



Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFKA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l

תשפ"ה

בהעלותך

פרשת

DESIRING ANOTHER CHANCE

A year after the Jews left Mitzrayim, the entire nation brought a korban Pesach, with the exception of a small group who were impure from contact with the dead and were therefore not able to participate. When they filed their complaint asking why they should lose out, Hashem gave them a second chance by instituting 'Pesach sheini', one month later.

A careful reading of the pesukim should leave us with several questions. The Torah (Bamidbar 9:10-11) states: "...if a man among you or future generations is impure or far away and does [the korban] Pesach for Hashem. On the second month, on the fourteenth.... he shall do it, and eat it with matzos and maror." The first posuk seems to say that he did offer the Pesach sacrifice, although he was impure or travelling. If so, why does he bring a makeup korban the next month? True, the Targum Yonasan inserts a word so that it should read "and is deferred from offering", but this isn't the literal translation. To suggest that the pesukim are broken apart in error is also unlikely. Although most agree that we are not experts in this and we don't always punctuate the pesukim properly, such a blatant error is highly unlikely to go unnoticed. The Baal Haturim writes that since in a leap year, Nissan is a month later and so Pesach is really in Iyar, every other Iyar is sort of like a Nissan, but this too, doesn't answer our question.

There is another question we need to ask: What is it about korban Pesach that warranted a second chance? Someone who doesn't hear the shofar on Rosh Hashana or doesn't have an esrog or a succah, isn't given the chance to make it up a month later. The time for the mitzvah has passed and the opportunity is lost. The Sefer HaChinuch explains that the korban Pesach lies at the very foundation of our religion and belief in Hashem; it is an annual commemoration of the miracles and wonders He did for us when we left Mitzrayim. Accordingly, it is so important for everyone to experience and so Hashem granted a second chance to those who couldn't participate the first time around.

Chazal tell us that if someone wants to do a mitzvah, and is unable to, the Torah considers it as if he actually did it. This is true of all mitzvos. Yet when it comes to korban Pesach, he also gets a second chance. However, this is only because he is lacking the expression and the experience, as the Chinuch explains. Perhaps then, this is what the Torah means when it says, "he was tamei or travelling and did the korban Pesach", meaning that although he didn't offer it, the Torah considers it as if he actually did, because he wanted to, but couldn't.

What emerges from this is that our desire for mitzvos is what counts. Not so long ago during Covid, most of us were unable to daven in shuls or with minyanim at all. We were prevented from attending regular shiurim etc, or did so in a limited capacity. How did we feel about this? Unfortunately some people became very comfortable with this type of arrangement. Davening in their homes or on their porches is more convenient, and since their early morning shiur will be saved and available to view later, why bother waking up early to attend? Yet, this attitude precludes reward for wanting to do a mitzvah and was prevented, because he didn't want. Instead, if a person longs for his shul, his shiur, his beis medrash, he will be rewarded as if he attended.

אמר רבי אבא ברבי דרבי פפי רבי יהושע דסיקנין בשם רבי לוי בלעזב יהיה מותר ודבר שפתיים אף למחסור. חנה על ידי שריבתה בתפילה קצרה בימיו של שמואל שאמר וישב שם עד עולם והלא אין עולם ללוי אלא חמשים שנה: (תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות פרק ד' הל' א')

When Chana beseeched Hashem for a child, she vowed to dedicate him to serving in the Beis HaMikdash forever. However, as a Levi, Shmuel could only serve in the Mikdash until the age of fifty and so he was therefore destined to live for only fifty years. Although this mandatory retirement of fifty year old leviim was only true in the Mishkan but not in the Beis HaMikdash, Hashem took her words seriously and decreed that he only live for fifty years after being brought to serve in the Mikdash.

TORAH TEMIMAH



From the desk of
the Rosh Kollel...

Welcome to all our new subscribers!

Exciting things are happening in the kollel! - We are in the final stretch of our 16th year since the kollel was established. The kollel, its beis medrash, and kehilla continue to be a real asset to the community on so many levels. We have reached the final stages of organizing and cataloging our vast otzar ha'seforim (around 3,000 volumes). This new system will not only improve learning in the kollel, but with benefit the broader community as well.

THE SEFER IS OUT! - *In honor of reaching our 16th year, I have published the Shabbos derashos on the haftarah and parsha which were said within the walls of our beis medrash. This is a second volume to the edition published upon our 10th anniversary five years ago. To find out how to get your own copy, email me at: rabbi@torahkollel.com*

The current situation worldwide is still frightening. Please increase your commitment to Torah study, tzedaka and chesed, and of course daven for all the captives, soldiers and the general situation.

From the early hours of the morning, until late at night, the beis medrash is and active asset to the community at large. Mosdos Avahas Yehonoson - "Torah Kollel" continues to impact on the community at large in many ways and exists thanks to the benevolence and generosity of its supporters around the world. Consider having a part of this tremendous zechus by sponsoring a sefer, a day, week or month of the Torah Kollel. Contact us at info@torahkollel.com for further information.

- Rabbi David Lewin

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Sugyas ha' Sedra

PASKENING FOR YOU AND ME

After the 70 zekeinim finished, Eldad and Meidad continued prophesying and in an attempt to defend his Moshe's honor, Yehoshua suggested their imprisonment. Chazal tell us that in doing so, Yehoshua violated the prohibition of issuing a halachic ruling in the presence of his rebbe. The gemara tells us that even ruling in matters as simple as the pareve status of an egg is included in this prohibition.

Accordingly, what should one do if he is asked by a recent ba'al teshuva what beracha to make on a cup of cola, for example, while your rebbe is in the room? At what point can one pasken for himself without asking about every little detail?

Many rishonim (see Meiri for example) rule that one may not pasken for himself until he attains the level of a "talmid chaver") an elevated status of a student who is somewhat of a colleague, at which point, the gemara rules, he can issue rulings for others as well. Many rishonim (Tosfos, Ritva, Mahri Veil) differentiate between deciding a halacha while learning the sugya, which is permitted, and paskening in a real "live" halachic query, which is prohibited. (See however, Toras Chaim that takes a stricter approach and only permits one to issue any rulings if he is far away from his rebbe, AND does so only 'once in a while'.)

Others, take a much more liberal approach and in fact encourage students to argue with their rabbeim. (See the Be'er Sheva who understands the gemara's criticism of one who argues with his rebbe to refer to general issues and not Torah or halacha.) This, argues the Rosh, is the way of Torah - to search out the truth. As proof, he notes that Rashi was the greatest of teachers and the baalei haTosfos, many of who were his own grandchildren, argued with him. Any talmid, writes the Mahari Bruna, can develop into a talmid chaver, as this was way of Torah since the times of the mishna. The Maharashdam furthers this point by

noting that R' Yochanan saved Reish Lakish from his life as a gangster and taught him Torah. The latter later went on to argue with R' Yochana throughout the gemara. It is also worth noting that although the Maharashal was vehemently against accepting any personal stringencies in matter of halacha (for reasons of arrogance) maintained that one who has sufficient proof is entitled and encouraged to disagree with his rebbe.

Despite the great prohibition of issuing halachic rulings, many poskim (Maharashdam, Birkei Yosef) maintain that one halacha was codified in Shulchan Aruch, one may, and should pasken whenever a question arises. The Shach asserts that the rulings of the Mechaber and Rema were Divinely inspired, and many poskim (Shvus Yaakov, Be'er Moshe, Pnei Yehoshua) had the custom of checking Shulchan Aruch each time they issued a ruling. Although the Marasha (Sotah 22a) cautions against 'just following Shulchan Aruch' without understanding the reasons behind it, this is possibly because he predated the Taz and Shach who serve this purpose (K'sav Sofer). One who had a full understanding of the sugya and the words of Shulchan Aruch may rely on them as a starting point to issue halachic rulings.

SPARKS OF SHABBOS

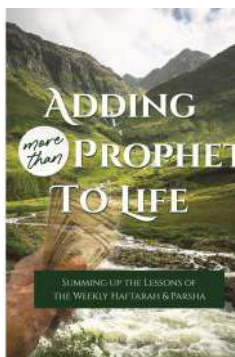
The gemara (Shabbos 118b) teaches us that even if a person worships idols he will be forgiven if he observes Shabbos properly. The Taz questions what this means for if he repents, teshuva should work anyway and if he doesn't how does Shabbos help? He answers that it refers to one who repented, but nevertheless, his neshama is tarnished from his sins and he still needs atonement. Properly observing Shabbos has the power to wipe away these blemishes and marks without atonements. The Steipler expands on this and explains when one's soul is sullied, he is confused and often misled which will cause him to sin further. When Shabbos comes, if he properly observes it, his mind will become clear and he will aspire to greater closeness to Hashem. This, explains Rav Matisyahu Solomon, is the 'great gift' which Hashem instructed Moshe to teach us about.

L'maaseh...

It was the middle of the second world war and a student in Rav Moshe Feinstein's yeshiva confided in a friend that he was planning on leaving the yeshiva the next day. When his friend tried to persuade him otherwise, he was adamant about his decision. Jews were being killed in Europe and R' Moshe zt"l "just" continued learning and the regular yeshiva schedule as if he was oblivious to it all. The student was bothered that his rosh yeshiva seemed to have no emotion or concern for other Jews. His friend probed further, and asked him where he sits during shacharis, and insisted that he sit opposite R' Moshe the next morning. Although he acquiesced, he insisted that he had made up his mind and nothing could change it, until this bochur saw how R' Moshe cried throughout the entire davening. Watching the emotion and tears flowing down his rebbe's face, the bochur change his mind and stayed on to become known as one of R' Moshe's star talmidim - R' Nota Greenblatt zt"l



When it comes to serving Hashem, the posuk in Tehilim instructs us "gilu b're'ada". This seems to be an apparent contradiction: "Gilu", means to rejoice and fulfills the command of "ivdu es Hashem b'simcha", but it is seemingly difficult to understand how one can do so b're'ada—with trepidation. The Rabeinu Yonah explains that simcha and fear are contradictory when we speak in human terms. If a person if overcome with fear, then it detracts from his level of simcha. When it comes to the Ribono shel Olam however, the more one is overcome with awe and fear of Him, the more he is inspired to serve Hashem and fulfill His mitzvos which is a tremendous simcha. Additionally, the more one focuses on the awesome opportunity he has to do mitzvos, the less he will be drawn after the petty enjoyment of this world's pleasures. Instead he will be propelled by the simcha of investing in eternity.



DIVREI HA'NAVI - ADDING PROPHET TO LIFE

Chazal tell us that learning Torah is greater than the fulfillment of its mitzvos because Torah study enables one to perform mitzvos. These words of Chazal are familiar but if you think about it, it really doesn't make sense because by definition then, mitzvos are greater, and it would seem then that Torah is 'only' the vehicle to get you there.

Rav Yehonoson Eibeshitz explains that whenever we approach any mitzva, the satan or yetzer hara stands up to block us from performing it by infusing our minds and thought processes with foreign thoughts. However this is only true of mitzvos. When a person learns Torah, he is in Hakadosh Boruch Hu's space as Chazal tell us that Hashem only has the four amos of halacha. There, the yetzer hara cannot penetrate and it is for this reason that the gemara says that when a person encounters the yetzer hara, he should pull him to the beis medrash. This is because there, it has no power to overtake his thoughts. So ultimately, mitzvos are greater, but for the average person, he can only serve Hashem if he infuses himself with Torah which will enable him to get there.

However, this is only true for the average person. If however, the Zohar tells us that if a person dies and comes back to life, the yetzer hara has no control over him. In which case, explains Rav Eibeshitz, his mitzvos are in fact greater, which gives a totally new understanding to our haftarah. Yehoshua Kohein Gadol was thrown into the fire and his neshama actually left his body but he was restored to life, and he was able to dedicate himself to the avodah, without involving himself in limud ha'Torah. The Satan however, didn't understand this and stood to his right, which symbolizes Torah, ("mi'yemino, eish das lamo") as if to say "you aren't learning Torah"! Hakadosh Boruch responded to this by confirming that Yehoshua is an "ud mutzal m'eish" – an ember saved from the fire, meaning that he came back to life and is no longer susceptible to the yetzer hara.

In the parsha, the posuk relates that the B'nei Yisroel traveled away from Har Sinai. The medrash says that they were like children running away from school. Rav Gedalya Schorr explains that k'lal Yisroel underwent a major transformation at that point. Moshe Rabeinu gave us the written Torah which can bring one to tremendous closeness to the Ribono shel Olam. Had they remained attached to Moshe, they too could have benefited from this tremendous level. However, when they sinned by making the eigel, they fell and could no longer relate to Moshe and his Torah and so they fled like schoolchildren at the end of the day. At this point they needed to connect to Torah sheh b'al peh and this is why the zekeinim were chosen to continue the mesorah. Moshe as their teacher was somewhat out of place for the new phase of the nation and they needed a system of mesorah to install this new model for k'lal Yisroel. He explains that the inverted nunim and the posuk of "vayehi b'nsoa ha'aron" separate between these two phases. Before there was a world of Moshe and the Torah. After they traveled, came the world of Torah sheh b'al peh.

In light of the words of R' Yehonoson Eibeshitz, perhaps we can suggest that once we detached ourselves from Moshe, we needed to be constantly involved in the Torah sheh b'al peh of daled amos shel halacha in order to fight our constant yetzer hara. It also therefore makes a lot of sense that this haftarah is also read on Shabbos Chanuka which celebrates the victory of Torah sheh b'al peh. It is not only a yom tov mi'd'rabanen but the entire oppression of the Yevanim revolved around the study of Torah sheh b'al peh.

We stand today just a short time after Shavuot which is primarily the acceptance of Torah sheh b'k'sav, but as we approach the summer months, we need to strengthen our connection to Torah sheh b'al peh even more in order to fight the Satan who stands to our right, trying to make us fail. If we strengthen ourselves in Torah, then there won't be any room for him to stand there.