



זמני שבת

הדלקת נרות	4:09
הנץ	7:09
סוף זמן קריאת שמע	9:29
שקיעה	4:28
שבת Ends	5:14

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שבת חנוכה

Rosh Mesivta

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Restoring the Law

This week's parsha says "Ve'heshivcha al kancha ve'natata kos paroh b'yado kamishpat ha'reishon asher hayita mashkehu" – "...and you will place Pharaoh's cup into his hand, as was the manner when you were his chief butler." (40:13). An alternative reading of the pasuk is, "...and you will place Pharaoh's cup into his hand, following the original ruling when you were his chief butler." The Sfas Emes asks what the connection between the "ruling" mentioned in the second interpretation, and a butler's services is.

Actually, according to Egyptian law, Pharaoh's chief butler had not committed a punishable crime. The chief baker, who had been sent to prison when a pebble was found in the pastry he had baked for Pharaoh, was guilty of a crime, because he had been negligent when sifting the flour by not spotting the pebble. When a fly flew into the wine the chief butler had poured for Pharaoh, it could not be construed as being caused by the butler's negligence. He was not negligent at all.

Really, the fact that Pharaoh became angry with the chief butler and threw him into prison was all part of Hashem's master plan to free Yosef. As the midrash says: "The Holy One, blessed be He, caused the master to be angry with his servants in order to bring about Yosef's deliverance." Pharaoh had his chief butler imprisoned falsely. However, once the chief butler had promised to remember Yosef and mention him to Pharaoh, Hashem's plan had been fulfilled. Thus, the "original ruling" had been restored and the chief butler was not liable to punishment for what had happened to Pharaoh's wine.

Aaron Kattan
*Junior***Facing Reality**

This week's Parasha, Parshat Vayeishev, contains the famous story of Yosef being sold into slavery by his brothers. Yosef was sent down to Egypt, and as a result, the Jewish people wound up spending hundreds of years there. The circumstances that led to the sale of Yosef are extremely bewildering, and it seems that the whole catastrophe was intentional. First off, Yaakov openly irritated his other sons by showing favoritism to Yosef. Then, Yosef stirred his brothers' hatred by giving Yaakov a bad report about them. When Yosef had his first dream, which indicated that he would become a ruler over his brothers, he irritated them further by revealing it to them. As if things were not bad enough, when Yosef had his second dream, he continued to reveal this dream as well. Not only did he mention it, he even retold this dream to Yaakov, while in front of the brothers. Even though Yaakov is fully aware of the strained and stressful relationship of his sons, he sends Yosef to check on his brothers' activities and to report back to him. Regardless of the apparent danger, Yosef agrees to go, and does so alone. It is then that the brothers throw Yosef into the pit and sell him into slavery. As outlandish as it may sound, this series of annoyances seems to be a deliberate effort by Yaakov and Yosef to stimulate his brothers' hatred. How can this be, that they would try to make the Brothers detest Yosef?

Chayim Rosensweig
*Sophomore**continued on page 3*

The Nature of Pidyon Ha'ben

**Jacob
Bernstein
Senior**

The mitzvah of Pidyon Ba'ben is done by a father (who is a Yisroel) when his wife's (who is a Bas-Yisroel) first naturally born son reaches the age of 30 days. At that point, the father must pay a kohen five slahim to accomplish Pidyon Ha'ben, allowing the son to return to father's possession. There are two popular approaches to explain the nature of Pidyon Ha'ben.

On one hand, this mitzvah can be explained to be a regular pidyon, redemption, of the son by the father, just as one would redeem an object that was hekdesch. Or, this mitzvah may be working based on the premise that at the age of 30 days, the son belongs to the kohen, and as a form of a chov (required payment), the father owes the 5 slahim to the kohen. So is the pidyon a regular redemption, or a chov that the father is obligated to pay to the kohen?

A commonly known and disputed case regarding this mitzvah discusses a son who reached the age of 30 days, but passed away before the father had done the Pidyon Ha'ben. In this case, the father is still required to do a Pidyon Ha'ben.

This seems to imply that the mitzvah is a chov, the second possibility we presented. If the mitzvah functioned as a pidyon, then there would be no need to do the mitzvah after death. Once a child passes away, he need not be redeemed any longer. But if the mitzvah functions as a chov, then we can understand why the father still needs to pay it off even after the death. The chov was created when the son became 30 days old, and even though he is no longer alive, the chov still exists.

However, there is a different case which seems to understand Pidyon Ha'ben as a regular pidyon. This case concerns a concept in Halacha called "matana sh'al m'nas l'hachzir," or a gift given on condition that the object be returned. This rule is important, for example, by the mitzvah of shaking the lulav and esrog on Succos. If one does not own a lulav and esrog, someone else can give him them al m'nas l'hachzir. This way, the receiver of this "gift" can still fulfill the mitzvah (as he fully owns the lulav and esrog), but the original owner can still be confident that he will have the lulav and esrog returned to him.

One is allowed to fulfill the mitzvah of Pidyon Ha'ben by using a "matana sh'al m'nas l'hachzir." This ruling seems to imply that the mitzvah functions as a redemption. If the mitzvah functions as a chov, how could someone possibly pay off this debt with something that must be returned after it has been used to pay off the debt? That is ridiculous! On the other hand, if the mitzvah functions as pidyon, we can say that just as other mitzvos can be accomplished by this method, the Pidyon Ha'ben can also be accomplished through this method. It is irrelevant whether or not the kohen must return the gift.

The Chazon Ish writes that the nature of the mitzvah is a "chovas mamon" or a monetary debt. His proof for this stems from the Gemarah in Kiddushin (29a) which discusses a case where a father only has five slahim, and must do a Pidyon Ha'ben for both himself (because his father never did it for him) and for his son. The Gemarah attempts to make a ruling as to which one receives the Pidyon Ha'ben first.

The Biur Halacha asks why the Gemarah needed to even entertain this question. A person is not required to spend all his money to perform a mitzvah assei (positive commandment). Rather, he is only obligated to pay one-fifth of his total money. Based on this information, the Gemarah simply should have said that the man does not have to do the mitzvah neither for himself nor for his son, because he is only obligated to use one-fifth of the five slahim he owns (one selah), which is not enough to do the mitzvah.

The Chazon Ish answers this question by saying that the mitzvah is really just a chov that the father owes to the kohen. Unlike mitzvos, a person always has to pay off his chovos, regardless how much money he has. Thus, the Gemarah's question is legitimate.

The answer is found hidden in Sefer Beraishis where it says that Yaakov sent Yosef from the “depths of Chevron.” On a simple level, this makes no sense, because Chevron is located on hills and not in a valley, and “from the depth” generally pertains to a valley. The Talmud answers this as follows. When it says “depth” it means it figuratively, that Yosef was sent from the depth of the plan told to Avraham. Since it was Avraham who initially questioned God and wanted confirmation that he and his children will be given the land, God believed it was necessary for the Jews to reach a point of realization that it is only God who can truly care for them. Therefore, he decreed that they would be exiled. The process of exile was to happen one way or another, which is why Yaakov and Yosef motivated the brothers into doing what they did (throwing Yosef into the pit and selling him to slavery). They hoped to rush things along so they would learn their lessons from the exile, and get it over with early on.

In our own lives as well, we have important life lessons to learn and challenges to overcome. This week’s parsha is teaching us that we should not go out of our way to avoid difficulties. Rather, if we are facing a challenge, it is foolish to ignore it, and even worse to give up on it. Too frequently we create diversions in order to escape the confrontation with reality. However, it always catches up with us in the long run, so we should deal with it when it is created, and not wait until it becomes even worse.

The Meaning of Yosef’s Two Dreams

**Rabbi
Yitzchak
Meir
Goodman**

After Yosef told his brothers his first dream, of the brothers’ sheaves of wheat bowing to his sheave of wheat, the Torah says, “...and they hated him even more.” After the second dream, in which the sun, moon, and stars bowed to him, “...his brothers were jealous of him.” Why do Yosef’s brothers react first with hatred, and only afterwards with jealousy?

The Vilna Gaon answers by explaining that there are two types of dreams; those merely reflecting the dreamer’s ambitions or desires, and those that are “1/60th of prophesy” (Berachos 57b). Concerning this latter type, “There is no dream without meaningful matter” (Bereishis Rabbah). Yosef’s first dream contained no such false information. Therefore, his siblings dismissed it as the vain daydream of a power-hungry little brother. Such dreams arouse no jealousy; they only arouse hatred for the spoiled, ambitious dreamer. Yosef’s second dream, however, introduced an impossibility. The moon, symbolizing his deceased mother, bowed to him. Consequently, Yosef’s brothers recognized this dream as prophesy, and were jealous of the greatness awaiting him.

Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg explains this change of attitude differently. The critical element of Yosef’s second dream was the fact that the sun, symbolizing Yaakov, bowed to him. Even the most spoiled son does not imagine in his wildest dreams that his own father will kneel before him! This anomaly certified Yosef’s dream as prophetic, which in turn aroused his brothers’ jealousy.

Among the numerous commentators who analyze Yosef’s dreams, the Ramban leads the way with some very cogent observations. In his first dream, the brothers’ sheaves bow to Yosef. This impersonal homage foreshadowed the brothers’ first trip to Egypt, when they bowed to Yosef because he was the keeper of the wheat (42:6). Likewise, the number of sheaves is not mentioned in this dream, because the brothers initially descended to Egypt without Binyamin.

The second dream involves eleven stars, however, for Shimon was released from his imprisonment (42:23) in time to join his brothers—including Binyamin—in bowing to Yosef personally (42:26), just as the stars bowed to him. The “sun” (Yaakov) bowed to Yosef only years later (47:31), when Yaakov was near death. As for the “moon”, rather than viewing it as the irrelevant part of Yosef’s dream, the Ramban suggests that it, too, eventually bowed to Yosef, for it represented the seventy Jewish souls who descended to Egypt. This symbolism is appropriate, for just as the moon reflects the sun, a family “reflects” its patriarch. Alternatively, a midrash cited by Rashi links the moon with Bilha, Yosef’s “stepmother”.

The Beracha of She'asa Nissim

**Rabbi
Horowitz
Rebbe**

The gemara in Masechet Shabbat (23a) introduces the three berachos recited on hadlakas nerot Chanukah. The first beracha – lehadlik ner shel Chanukah - resembles a standard birchat hamitzva. The final beracha - shehecheyanu – is also familiar; all yamim tovim and many mitzvos carry this beracha. The middle beracha, however, appears far less frequently. In fact, only one other mitzvah requires the recitation of this beracha of “sheasa nissim”- the reading of the megillah on Purim. This beracha seems to represent an added component to these mitzvos- that of Pirsumei Nissa (publicizing the miracle). The only other mitzvah that contains this component, besides for those of hadlakas nerot and megillah, is the mitzvah of arbah kosos on Pesach.

Having attributed the beracha of sheasa nissim to pirsumei nissa, we might question the degree to which the beracha is attached to the act of hadlaka. Did Chazal institute a completely separate beracha to commemorate the miracle, or did they instruct that the beracha be recited on the pirsumei nissa generated by the act of lighting? To what extent can the pirsumei nissa (and, by extension, the beracha) be severed from the act of lighting?

The gemara in Shabbas (23a) asserts that the berachos are to be recited during the hadlaka. This is obviously the preferred, lechatchila option. What happens, however, if the pirsumei nissa occurs separately from the lighting?

One scenario is actually stated by the gemara in Shabbat, which instructs someone who merely sees a ner to recite the beracha of sheasa nissim. Though he has not lit any candles himself, he may still recite the beracha on the pirsumei nissa generated by witnessing the candles of others. Indeed, the Rishonim argue on the scope of this halacha. According to Rashi, the beracha is recited only by someone who has not lit, will not light, and has no one lighting for him at home. Ideally, sheasa nissim should be tethered to the act of lighting the menorah and the fulfillment of the mitzva of hadlaka. If this is impossible, the beracha may be separated from the act of lighting.

The Rashba, on the other hand, says that even one who plans to light for himself later can make a sheasa nissim on witnessing a candle. According to this approach, we can definitely separate the bracha of sheasa nissim from the act of lighting. The ner, however, remains at the root of the bracha. Indeed, according to most Rishonim, if a person cannot light and does not behold anyone else lighting, he recites no beracha. Though we may separate the beracha from the act of lighting, it cannot be detached from the medium of ner Chanuka- one must at least see it.

A notable exception to this position is the Me'iri, who rules that if a person has no opportunity to light or witness lights, he should still recite the beracha of sheasa nissim on the festival of Chanukah itself. Though ideally pirsumei nissa is integrated together with the mitzvah of lighting, it may be isolated as an independent entity. According to this opinion, the beracha is not necessarily a din in the ner at all, but a separate din in the day of Chanukah.

From this machlokes about when one can recite the bracha of sheasa nissim we see a fundamental issue in the nature of the beracha in relation to the action of lighting the ner. What triggers the chiyuv to recite the bracha? The act of lighting, the site of a fulfilled mitzva of ner chanuka, or is it a totally separate entity from ner. All opinions do agree that if one does light, however, that is the most appropriate time for the recitation of the beracha.

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