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זמני שבת

הדלקת נרות	4:15
הנץ	7:17
סוף זמן קריאת שמע	9:36
שקיעה	4:34
שבת Ends	5:20

זמנים for area code 11559

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The Sensitivity of Yosef

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In this week's Parshah, the brothers descend to Egypt to get food, and Yehuda tries to convince Yosef to take them as servants in Binyamin's stead. While Yehuda is recounting to Yosef what has happened since their last meeting, the pasuk says that Yosef is not able "lehisapeik" in front of all the servants (45:1). The pasuk goes on to say that Yosef sends out all the servants who are in the room, and finally reveals to his brothers that he is still alive.

The Rashbam explains that the word "lehisapeik" means "to be strong and stand firm." The Abarbanel explains that Yosef was no longer able to hold back his tears, but he did not want his servants to see him crying. He also was not able to go to a side room to cry, because of those people who were blocking his way. He therefore orders all the servants out of the room.

Rashi explains that the word "lehisapeik" means "to tolerate." One can ask what Yosef could not tolerate, and what that has to do with his sending his servants out of the room. Rashi explains: "Yosef sent out all the servants because he could not bear to have Egyptians standing in the room see his brothers' humiliation when he would reveal himself to them." Yosef could not tolerate the chance that his brothers would be unnecessarily embarrassed. A couple of pesukim later, it says "Yosef called them close to him and told them, 'I am your brother, Yosef, whom you sold to Egypt. Don't worry, and don't be angry with yourselves, that you sold me down here, for it was to preserve life that G-d sent me here....'" (45:4). The two actions of Yosef – of sending his servants out of the room and of pulling the brothers close to him – are connected. In both, Yosef has the concern of his brothers at the front of his mind. He does not want the servants to see the embarrassment of the brothers due to what they had done, so he sends the servants out. Yosef has to tell his brothers to come close because, as Rashi explains, they had recoiled upon hearing who the man before them really was. Yosef realizes that his brothers feel terrible, so he calls to them tenderly and pleadingly, so that they will not feel ashamed. We see from Yosef that, in every situation, we should have other people in mind, and we should do what we can so that others should not feel ashamed.

The Brothers' Charem

**Rabbi
Moshe
Farkas
Rebbe**

After the brothers informed Yaakov that Yosef was still alive, the pasuk says, "ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם...", that the spirit of Yaakov was revived (45:27). Regarding those words, Rashi informs us, "שרתה עליו שכניה שפירשה ממנו", that Yaakov regained Ruach Hakodesh, which had previously left him. Yaakov had originally lost his Ruach Hakodesh when the brothers brought to him Yosef's tunic, which had been stained with the blood of a goat. A few pesukim later, the Torah says, "ויבך אתו", that Yitzchak cried for the loss of Yosef (37:35). Rashi comments that Yitzchak cried, but did not actually mourn, for he knew that Yosef was still alive.

continued on page 3

Women's Obligation in "Lo Sakiyfu"

Jacob
Bernstein
Senior

The Mishnah on 29a in Kiddushin says that both men and women are commanded to keep Mitzvos Lo Ta'aseh, whether or not they are time-bound. It proceeds to list the three exceptions to this rule, all of which are negative commandments that women are not obligated to keep: not to round the peiyos (corners) of one's head, not to destroy one's beard, and not to become tameh to a corpse (if one is a kohein).

The Gemarah later (35b) inquires as to the source that women are not bound by the negative prohibitions of cutting one's peiyos or destroying one's beard. It quotes a pasuk (Vayikrah 19:27) which states "Lo Sakiyfu P'as Roshchem V'lo Sashchis Eis P'as Z'kanecha" ("You shall not round off the edge of your scalp and you shall not destroy the edge of your beard"- ArtScroll Chumash Translation), explaining that the prohibition dealing with the beard is connected to that of rounding one's peiyos. Therefore women are either obligated or exempt in **both** mitzvos.

The Gemarah then gives two possible explanations as to why women are not m'chuyav in the prohibition of destroying one's beard, which would then also free them from the lav of rounding off their peyos. The first answer is a logical reason (svorah): women don't have beards, so it would be illogical for them to have such a prohibition. The second answer is through the pasuk quoted above, and learned out by a limud, basically a gzeiras hakasuv.

The Rambam in Hilchos Avodas Kochavim (12:2) says that Avadim are obligated in the two mitzvos discussed above (destroying the beard and shaving peiyos). The Nosei Keilim (commentators) on this psak of the Rambam ask why slaves are obligated in these mitzvos. If the source for their obligation in certain mitzvos comes from women's obligations, they should not be obligated in anything that women are not obligated in!

In the third Mishnah of the third Perek in Brachos, women are paired with Avadim and children in regard to their level of obligation in mitzvos. The Tosafos Yom Tov explains that the connection between women and Avadim in this regard is the Gzeira Shava of the words Lah-Lah (which appears there). Rabbi Akiva Eiger comments on this Mishnah with an interesting way to understand the Gzeira Shava. Without it, Avadim would not be obligated in **any** mitzvos; it is only because of this connection that they have some obligations. He then continues to ask the same question posed above; if the entire source for slaves having any obligation stems from women, then how could slaves be obligated in the lav against destroying their beards?

To answer this question, we must look back at the two possible answers found in our Gemarah. According to the original answer (that women do not have beards), the logic of the Rambam makes perfect sense. Since women would technically be obligated in this mitzvah, and are only exempt because of this practical exception (because they simply do not have beards), we can understand why slaves, who do have beards, would be obligated in this mitzvah. Furthermore, since the only reason women are not obligated in the prohibition of rounding their peiyos is because of the connection with the beard, Avadim who are obligated in the lav against destroying their beards, would also be obligated in the lav against rounding their peiyos.

The question posed by the Nosei Keilim and Rabbi Akiva Eiger on the Rambam is much stronger when approaching it with the second answer of the Gemarah. If the reason women are not obligated in the lav against destroying their beards is because of a pasuk, it would seem that they are not even technically obligated; they are exempt from the source rather than just an exception to the rule. If that is so, why would a slave be obligated in these mitzvos? They should be exempt just as women are!

The Chazon Ish presents an answer to resolve the confusion in the Rambam's psak. He explains that the second answer in our Gemarah was not actually brought to provide a reason for women not being obligated in the lav of destroying their beards. Rather, it was merely a support for the original answer. Based on this, one can use the same logical approach that was described above, resulting in the Avadim being obligated in the lavim dealing with beards and peiyos.

Teshuvah With Mechilah

Yecheil
Schwab
Junior

This week's Parshah recounts the climactic end of Yosef's deception of his brothers. After Yehuda confronts him, Yosef cries out "ani Yosef, haod avi chai?"- "I am Yosef, is my father still alive??" At first glance, this question of "haod avi chai", of whether Yaakov is alive, merely seems like that of an innocent son wanting to know whether his father is still alive. However, examining the pesukim around it, this explanation comes into question. Throughout Yehuda's speech, he emphasizes that the reason Yosef cannot keep Binyamin is that Yaakov will die if Yosef keeps him. From this speech, Yosef clearly knows that, to the best of Yehuda's knowledge, Yaakov is still alive. Why, then, does he ask this question to which he already knows the answer?

continued on page 3

The Brothers' Charem

continued

The Medrash Raba states that Yitzchak did not reveal to Yaakov the whereabouts of Yosef, because he felt that if Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted Yaakov to know where Yosef was, He would have told it to Yaakov Himself. If that is true, we have another question- why did Hashem Himself not reveal Yosef's location to Yaakov? We can answer this question by looking at the Medrash Tanchuma, which states that the brothers forbade anyone to tell of Yosef's whereabouts, and would place a Charem on anyone that would do so. Apparently, even Hakadosh Baruch Hu fell under this prohibition.

Every day we say in our davening, "Magid devarav l'Yaakov", which means that Hashem did in fact converse with Yaakov regularly. Apparently, Hashem followed this Charem instead of His usual policy of talking with Yaakov. The Telzer Rav Rebbi Yosef Yehuda Leib Bloch Zt"l asks a simple question on this. Why did Hakadosh Baruch Hu heed this Charem? Must He follow human whims?

Rabbi Bloch relates that as a youth he heard in the name of the Gra (through a reliable source) that when a ganav is gonev bmachteret (he digs a tunnel under a house to rob it), if he has bitachon in Hashem, he will be successful in his stealing. Why is this so? He answers that Hakadosh Baruch Hu incorporated into the Tevah (nature) of the world the ability for Kochos Hatfilah to be effective. He applies this concept to the Charem of the nine brothers. Their hope, that the location of Yosef would not be revealed, was fulfilled through Tevah. In general, Hakadosh Baruch Hu does not want to defy the laws of Tevah, so He also followed the Charem established by the brothers.

I would like to add one more point. I think the shevatim also created something new with their request. They created a Hester Panim on Yaakov, the concept of Hashem dealing with someone in a subtle, as opposed to explicit, manner. We see that they caused even Yaakov to lose his Ruach HaKodesh. Avraham Avinu was told that we would be in Galus for 400 years before being able to go to Eretz Yisrael (this was Galus Mitzrayim). Hester Panim was not mentioned. In theory, galus does not have to mean we cannot interact with Hashem on a very clear level. Yet the galus we are in now, Galus Bavel, does include Hester Panim for all of us, making it much more difficult than a plain galus.

Let us be mispallel that just as Yaakov received a tremendous spiritual uplifting when he heard that Yosef was alive ("ותחי רוח יעקב אביהם"), so too we should be able to interact with Hashem on a strong spiritual level, which will herald the coming of Mashiach Tzidkeinu, Bimheira B'yameinu.

Teshuvah With Mechilah

continued

I believe that the answer of the Chasam Sofer explains this, as well as the rest of Yosef's actions throughout this week's Parshah. The Chasam Sofer explains that this question of whether Yaakov is alive is not an innocent question, but rather it's rebuke that Yosef is giving to his brothers. In Yehuda's speech about Binyamin, he speaks of what will happen to Yaakov if Binyamin does not return, and how this might kill him. Yosef is rebuking his brothers for not taking this same idea into consideration when they sold Yosef.

This answer leads to another question, though; if Yosef is rebuking his brothers, why does he say in the next pasuk that he forgives them? Furthermore, after forgiving them, he sends them back to Eretz Yisroel with presents, and he gives Binyamin more than the other brothers. It is brought down in the Midrash that Yosef is trying to test his brothers by favoring Binyamin, just as how he himself had been favored by Yaakov over his brothers. This test is a way for them to do Teshuvah for their actions. If they have yet to do teshuvah, why does Yosef forgive them? Yosef seems to be sending his brothers contradictory messages.

I believe that the answer to this question lies in the difference between the messages he is sending them. One message is of teshuvah, and the other is of mechilah. When Yosef says "haod avi chai", he is trying to rebuke his brothers and help them do teshuvah. Without their even responding or reacting to this rebuke, he forgives them. After forgiveness, he tests them in order to help them perform teshuvah for selling him. These actions of Yosef teach us an important distinction between teshuvah and mechilah. Yosef immediately forgives his brothers, even though they have not yet done full teshuvah. He then helps them do teshuvah. This shows that teshuvah and mechilah do not always come together in mitzvos bein adam licheveiro - mitzvos between man and man. Yosef does not wait until his brothers do teshuvah to forgive them, but rather he forgives them right away, and this is something we should aspire to do. When a friend wrongs us, we should forgive him for the action, and then help him do Teshuvah for it and fix the character flaw he has which caused him to do this sin. Through this, we can all become better people and better Jews.

When Do We Say Aneinu?

**Reb Noam
Horowitz
Rebbe**

The Gemarah (Ta'anis 13b) teaches that on a public fast day, both the individual and the shaliach tzibbur should insert a special prayer, Aneinu, into the Shemona Esrei. At which tefillos is Aneinu inserted? Both the Bavli (Shabbas 24a) and Yerushalmi (Ta'anis 2:2) imply that Aneinu should be recited during all three prayers of the fast day: Ma'ariv, Shacharis and Mincha. Based upon these sources, most Rishonim (including the Rif, Ran, Ramban, Ritva, and Rashba) rule this way.

The Ba'al Hame'or, on the other hand, disagrees. He rules that Aneinu should not be recited at night (Ma'ariv). He insists that "at a time during which one may eat, one should not insert Aneinu into the evening prayer." Indeed, the Rashba asks in his discussion of this opinion, "How can one insert Aneinu in the evening prayer while one's belly is still full?!" We ask Hashem to answer us "on this fast day"- how can we say such a prayer if it is at a time during which we are not fasting?

The Ran, however, explains that according to the Rif, the fast fundamentally (although not practically) begins at night. As we know, the halachik day begins at night. Theoretically, fast days are no different, and should also begin then, but Chazal realized that fasting from the night before can be difficult. The nature of the day, though, still starts at night, so we should start reciting Aneinu at Ma'ariv. Therefore, if one would decide at night that he will no longer eat, the fast begins for him. (According to this, if one awakens in the middle of the night, he may not be allowed to eat, even though it is before alos hashachar. Since the actual day starts at night, his acceptance of the fast is effective, even though it was at night).

Seemingly, these Rishonim disagree as to the nature of Aneinu. The Ba'al Hame'or views Aneinu as a tefillah recited as part of one's fast. Therefore, it would only make sense to say such a tefillah during a time at which one is actually fasting. On the other hand, the Rif and Ran view Aneinu as, in the language of the Gemarah "hazkarat me'en hame'ora," or an expression of the nature of the day - which technically begins at night.

Rashi (Shabbas 24a) supports the position that Aneinu should be recited three times. However, he then brings the opinion of the Ge'onim, who record that they were not accustomed to saying Aneinu either at night or in the morning, lest a person not finish his fast and therefore, retroactively, would have lied in his prayers. The Rashba explains that the Ge'onic position does not argue with the Yerushalmi cited above, but rather reflects the weakness and inability to fast that has overcome some of the Jewish people.

The Ritva (Shabbas 24) and Tosafos (Ta'anis 11b) reject the concern of the Ge'onim. They explain that even if one ate later in the day, that is considered to be an unavoidable circumstance, and we do not consider his earlier prayer to be dishonest. These Rishonim report, however, that the custom in France was for only the shaliach tzibbur to insert Aneinu in the Shacharis prayer. They explain that "it is inconceivable that there is not at least one in the community who is fasting, so the shaliach tzibbur may recite it," but an individual should not recite it until Mincha (Ritva). Once a person davens Mincha while still fasting, he is considered to have fasted for the whole day (through the halachik principle of "rubo ki'kulo", that a majority of something is considered to be all of it. Therefore, if one fasted for most of the day, it is considered to be as if he fasted the whole day. Of course, one still must fast the whole day). This opinion takes that of the Baal Hame'or a step further. Not only should we not say Aneinu at night when we do not fast, but we should not even say it at Shacharis because there is potential that one might break his fast, which would cause this tefillah to be false retroactively. According to this, Aneinu does not just reflect whether or not one is fasting while he says it. It also reflects his completion of the fast. If one fasts the entire day, that day is defined as a fast day for him, and he would have been able to say Aneinu. However, if he breaks his fast anytime during the day, the day would not be defined as a fast day for him, and he would not have been allowed to say Aneinu.

The Shulchan Aruch (565:3) says that on the four fasts we should insert Aneinu in all our prayers. Even if a person needs to eat, he says, it is still appropriate to say Aneinu- "Answer us on our fast day"- because it is an established fast day, even though he may not be fasting. The Rama, on the other hand, holds that individuals should say Aneinu only at Mincha, while the Shaliach Tzibbur says it at Shacharis as well.

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