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שבת קודש פרשת משפטים/שקלים - כ"ה שבט תשע"ח
Shabbos Parshas Mishpatim - February 10, 2018

ל תורה מסיני, אומר אני, לפי שמסכת זו אינה מיוסדת על פי מצוה ממצוות התורה

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ברית עולם בקרן השלם זה
הבגין ענני הגפן בענני הגפן
דבר נאח ומתקבל
Mazel Tov to Racheli
and Yitzy Rieder on
their Chasunah. May
the young couple be
zoche to build a Bayis
Neeman B'Yisroel and
become an everlasting
source of nachas.
Dedicated by Naftali and
Estee Manela

מעשה אבות סימן לבנים

אם בנפו יבא בנפו יצא אם בעל אשה הוא ויצאה אשתו עמו וגו' (כא-ג)

The *Torah* tells us that one who owns a Jewish slave must release him after the sixth year. He is to leave his master the same way he came. Rashi explains that the expression "בגפר" in the *posuk*, means he is not married. He leaves “with his cloak,” in other words, if he came only as he was, alone within his clothing, that is how he is to leave. According to Rashi, the metaphor for being single is one’s garment. What is the connection between a person’s garment and being single? The answer, explains **R’ Yissochar Frand *shlit’a***, is that we define a person who is single as being one whose world ends at the end of his garment. He is a self-contained unit. His world ends where he ends. For this reason, by a traditionally *Yekke* (German Jewry) wedding as well as at a Sephardic wedding, the *chossan* puts on a *Talis* and spreads it over himself and his bride. This ritual acts out the very implication of our metaphor. Under the *chuppah*, at the moment of his marriage, the *chossan* demonstrates that his world has now been extended - his *kallah* is now part of his life - by spreading his garment over someone else in addition to himself. In essence, he is saying, “My coat now has to cover someone else.”

There is a story told by **R’ Elimelech Biderman *shlit’a*** about a small town in Siberia, where the frigid temperatures and desolate wilderness made for long and lonely stretches of civilization. In this waylaid town, there lived a elderly father and his son, who barely eked out a living under the harsh conditions. One day, the father and son came to the local Rabbi with a dispute. Each one was laying claim to the one coat in the house. Each one felt that he was more deserving of this coat.

The Rabbi listened as they explained that the elderly father stayed home while the son went off to work each day. The father said that he needed the coat; otherwise he would freeze to death as there was no heating in the house and the walls were insufficient to keep out the winds. The son, on the other hand, claimed that his need was far more pressing because he was out working all day in the exposed fields. If he didn’t have the protection of the coat, he would never survive.

The Rabbi looked at the father and asked him how he would respond to the son’s legitimate claim. The father retorted that as the son was working and moving about during the day, after a while he would warm up and not need the coat.

The son shook his head, not accepting this response. He replied that even though their house was full of unplugged holes it was still preferable to be indoors as there was always some shelter to be found. Plus, they had a stove

The two complainants continued to argue back and forth and the Rabbi was unsure how to proceed. Who should get to wear the coat? He thought long and hard but could not come up with a valid decision. He told the pair to give him some time to study the matter in depth and come back in two days time when he would give them an answer.

As they trudged back to their dilapidated and freezing hovel, both the father and his son begin to assess the claim of the other one. Each man tried to understand the other’s counterpoint and what the coat would mean to them. By putting himself in the other one’s shoes, they both came to the realization that perhaps the other was right after all. He really does need the coat more than me. I will manage as best as I can without the coat. This became the new crux of their argument.

As a result, on their return to the Rabbi two days later, the father and the son were still arguing vehemently, but this time each was claiming that the other one should take the coat!

On hearing both of them present their cases once again, the Rabbi asked them to wait a few moments. He left the room only to return almost immediately with a warm coat in his hand that he gave to them, telling them that now they would both have a coat to wear. Of course, both father and son thanked the Rabbi profusely and stood up to leave.

As they got to the door the son turned around and asked the Rabbi why he hadn’t just given them the coat two days ago. The Rabbi answered that when they were both fighting because each one thought that he needed the coat more, the Rabbi thought to himself that he also needed his coat. But when they returned with each one thinking about the other and agreeing to manage without the coat, the Rabbi thought to himself that he could also think about others and manage without his coat!

משל למא הדבר דומא

אם המצא תמצא בידו והנבנה משור עד חמור עד שה חיים שנים ישלם וגו' (כב-ג)

משל: R’ Hillel Kolomyia (Lichtenstein) *zt”l* was once up late Friday night learning when he heard a noise near the window. He turned to see a thief in his home taking his silver candlesticks and other items in his hand. As he was about to exit. R’ Hillel said to him, “How could you do this? You know you can’t carry on *Shabbos*, and the candlesticks are *Muktzah*? Either way, the *Torah* prohibits you from stealing, and what about the *agmas nefesh* (emotional anguish) you will cause the *Rebbetzin* on *Shabbos* itself? If you are hungry and need to eat, come and I will give you delicious *Shabbos* food.” The thief laughed and slipped out the window.

A little while later, the *Rav* heard a commotion outside. A policeman had caught the thief and was taking him to the police station. R’ Hillel approached the officer and told him not to take the thief away, since all the articles were formerly his and he had given them as a present to this man.

The officer ignored his entreaties and took him down to the station, with R’ Hillel following along. Once there, the *Rav* prevailed, and the man was released! The sinner then fell upon the *Rav* asking him for forgiveness. R’ Hillel invited him to his house for the remainder of *Shabbos*, where he became a new man, and a true *Ba’al Teshuvah*!

מחשבת הלב

CONCEPTS IN AVODAS HALEV
FROM R’ CHAIM YOSEF KOFMAN

אם ענה תענה אתו כי אם צעק יצעק
אלו שמעו אשמעו צעקתו וגו' (כב-כג)

Nobody ever heard the **Chofetz Chaim *zt”l*** say, “That person is speaking *Lashon Hara*; he will be punished.” Likewise, no one ever heard the Chofetz Chaim say, “That person is being *mechalel Shabbos*; *Hashem* will punish him.” But when it came to widows and orphans, the Chofetz Chaim would say this. He was fiercely protective of orphans and widows. Why was the Chofetz Chaim so emphatic about the punishment of these tormenters, if he wasn’t so forceful about the other *aveiros*?

The answer is explicit in the *Torah*. When mentioning the torment of a widow or an orphan, the *Torah* says it twice. “*If you will afflict him ... I will surely hear his outcry.*” The **Rambam** says one must be mindful when it comes to orphans and widows because the punishment is spelled out directly in the *Torah*. *Hashem* made a special covenant with orphans and widows that He will listen to them and He will respond to them whenever they are tormented and cry out. The **Kotzker Rebbe** observes that all the verbs in this *posuk* are doubled: “ענה תענה, צעק יצעק, שמעו אשמעו.” This is an indication that tormenting widows and orphans will cause twice the normal punishment. Every insult not only inflicts humiliation, but it also reminds them of their earlier loss and that there is no one to come to their defense. The orphan will think, “Perhaps if I had a father, I would never have been treated like this.” The widow thinks, “This would not be happening to me if my husband was still alive.” Therefore, *Hashem* hears the double level of pain and torment and He responds with an appropriate punishment.

R’ Chaim Soloveitchik *zt”l* would visit the widows of his city. Although his usual humility caused him to refer to himself as Chaim Soloveitchik, however, before visiting a widow, he , he would send his attendant ahead to tell her that Harav Chaim Soloveitchik, the *Rosh Yeshivah* and head of the *Beis Din* in Brisk, was coming to visit. He felt that to make a widow feel important it was well worth it to forgo his usual modesty and use his full title.

DRUSH V’CHIDDUSH

יאמרו כל אשר דבר ה' נקשה ונשמע ... (כד-ז)

The famous *Medrash* tells us that before the Jewish people accepted the *Torah*, *Hashem* offered it to the other nations one by one and they rejected it. Esav didn’t want it because it prohibited murder and they “*live by the sword.*” He offered it to Yishmael. They asked Hashem what was in it. “*Don’t commit adultery.*” So Yishmael also turned it down; it wasn’t congruent with their lifestyle. Finally, *Hashem* offered the *Torah* to *Bnei Yisroel* and they said, “*Na’aseh V’Nishma*” - “*We will do and we will hear.*”

This *Medrash* is problematic. All those nations who rejected the *Torah* now have laws against murder, adultery and many other of the *Torah’s* societal laws. If those very nations incorporated these statutes into their legal systems, why was the *Torah* so difficult for them to accept? Seemingly, the *Torah* required no more of them than that to

which they subsequently committed themselves!

R’ Yaakov Yitzchok Ruderman *zt”l* (Sichos Levi) provides a deep and beautiful response. His answer is based on the *Gemara (Bava Metzia 58b)* that teaches us that when we embarrass someone it is as though we have killed him. This is evidenced by the blood draining from his face, which is akin to blood draining from his body, his very lifeblood. The *Talmud* also tells us that staring at a woman with lustful intent is in itself an act of gross indecency.

What this teaches us is that beneath the surface of each commandment, there is a subtlety and depth that demands a great deal of a person. For the *Torah* is not just a dry legal system - it’s the handbook of holiness in this world. It is a way of life. We don’t just do a *mitzvah* - we live that *mitzvah* and all that comes with. That is what the nations couldn’t accept. When they realized that the *Torah* connoted infinitely more than its surface appearance, they all turned it down.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE MIDDAH OF התפוקת

דרגה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO

אם כסף תלוה את עמי את העני עמך ... (כב-כד)

We are all well aware of the tremendous merit of helping others in need. *Tzedakah* is one of the three things that the world stands upon, it can nullify an evil decree and can literally save a person from death. The **Cheishev Sofer** gives us a rather unusual twist to these words. “אם כסף תלוה את עמי” - “*If you LEND money to a Jew,*” - “*let the poor person be with YOU!*” This means that even if you are wealthy and have a lot of money to give to others, don’t flaunt it. Act like a poor person - be satisfied with little! Don’t waste your money on indulging in materialism. *Hashem* gave you wealth to help the poor.

He also interprets the *mishna* in *Pirkei Avos* (1-5) in a similar fashion: “*Your home should be opened wide (for guests) but let the members of your home be like the poor.*” Don’t let your family members get carried away with wealth! Your home should be “opened wide” for *hachnassas orchim*, not “opened wide” with constant renovations, extensions and refurbishments!

This is a great lesson for our generation of great abundance! Everyone today is rich! Even if you barely make it to the end of the month, your closets are full and your pantries have food. B”H, we are all very wealthy. But we must be careful not to fall into the trap of the *yetzer hara* who is trying to distract us from *Torah* and *mitzvos* by keeping us busy with our materialism, which can literally take over our entire lives! I personally know of a tremendous *baal tzedakah* who lives in the same simple home for the past 50 years, and will only buy himself irregular shirts that are on sale! He needs nothing for himself, he just gives and gives and gives. He lives to give! The truth is that the only things you really have are what you give away to others!

May we be *zoche* to pass the test of wealth by using what we are given to help others. May we be satisfied with little, like a poor and simple man, and make sure to bring *nachas* to *Hashem* by utilizing the gifts He gives us for the purpose it was given.