

מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WAS PRINTED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES, ON APRIL 8, 1897: Orthodox Hebrews in every part of the world celebrated yesterday what is familiarly known among them as the “new sun.” The festival comes once every twenty-eight years, on the fourth day of the first week of the Hebrew month Nisan, corresponding practically to the month of April. The celebration in New York was spoiled for some hundreds of people by the interference of two park policemen with a gathering in Tompkins Square, the arrest of Rabbi Wechsler, and the flight of Rabbi Klein.

The ceremony is a very old one. It is required by the Talmud Beraches, although there is no mention of it in the laws of Moses. The ancient rabbis calculated that on the night before the fourth day of the month Nisan of every twenty-eighth year, the sun is in precisely the position in which it was placed at the moment of creation. In honor of this, it is ordained that on the morning of that day, Hebrews assemble in open places where they can see the sun and repeat the blessing, “*God has again placed the Universe as He placed it at the creation,*” that being a free translation of the Hebrew words used.

Rabbi Wechsler and Rabbi Klein, who are the heads of the large east side congregations, decided to call their people to meet in Tompkins Square. Nobody was in charge of the services, and nobody thought of obtaining a permit, for holding a public meeting, as required by city ordinance. The Hebrews gathered by the hundreds. The Talmud says that if the sun is shining, the services for the new sun must be concluded by 9:00 o’clock in the morning, while if the sun is invisible, it must be waited for until noon. By 8 o’clock the square and the sidewalks around it were crowded.

R’ Wechsler arrived about that time, and was astonished to see R’ Klein running away at full speed. This last phenomenon was explained a moment later by the appearance of Park Policeman Foley, puzzled and excited. The celebration is rather a complicated matter to explain to anybody. Rabbi Klein’s knowledge of English is slight, while Foley’s faculties of comprehension of matters outside of police and park regulations and local events are not acute. The attempt of a foreign citizen to explain to an American Irishman an astronomical situation and a tradition of the Talmud was a dismal failure.

Both became excited, and the people who clustered around them increased the confusion. When Foley was told in broken English about a new sun, he was doubtful whether it was an attempt to guy him, or whether some new infection of lunacy had broken out on the east side. His demonstrations became so threatening that Rabbi Klein understood that he was in danger of being arrested and clubbed, and chose the easiest and fastest plan of escape.

Rabbi Wechsler’s English is better than Rabbi Klein’s, but he could not convey the significance and purpose of the assemblage to Foley. The one fact which that official’s perceptions grasped was that there was no permit. After some parley, he seized the rabbi by the neck and took him to the Essex Market Police Court. After being kept among the prisoners in the police court for nearly an hour, the rabbi was arraigned before Magistrate Cornell, who dismissed him because he had evidently not intended to do wrong, admonishing him however, not to make trouble for Foley.

The people who were left in the square conducted their simple service without a rabbi. Similar services were held in other parts of the city. One or two east side congregations gathered on the East River water front and were not disturbed.

Rabbi Wechsler was good natured in his comments on the affair when seen by a reporter for the New York Times last night. He said he felt no resentment against the policeman, who probably knew no better. The course of Magistrate Cornell, however, he thought, would tend to encourage similar violence in the future.

Records of the synagogues show that the “new sun” service has been conducted by orthodox Hebrews in this country at intervals of twenty-eight years for 180 years. According to the Talmudic calculations, the sun was 5,624 years old yesterday.

משל' למה הדבר דומה

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משל': Among his many other responsibilities, the *gabbai* of the **Rebbe Maharash, R’ Shmuel Schneerson ZT”L of Lubavitch**, was constantly running to and from the *Rebbe*’s inner room, bringing numerous pairs of fresh, clean clothing throughout the course of the day. It seems, R’ Shmuel would perspire heavily while speaking to his many petitioners during the day, and it was necessary for him to change his clothing quite often.

The Maharash explained his unusual practice as follows: “In one hour alone, I may see 25 different people

in private who come to me for advice. But before I can help them, I need to feel their pain on a personal level. In order to do that, I need to shed my mortal body and encase myself in the petitioner’s body. Then, when I can truly feel the pain in his heart, I now must return to my original body in order to properly advise him on how to ease his pain.

“I do this for each and every person that comes to me. So think about it: If I have to change my inner ‘clothing’ fifty times an hour, don’t you think I would sweat enough to have to change my outer clothing quite a few times as well?”

צו את אהרן ואת בניו לאמר זאת תורת העולה
היא העולה על מוקדה על המזבח וכו' (ו-ג)

The words of Rashi ring out loud and clear: “*The word 'צו' - ‘command’ is only employed (in the context of) urging on for the immediate and for future generations. Rabi Shimon said, ‘The posuk required an extra statement of urging in a place (situation) involving monetary loss.’*”

Rashi quotes the *Toras Kohanim* here, yet the Ramban seems to disagree with this statement since in his opinion, there is no real monetary loss involved. Every *korbon* (sacrifice) that a *kohen* is entitled to is his personal gain but offering a sacrifice that is fully burnt on the altar, rather than eaten by the *kohen*, cannot be construed as a “loss.”

R’ Boruch Mordechai Ezrachi Shlit’a reconciles these words in a fascinating manner, based on the *Yerushalmi* (וימא לה): “*The first Temple was destroyed due to the three terrible sins whereas the second, we know that the people were involved in Torah study, doing mitzvos, giving maaser and every good deed. However, they loved money and resented one another with baseless hatred, and such hatred is equal to the three terrible sins...*” It is clear that a person who loves money will soon feel baseless hatred for another because when one chases monetary goals all his life and is focused on this sole pursuit, the only thing that gets in his way is another person pursuing that very same monetary goal. And should that other person achieve this goal before he himself can, this engenders a hatred - based on his own self-perceived desire and non-existent need - that festers within him until he literally despises the other person.

Thus, Rashi is giving us a warning which is to be heeded and recognized for all future generations: When issues involving monetary loss - even the slightest perception or minute lack of profit - are being considered, extra vigilance and urging is required to avoid any trace of sin and iniquity.

EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS
ON THE WEEKLY MIDDAH OF ...
חירות

As we scrub, scour, dust, wash, cook, clean, shop, and eventually usher in the *Yom Tov* of *Pesach*, do we ever stop and wonder why this time is called “זמן חירותנו”? It is sure to befuddle the mind of an overworked and undermanned housewife!

Well, the answer to that leads us to this question: What is *חירות* - *Freedom*? Is true freedom escaping our responsibilities and obligations and just chilling out? Of course not! Freedom is the ability to do what we want to do. We all really want to reach our potentials in *Torah* and *Avodah* and its our *yetzer hara* that gets in the way. By listening to it we are not at all free, we are actually trapped in its clutches and swayed by its strategies not to do what we know we should, and really want to do! By utilizing every opportunity to do a *mitzvah* we are truly free because we are doing what we innately WANT to do.

Chazal state: “*A mitzvah that comes your way - don’t let it become chametz.*” Don’t let it be transformed into something bad. The *goyim* don’t have the *Torah* and don’t have the *mitzvos*. When they celebrate a holiday, they drink at least one, two, three, four cups (or bottles) of wine and wind up laying in the dirt or involved in a criminal act. When *Yidden* celebrate a holiday like *Pesach*, they drink one, two, three, four cups of wine. With the first cup they make *Kiddush* and sanctify *Hashem*’s name. With the second they tell over the story of *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and all of *Hashem*’s miracles. With the third cup of wine they *bentch* and thank *Hashem* for their food and with the fourth they say *Hallel* and give thanks to their Creator.

Let’s not get so caught up in the servitude (*avdus*) of *Pesach* but rather let us rejoice in the fact that we are truly free!

TORAH GEMS

ויאמר משה אל העדה זה הדבר
אשר צוה ה' לעשות וגו' (ה-ו)

The unmistakable humility of *Moshe Rabbeinu* is once again displayed in its full glory. When *Hashem* commanded Moshe to take his brother Aharon, and his nephews the *kohanim*, and prepare them for their role as the anointed ones who will perform the services in the *Mishkan*, Moshe declared to the entire congregation, “*This is the thing that Hashem has commanded me.*” Rashi elaborates on his words: “*The things that you will see me do before you were commanded by Hashem; do not say I did it for my honor or for my brother’s honor.*”

The two holy brothers, **R’ Elimelech of Lizhensk ZT”L** and **R’ Zusia of Anipoli ZT”L**, maintained a low profile in their early years and traveled around from place to place incognito, so as not be accorded honor by the villagers. Eventually, R’ Elimelech was revealed as a *tzaddik* and hundreds of *chassidim* flocked to him to learn from his wellspring of *Torah* and *chassidus*, and to bask in his otherworldly glow of spiritual elevation.

Far from being upset or even jealous of his righteous brother, R’ Zusia went out of his way to tend to his brother’s needs and serve him as a *shamash*. R’ Elimelech was alarmed and tried to stop him but R’ Zusia countered with a convincing argument: “My holy brother, we find that even *Moshe Rabbeinu* served his brother Aharon and the *kohanim* in the *Mishkan*. He washed them, hand and foot, and dressed them in the priestly garments.” R’ Zusia smiled coyly. “And even if you’ll say Moshe was the king and a king may not renounce his honor (אין כבודו מחול), yet we still find that he served his brother like I serve you!”

R’ Elimelech’s face shone with holiness. “True, true. But Moshe had a specific commandment from *Hashem* to serve his brother - you have no such commandment!”

דרכה יתירה

FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF
R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHLOMO