



THE שבוע MATTERS

שבת קודש פרשת תזריע-מצורע | מסכת יבמות דף מ"ח

לע"נ ברוך בענדיט וברכה גרוס ע"ה
by Mr. & Mrs. Duvy Gross

לע"נ שרה בת יעקב

INSIGHTS FROM OUR CHABUROS

Trusting in Hashem

אמר ר' אבהו ואתימא ר' חנינא מאי קראה? ישלם ה' פעלך ותהי משכרתך שלמה מעם ה' אלקי ישראל אשר באת לחסות תחת כנפיו

Boaz complimented Rus for her eager interest in becoming a convert. In the verse (Rus 2:12), Boaz uses the word לחסות—to seek shelter in describing Rus entry to the wings of the Shechina. In Hebrew, there are two different words that are used to describe one who trusts or has confidence. These are בוטח and חוסה. בוטח is the term used when a promise has been made, and the person to whom the promise was made trusts that the commitment will be fulfilled. On the other hand, a חוסה is someone who has confidence in something although it has not been promised to him because he knows that the provider has the ability to grant his needs. As the verse in Tehillim states (118:6) טוב לחסות 'בה' - it is better to have confidence in Hashem" - even when He has not explicitly promised—מבטוח באדם—thank it is to trust in man" - even if he promises.

The Jewish people have been blessed with many promises and assurances which guarantee our survival. We are accordingly referred to as בוטחים as we trust in these prophecies and their certain fulfillment. As a convert comes to join our ranks as a member of the Jewish nation, he is not coming to be the recipient of any specific reward which was promised to him. Yet as he willfully enters into a life of Torah, he is volunteering to be protected by the divine promises which were issued to us, the Jews. This is why Boaz declared that Rus was especially deserving of blessing, as he proclaimed, "May Hashem repay that which you have earned...in that you have come to develop confidence under the wing of Hashem."

STORIES OFF THE DAF

גר שנתגייר קקטן שנולד דמי The Newborn Baby

Chaim had come late to shul once again and was feeling discouraged. The minyan near his house was very early and he didn't have a car. After the davening, he decided to speak his heart out to a young married man who was learning with a very inspiring melody. Somehow he felt that the man would understand.

"Here I am late again!" Chaim sighed. "I feel so broken. Maybe you have some encouragement to share?"

The young man said, "In Yevamos 48b we see that a convert is like a newborn. The Likutei Halachos learns a very powerfully encouraging lesson from this. A convert has to sincerely want to become a Jew and immerse in the mikveh. A male convert must also become circumcised. After going through these processes, the convert is like a newborn baby. But have they come to some sort of perfection through this process? Does immersion or circumcision automatically erase their character defects? Not by a long shot! Even so, the fact that they have acted on a genuine desire to become Jewish is transformative. Although this desire alone is not enough, one who doesn't have it is not accepted as a convert. We must be assured of the purity of his intentions. From this we can learn the preciousness of one who keeps trying to be a good Jew and do the right thing even if he sometimes fails. Surely he is much more of a newborn than a convert since he has continued to yearn to move forward many hundreds of times!

The young man continued, "We can also learn this from teshuvah. Even if one regrets his sins and wishes to improve on the last day of his life, his repentance is accepted. How much more precious is one who does teshuvah many hundreds of times! And one who repents every day is even more laudable. The main thing is to keep yearning to be better until we merit the help from Above that we need."

PARSHA CONNECTION

In this week's daf we learn about the יפת תואר the non-Jewish woman captured by a Jew during wartime. The Torah mandates that she should shave her hair and "do" her nails. Although the passuk doesn't give a reason for why her head is shaved there is a very interesting explanation offered by the חזקוני. פרשת כי תצא in חזקוני compares the יפת תואר to a מצורע who likewise has to shave all of his hair before during the טהרה process. How do we understand these seemingly unrelated situations? The commentaries explain that hair and nails represent things which are "extra" to the person, inasmuch as neither are vital for a person's survival. By demanding that they be removed we direct the person to focus on what is reality important in life. It is therefore appropriate when one is transitioning from טומאה to טהרה, to eliminate the unnecessary parts of their life and concentrate on the core values. (See הקדש פרשת מצורע).

MUSSAR FROM THE DAF

Act Now

אחרים אומרים מפני ששהו עצמם להכנס תחת כנפי השכינה

The Gemara states one reason that Geirim suffer in this world is because they delayed coming under Kanfei Hashecina.

This seems odd. How can a Ger be punished for not converting earlier if there is not a specific Mitzvah for a Ger to convert?

Rav Yitzchak Blazer explains that we see from here a very important limud regarding the Mitzvah of Teshuva. If a Ger can be punished for delaying his conversion even though he is not obligated to convert how much more is there a responsibility on us to do Teshuva right away as we have a constant chiyuv to do Teshuva.

Many people have a strong desire to change yet there is also a very strong voice in people to push off ideas of growth and change. We must learn the lesson from the Ger that we have a responsibility to change right away and not allow ourselves to delay.

POINT TO PONDER

The Gemara says the opinion of ר"ש בן אלעזר who says that one can marry a יפת תואר immediately after טבילה. Since she is not Jewish, shouldn't he need to wait 3 months prior to marrying her for הבחנה?

Response to last week's Point to Ponder:

The Gemara says that if a non Jew comes to convert we must tell him about various Mitzvos including lenient ones (קלות). It's easy to understand how difficult Mitzvos may discourage a potential convert, but why tell him about the easy ones?

We tell a non-Jew about lenient Mitzvos, because we want him to see the scope of the commitment. Non Jews are used to having very few religious constraints and need to understand all of the detailed Mitzvos, affecting every aspect of life.

REVIEW AND REMEMBER

1. What is the source that a document of freedom is unnecessary to free a slave according to Shmuel?
2. What is done to the hair of the יפת תואר?
3. For how long is one permitted to retain and uncircumcised slave?
4. What are the four reasons converts suffer?

HALACHA HIGHLIGHT

A Convert Davening for the Well-Being of his Biological Parent

גר שנתגייר כקטן שנולד דמי

A Person Who Converts is Like a Newborn Child

A common question asked by converts is whether it is permitted and even appropriate to daven for their biological parents who are ill. Rav Ovadiah Yosef¹ writes that at first glance it would seem that it is prohibited based on the ruling in Shulchan Aruch² that prohibits administering medical treatment to idolaters unless it is a circumstance where refraining from assisting will generate animosity. After examining the opinions of different Poskim concerning which religions are considered idolatry, Rav Yosef writes that it is logical that the restriction of this halacha is limited to actual treatment but does not restrict a Jew from davening for the well-being of an idolater since ultimately Hashem will do what He sees fit. Therefore, it is permitted and even appropriate if the non-Jew asked that a Jew should daven on his behalf since it shows recognition of the power of Hashem. He then proceeds to cite several instances in which Poskim permitted davening for the health of a non-Jew. Therefore, it seems that not only is it permitted for a convert to daven for the health of his biological parent but it may even be an obligation as an expression of appreciation for the person who brought the convert into this world.

Rav Yosef challenges his assertion from our Gemara that states that a person who converts is considered like a new-born, totally detached from his biological family. Accordingly, a convert does not Biblically inherit his biological father's estate upon the death of his father³. Nevertheless, in some instances we do find that the convert retains a connection with his biological parents. One example is that someone who converts who had children before his conversion is credited with the mitzvah of פרו ורבו if the children also convert⁴. Another example is that converts are not permitted to curse their biological parents⁵. In conclusion, not only is it permitted for a convert to daven for the health of his biological parents but it may even constitute a mitzvah since it was through the action of the biological parents that the convert was born and eventually had the opportunity to convert and enter into the covenant and earn eternal life.

1. שו"ת יחווה דעת ח"ו סי' ס'
2. שו"ע יו"ד סי' קנ"ח סעי' א'
3. ע' גמ' קידושין יז
4. שו"ע אה"ע סי' א' סעי' ד'
5. שו"ע יו"ד סי' רמ"א סעי' ד'

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