



# THE SHABUOT MATTERS

שבת קודש פרשת בראשית | מסכת יבמות דף ע"ב

## INSIGHTS FROM OUR CHABUROS

### Nobody did Milah in the Desert

משום שלה נשבה להו רוח צפונית

**T**he Gemara explains that when the Jewish people were in the desert for forty years they were unable to perform the mitzvah of milah. The reason that they could not perform this mitzvah was that it would have been dangerous for the baby, either due to the weakness they all experienced due to the constant travel, or due to the lack of the northern wind and its healing powers, which did not blow during the day during those years.

Tosafos (ד"ה לא נשבה) explains that we cannot say that the northerly wind did not blow at all during the forty years the Jews were in the desert, because the Gemara in Gittin (31b) reports that winds from all directions blow each day, including the wind of the north, for otherwise the world would not be able to exist. Rather, when our Gemara says that the northerly wind did not blow, it means that it never blew by itself. Its full medicinal or meteorological benefits were therefore lacking. It did, however, blow together with the other winds.

Our Gemara provides two reasons why milah could not be done in the desert during the forty years the Jews were moving through. One is that they were weak due to travel. The other reason is that the northerly wind did not blow so as not to dispel the Clouds of Glory. Panim Yafos explains why the Gemara uses two different reasons. The tribe of Dan was situated in the north of the camp, and they actually traveled outside the back of the cloud enclosure. Therefore, they did experience the northerly wind, as for them there was no problem of the effect the wind would have on the cloud. However, the reason for being weary due to the travel is given to explain why the tribe of Dan did not do milah. The other tribes traveled inside the cloud enclosure, which enveloped the people completely, as it lifted and transported the nation miraculously. For these people, becoming weary was not an issue, but the lack of the northerly wind was an issue that prevented their doing milah.

## PARSHA CONNECTION

**In this week's** daf we learn about someone who is נולד מהול (born circumcised). The Midrash tells us that this phenomenon occurred a few times in history. In fact both אדם הראשון and his son שת, were born circumcised. (See מדרש תנחומא פרשת נח for a list of 7 people). In explaining the מצוה of אור החיים (ברית מילה ויקרא) the (פרק יב פסוק ג), offers a fascinating insight based on this phenomena of נולד מהול. If ערלה is a natural part of the person, how do we understand the fact that משה רבינו was born circumcised, yet his son was not. (The same can be asked about אדם הראשון). From this question, the אור החיים proves that ערלה represents a spiritual separation that needs to be overcome to reach completeness. He further explains that אדם הראשון who was created by הקב"ה as a perfect human being didn't have an ערלה, but developed one after the חטא of eating from the דעת.

## STORIES OFF THE DAF

### Children Who Have Been Saved From the Gentiles

הלא הרבה מלו בימי בן כחיבא... [רש"י שם: שמשכום ער"כ באונס... וחזרו ומלו בימין]

**O**n this week's daf we find that even in the case of a mashuch, where milah is likely to be dangerous, Chazal decreed that it be performed. It is forbidden for a Jewish child to appear like a gentile!

After Lithuania's liberation from the hands of the Nazis, Rav Ephraim Oshry, z"tl, traveled throughout the towns and villages to seek out Jewish children. Because of the danger, many parents did not circumcise their children in the ghettos; they also hoped that leaving them uncircumcised would make it easier to hide them with local non-Jews. In his book of teshuvos written after the war, Rav Oshry relates that among the children was one three-year old boy who had not yet been circumcised. With great difficulty, he found a mohel who came from the Vilna district to circumcise sixteen such boys. Upon examination, the mohel found that the child appeared jaundiced; in his opinion, it was forbidden to circumcise the boy. A doctor was brought in, and he disagreed—according to him, the child was not jaundiced enough to warrant concern. Rav Oshry had to decide—in such a case, could they rely on the doctor over the opinion of the mohel? The bris could not be postponed because the mohel had to leave the country and there were no others available.

After further medical consultations that upheld the first doctor's opinion, Rav Oshry was inclined to permit the milah on the basis of the Rambam. Because the Shulchan Aruch rules differently, however, the Rav hesitated. He wrote, "I feared risking even the slightest chance of danger to the child, for he was the only remaining survivor of his entire family. If, God forbid, something should happen to the child we would be causing an entire family to disappear from the Jewish people. I therefore begged the mohel to postpone his departure. The mohel agreed and the occasion proved to be the opportunity for a beautiful celebration. One mitzvah led to another. The story had spread all over Kovno. A doctor [there] confided to me that he had a three-month old son whom he strongly desired to have circumcised but hadn't because Lithuania was then governed by the communists and this might have harmed the father. Our joy was truly doubled by having two circumcisions take place that same day!"

# MUSSAR FROM THE DAF

Teshuva: A Golden Opportunity

מאי טעמא איבעית אימא משום דנזופים הוו

The Gemora explains that Hashem didn't allow the northern wind to blow during the 40 years that Klal Yisroel were in the Midbar and therefore Klal Yisroel were not able to perform the Mitzvah of Bris Milah (as it would be dangerous to do the Bris without the Northern Winds). Why didn't Hashem allow the northern wind to blow? One of the reasons given by the Gemara is that Hashem was censuring Klal Yisroel. There is a dispute among the Rishonim concerning the reason for this censure. According to Rashi, it was because of the golden calf. According to Tosafos, the golden calf could not have been the cause for the censure since we know that Hashem forgave Klal Yisroel for the golden calf. Tosafos instead learns that the censure was because of the sin of the spies. What is the machlokes between Rashi and Tosafos? How can Rashi say that Hashem was censuring Klal Yisroel for 40 years on an avera that he had already forgiven them for? There are two primary reasons one gives תוכחה. First, one gives תוכחה so that the other will change their actions. The second reason one may give תוכחה is meant to elicit an apology and then to repair and rebuild the relationship. (See Ramban Vayikra, 18). Perhaps Rashi was learning that the censure which Hashem gave Klal Yisroel was the first type of תוכחה. Even though Hashem had fully forgiven Klal Yisroel, Hashem was still "nudging" them to change their ways (as we know that Moshe "negotiated" the forgiveness for the golden calf, not Klal Yisroel). While Tosafos was learning that the censure which Hashem gave to Klal Yisroel was the second type of תוכחה. Tosafos is focusing on the תוכחה which is meant to elicit an apology and then to repair a relationship -- and if one apologizes -- then that repairs the relationship. Hashem wants them to at least do a minimum level of teshuva (vidua/charata, etc) so that a Selicha can occur. Hashem did this in order for Klal Yisroel to admit they were wrong for the Aveirah of the מרגלים and commit to not act that way again. Only then, would Hashem forgive them for the actions of the מרגלים.

We have to always be on the lookout as to what messages Hashem is sending us. We should be ready to respond to challenging circumstance by asking ourselves what can we do to repair our relationship with Hashem.

## POINT TO PONDER

The Gemara says that בני ישראל didn't perform a ברית during the 40 years in the desert because there was no Northern wind, and therefore could not bring the פסח. קרבן פסח. The גמרא offers two reasons why there was no רוח צפונית; either because they were admonished for their sins, or because the wind would interfere with the ענני הכבוד. The ספרי says that the fact that בני ישראל only brought one קרבן פסח during the 40 years is a bad reflection on them. If the reason why there was no wind is unrelated to their sins, but due to the ענני הכבוד, why is their not bringing a פסח, קרבן פסח, their fault?

### Response to last week's Point to Ponder:

Why can't imprisoned parents appoint a שליח to do the bris on their behalf the same were they are able to appoint a messenger to perform the קרבן פסח? The מצוה on the father to circumcise his son is personal to the father and can't be conveyed to a שליח. While a father can ask a mohel to circumcise his son, it is not considered as if the father performed the מילה. (It is not שלוחו). (של אדם כמותו). With regards to the קרבן פסח שליח is an inherent part of the מצוה since only one person can perform the שחיטה while the are usually several people who partake of the קרבן. This is why רש"י writes that they can appoint someone to slaughter the פסח on their behalf but could not do the same for the ברית. (See שו"ע חושן משפט סימן שפ"ב ש"ך). (קצות החושן).

# HALACHA HIGHLIGHT

Protecting the Simple

שומר פתאים ה'

Hashem protects the simple

The Gemara declares that although it is dangerous to give a baby a bris on a cloudy day, nevertheless, it is permitted nowadays because Hashem "protects the simple." Ritva<sup>1</sup> writes that one who is concerned about the possible danger has the option to not act "simply" and may delay the bris until the clouds clear. Rav Eliezer Yehudah Waldenberg<sup>2</sup>, the Tzitz Eliezer, cites this comment to support his position in a dispute he has with Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach concerning the parameters of this principle.

Rav Auerbach<sup>3</sup>, writes that the principle "Hashem protects the simple" applies whenever people do not treat a particular behavior or condition as dangerous. This is also the way Rav Auerbach sets up the parameters of פיקוח נפש. Rav Auerbach writes that people's perception of danger is what defines the principle of פיקוח נפש. Consequently, when there is a perception of danger one is even permitted to desecrate Shabbos, even though medically there may not be any danger.

Rav Waldenberg, however, disagrees, and poses the following challenges to Rav Auerbach. Nowadays, doctors do not perceive metzitzta as a medical necessity; does that mean that it is no longer required? Another example relates to Chazal's assertion that a woman up until three days postpartum is considered to be dangerously ill. If people no longer consider a postpartum woman dangerously ill does that mean that it is not permitted to desecrate Shabbos on her behalf?

Therefore, Rav Waldenberg, writes that we only apply the principle that "Hashem protects the simple" in those cases identified by Chazal. This is consistent with the opinion of Terumas Hadeshen<sup>4</sup> who writes that it is difficult to be lenient concerning something dangerous based on the principle of "Hashem protects the simple." Furthermore, concludes Rav Waldenberg, even when Chazal declare that the principle of "Hashem protects the simple" is applied, Ritva maintains that one could be cautious. Therefore, one should certainly be very cautious before further applying this principle to new circumstances.

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