



שבת קודש פרשת נשא | מסכת נדרים דף לב'

INSIGHTS FROM
OUR CHABUROSAvraham recognized Hashem at
age three

בן ג' שנים הכיר אברהם את בוראו

Our Gemara lauds the remarkable achievement of Avraham Avinu in that he recognized the Creator of the world at the age of three. In certain regards, this is not such an outstanding thing. As the Chovos Halevavos explains, realizing that the world has a master creator and is directed and supervised by an all-mighty God is an obvious conclusion. It is, perhaps, impressive that a young boy would think seriously about this, but the conclusion of Avraham Avinu was foregone. The Gemara is, however, praising Avraham for taking this information and understanding that this belief in Hashem carries with it consequences. The fact that Hashem created the world means something to us. We are obligated to respond by fulfilling our role and by striving to serve Hashem. Not only did Avraham Avinu realize that the world has a creator, but he also recognized that it was important to mankind.

At the moment of the parting of the waters of Yam Suf, the verse testifies (Shemos 15:15): "Then the chieftains of Edom were confounded." We see that they were gripped with fear and they trembled. This condition of fright did not dissipate, and it remained intact and affected the residents of Canaan until forty years later as the Jews completed their travels in the desert. When the spies sent by Yehoshua arrived in Yericho, Rachav told them (Yehoshua 2:10) that everyone was still filled with dread and terror. How could it be, then, that the residents of Edom threatened to wage war against the Jews if they would attempt to cross their border? (Bamidbar 20:18) What happened to the fear they had of the Jews? The people of Edom, and its leaders in particular, were shaken and disturbed when they heard about the parting of the waters of the Yam Suf, yet they did not internalize this information. It remained as a mere historic fact, and its significance was trivialized. When the Jews approached at this point, thirty-eight years later, the princes of Edom foolishly ignored what had happened earlier, and they amassed their army to repel the Jews. The Jews did turn away, but it was due to the command of the Torah that we not battle against Edom. The reason the Torah relates this incident, with its various details, is precisely to teach us this lesson. Certainly, the world has its share of evil people whose actions are wicked and harmful. The details of the shortcomings of Edom are of no special interest to us in and of themselves. What we should learn from this incident is that as we develop our belief in Hashem, we must internalize it and act upon it. It should not remain an impersonal fact of fascination, but rather a very meaningful and personal message which makes an impact upon our lives.

PARSHA CONNECTION

In this week's daf the Gemara discusses how הקב"ה was going to give the כהונה שם but since he didn't mention הקב"ה first he lost the כהונה and it was given to אהרן and his children. In this week's פרשה we find ברכת כהנים, whereby the כהנים are commanded to bentch ישראל כלל. The Possuk (במדבר פרק ו' פסוק כג) says: דבר אלי אהרן ואלי בניו לאמר כה תברכו את בני ישראל אמור:

להם. This is how you should bless בני ישראל. The next Possuk (כד) starts with the actual bracha וישמרך. Hashem should bless you and guard you. While the first פסוק is written in the plural addressed to the entire בני ישראל when it comes to the actual ברכות they are all in the singular ("Hashem should bless you"). Why does the תורה change from plural to singular. The אלשיך ספר שמות offers a beautiful explanation, by introducing a similar phenomenon from פסוק הקדוש.

The Possuk (פרק כג פסוק כה) says: ועבדתם את ה' אלקיכם וברך את לחמך ואת ימימך והסרתי מחלה (פרק כג פסוק כה). Here too the פסוק starts in the plural and ends in the singular. The answer to both are very similar, in the ספר שמות פסוק we have a promise of a reward for serving הקב"ה. Since everyone has different levels of עבודה including how much effort it takes from them, each individual will be rewarded according to their individual efforts. Similarly, everyone has individual needs and ברכת כהנים is individually tailored to give every individual the "ברכה" that they need. This is why the תורה switches from the plural of "בני ישראל" to the singular "יברכך".

STORIES
OF THE DAFTalmud
Torah &
Chinuch

דאמר ר' אליעזר גדולה תורה

On today's daf we see the greatness of Torah study. However, it is important to understand that spending time with one's children is not considered bitul Torah. A certain man came to his Rav to discuss his son. The man said that he just did not have a close relationship to the boy and it worried him. After some probing, it emerged that the father sat at the Shabbos table with his nose buried in a sefer. Despite having an ideal opportunity to build a close relationship with his son, the father was more interested in his learning. Needless to say, this was one of the prime reasons for the distance between them. The Rav suggested that the man spend more time with his son and take him out to the zoo or on some other trip.

The father duly followed the Rav's instructions. Some time later, the man came back to the Rav and said that although he had taken the boy on outings, it had not helped one whit. The Rav asked, "Where did you go and what did you do while you were out together?" The father said, "We went to the zoo." The Rav asked, "Didn't your son enjoy the trip?" The father answered, "I believe so." The Rav was confused, "What do you mean, 'You believe so.' Weren't you with him?" The father admitted, "Of course I was with him...but naturally I brought along a sefer." While the father spent the time learning, his son looked at the animals!

HALACHA HIGHLIGHT

Reciting יהי רצון or "Ichaim" before or after the beracha

בין שהקדים ברכת אברהם לברכת המקום וכו'

Since he put the beracha for Avrohom before the beracha for Hashem

Poskim debate what is the correct procedure for eating the simanim on Rosh Hashanah. Is the correct practice to recite the beracha on the food, followed by the יהי רצון and the eating or should one make the יהי רצון, recite the beracha and then eat the food? Magen Avrohom¹ writes that the language of Shulchan Aruch indicates that one should make the beracha on the food, eat some of the food and then recite the יהי רצון. This is in contrast with the opinions who maintain that one is permitted to recite the יהי רצון between the beracha and the eating. They maintain that the יהי רצון is not an interruption since it is considered a need for the eating. Precedent for this idea is found in Bach² who maintains that one is permitted to recite the declaration 'זה חליפתי וכו' of kapparos between the beracha on shechita and the actual slaughtering of the animal since it is considered a necessity for the procedure. Magen Avrohom, however, asserts that although בדיעבד the יהי רצון is not an interruption, l'chatchila one should not intend to interrupt between the beracha and the eating and thus the יהי רצון should be recited after eating some of the food.

In a related matter, Pri Megadim³ records two opinions concerning the proper time to recite "Ichaim." According to one opinion one should make the beracha, drink some wine and then say "Ichaim" whereas other opinions maintain that one should recite "Ichaim" before even reciting the beracha because giving honor to one's fellow man is a priority (גדול כבוד הבריות). Knesses Hagedolah⁴ also mentions that he saw others who would make the beracha and drink before blessing the other people at the table and explained that he followed that order because it is appropriate to give honor to Hashem before giving honor to others. Proof to this position is found in our Gemara where we are taught that Shem was punished for blessing Avrohom Avinu before blessing Hashem. Knesses Hagedolah disagrees with that perspective since we find many examples when sensitivity to the honor of others takes priority לא תעשה (גדול כבוד הבריות שדוחה לא תעשה). Notwithstanding his challenge to the alternative approach, he concludes that when he remembers he follows the other practice to make the beracha and drink before blessing others.

1. מג"א סי' תקפ"ב

2. ב"ח סי' תר"ה

3. פמ"ג מ"ז סי' קע"ד סק"א ומובא בפסקי תשובות שם אות ט"ו

4. שיירי כסת הגדולה שם הגה"ט סק"ב

MUSSAR FROM THE DAF

A schedule of values

אלא מפני מה נענש משה מפני שנתעסק במלון תחלה, שנאמר "ויהי בדרך במלון".

The Gemara tells us that Moshe Rabbeinu was punished because he first occupied himself with arranging his lodgings before giving his son a bris milah. This seems puzzling, why was the punishment so severe (the malachim came to swallow him)? After all, a bris milah may be performed at any point during the day. While there is certainly a virtue in performing mitzvos with zerizus (alacrity), it still doesn't seem to justify such a harsh response.

Let's consider another incident in Chumash. What was wrong with Noach leaving the Teivah and planting a vineyard? Rav Shlomo Wolbe (Chelek 2 Alei Shur, Vaadim on Seder) explains that Noach's mistake lay in the fact that this was the first thing he did upon exiting the Teivah. That initial act, planting a vineyard, made him chullin, spiritually diminished or desecrated. He should have begun with something more elevated. His downfall was set in motion by that misplaced first step. The order in which we act reflects what we truly value.

This idea is embedded in halacha: we are instructed not to take care of our physical needs such as eating before davening. By tending to our own well-being before declaring malchus Shamayim Hashem's sovereignty we imply that His dominion is a secondary concern. There is a seder, a sacred order to life, and how we arrange our actions reveals our priorities. It symbolizes who we are.

That, perhaps, is the deeper message in the Gemara. Moshe's mistake wasn't merely a matter of delay, it was a matter of seder, order. By placing his lodgings before the mitzvah of milah, he demonstrated a lapse in priorities, and that misstep warranted a strong response.

The message is powerful: each day, the way we structure our schedule and what we choose to do first broadcasts to ourselves and to Hashem What we truly value.

POINT TO PONDER

The Gemara says that השטן adds up to 364 indicating that he is in control every day of the year except כיפור. The word שטן is 359, so why is the "ה" counted even though it's not part of his name?

Response to last week's Point to Ponder:

The Gemara says that שובתי שבת can include גוים. Since we know that they are not allowed to keep שבת, how can the Gemara call them שובתי שבת?

We see from the Gemara that it's possible for a גוי to keep שבת (not do מלאכה) and be considered שובתי שבת and at the same time be חייב מיתה (See שלמה).