

Parsha Encounters

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Parshas Metzorah - Rabbi Dovid Rokach

Pleasant Lessons

"When you come to the land of Canaan . . . and I will place tzoras on the houses of the land of your inheritance." (Vayikra 14:34)

Typically, *tzoras* serves as a form of punishment for a person's sins – *i.e. lashon hora*. In connection with this *pasuk*, however, *Rashi* explains that *Hashem* promised to place *tzoras* upon the houses of *Eretz Yisrael* so that the hidden treasures of the *Cannanim* would be revealed when the houses were destroyed. At first glance, the two roles played by *tzoras* appear somewhat inconsistent. Why would *Hashem* employ a tool normally associated with punishment as the means of rewarding *Klal Yisrael* with the treasures of the *Cannanim*?

The *Sforno* (*Vayikra* 13:47) provides more detail on the effect of *tzoras* as a punishment. He explains that sin is often caused when a person allows himself to become distracted from a proper awareness of *Hashem*. *Tzoras*, which is an unnatural phenomenon, serves as a warning signal and reminder for a person to refocus his attention. As the *Mesilas Yesharim* explains, one of the most fundamental hurdles to self-improvement is the complacency imposed by the comfortable routine of everyday life. The unusual and unpleasant punishment of *tzoras* shakes a person out of that complacency.

Rav Avigdor Miller *zt"l* comments that this effect is not limited to punishment. Certainly, when a person endures punishment, he will come to understand that *Hashem* is showing disapproval and expects an improvement. But the basic concept at work is simply that an unusual circumstance forces one to abandon his comfortable routine and ask why *Hashem* has seen fit to depart from the natural course of events. This same effect can be had with an unusual reward, where the routine is once again disrupted in a way that should lead a person to improve in gratitude for *Hashem's* unusual kindness. Rav Miller concludes that a person can, in theory, take the very same lesson from reward as from punishment – if not for the unfortunate tendency of human nature to attribute success to personal accomplishment and turn to *Hashem* only in times of suffering.

It is now apparent that the seemingly inconsistent roles of *tzoras* are in fact two sides of the same coin. Both as a punishment and as a reward, the unusual occurrence of *tzoras* serves as a reminder for a person to focus his

attention and come closer to *Hashem*. The blurring of the line between these two functions is further illustrated by the *Sforno's* comment that *tzoras* no longer occurs in modern times, because we do not deserve to see unnatural phenomenon. Thus, even as a punishment, *tzoras* is much more than a mere form of suffering – it is an opportunity to be taught a lesson by observing *Hashem's* departure from the course of nature.

This idea may also be used to better understand a *pasuk* in *Parshas Ki Savo*, which states that the punishment of the *tochecha* will come:

"Because you did not serve Hashem with joy and a good heart, when you had an abundance of everything." (Devarim 28:47)

Why the emphasis on lack of joy and *Klal Yisrael's* previous prosperity as reasons for the *tochecha*? The *Ohr Ha'Chaim* (*Vayikra* 26:21) explains that the punishments of the *tochecha* are needed to negate an attitude of *keri* – that life simply follows a natural course and particular occurrences need not serve as a lesson. This misconception is shattered by the terrible severity of the *tochecha*, which cannot be attributed to nature. However, as explained earlier, the very same goal could have been achieved by contemplating the unusual prosperity previously enjoyed by *Klal Yisrael*, which was no less of a departure from the natural course of events. The *pasuk* therefore states that it is because the necessary lesson was not learned from the joy of reward, that it must now be taught through the suffering of punishment.

Yechezkel *Hanavi* was instructed:

Tell the house of Yisrael about the Beis Hamikdash and they will become ashamed of their sins. (Yechezkel 43:10)

As discussed above, hearing of the tremendous *bracha* and *kedusha* that *Hashem* has in store provides an impetus to break loose from the humdrum of everyday life and do *teshuva*. May we be *zoche* that our motivation to come closer to *Hashem* be derived from a showing of *Hashem's* extraordinary kindness to *Klal Yisrael*, and in particular, the *geulah shlaima* and rebuilding of the *Bais Hamikdash*.

Rabbi Rokach learns night seder at the Kollel.

THIS ISSUE OF PARSHA ENCOUNTERS IS DEDICATED
ANONYMOUSLY

WISHING EVERY ONE A CHAG KASHER VISHAMEACH!

Halacha Encounters

Shabbos Erev Pesach

A special Halacha Encounters by the Rosh Kollel shlit" a
HaRav Dovid Zucker

With Erev Pesach falling out on Shabbos this year, there are many halachic and practical issues that must be dealt with. We have to be able to have a chametz-free, changed over kitchen for Shabbos, and at the same time try to have three meals on “bread” before 10:08 Shabbos morning – all with our sanity and Oneg Shabbos intact. We will try to present a clear, step by step approach to navigating through this Shabbos in order to make it to the afternoon in a halachically sound and relaxing way.

Bechoros, Bedikah, Biur and Bitul

Bechoros fast this year on Thursday. Bedikas Chametz is performed, as usual, on Thursday night at nightfall. The beracha is said as usual, as is the post-bedikah “kol chamira vichamiya” that we say following the bedikah on a regular year. From that point on, all chametz that one does *not* know about has been made bateil and ownerless. On Friday morning, we do the regular burning of chametz at the same time we would as if it were in fact Erev Pesach. One, at this point, burns any chametz he is aware of that he will *not* be needing still for Shabbos. We do *not* recite then the “kol chamira” that is usually recited after the burning. Only after the final Shabbos morning meal, **before 11:29 am Shabbos morning, will one recite the final “kol chamira vichamiya,”** making bateil and ownerless any and all chametz, whether one is aware of it or not.

Preparing for Shabbos

Before Shabbos, the kitchen should be made 100% ready for Pesach, with all courses and dishes chametz-free, cooked as if they could be eaten on Pesach. By the time Shabbos begins, the house must be completely ready for Pesach – with all the sold or sealed areas and rooms closed off.

However, in order to be able to make Hamotzi at the Shabbos meals (keeping in mind that one may not eat matzoh this entire Shabbos), one should purchase challah rolls¹ for Lechem Mishna for the Shabbos meals. One should plan on having approximately a half a challah roll per person per meal.² These rolls should be carefully sealed in a plastic bag and put somewhere where they will not spill or cause crumbs to fall out.

Timing the Meals

The Shabbos night meal has no time restrictions at all. **On Shabbos morning, however, one must be finished eating all chametz before 10:08 am.** Therefore men daven very early on Shabbos morning. After coming home from shul, the generally accepted practice is to have two bread meals, one after the other. The family should make Kiddush, wash and eat the rolls from the first meal. At that point, many have fish or some of the main Shabbos meal and then bentch. Following the meal, one should take a half hour or so break or one should actually “do something,” for instance, go for a stroll or learn Torah. One may then wash and make Hamotzi again, for Shalosh Seudos, finish the rolls and eat whatever part of their normal Shabbos meal remains. **As long as the rolls are finished by 10:08 and any leftovers fully discarded or flushed by 11:29,** this meal can continue for as long as one wants. **[One must make sure to**

say the final “kol chamira” before 11:29 as well. If one forgot before 11:29, they may still do so until 11:40.] Since the second morning meal may not qualify as Shalosh Seudos according to all opinions, in the afternoon, some time after midday, one should have some meat, fish or fruits as another Shalosh Seudos. One who eats gebroktz on Pesach should preferably have a form of cooked matzoh meal, kneidelach or the like.

Lechem Mishna

The Shabbos meal should begin with the regular Hamotzi made on the Lechem Mishna. Each person partaking of the challah should have an open paper napkin in front of him or her and carefully eat the roll over this napkin, taking care that no crumbs fall onto the table or Pesach utensils. When one finishes the roll, if there are only crumbs left on the napkin, the napkin should be carefully shaken into the toilet and then crumpled up and discarded in the regular garbage. As it may be difficult to make sure that children do not spread chametz around the area, one may prefer not to give children chametz rolls. They may be given egg matzoh instead. Once the napkins and rolls have been removed from the table, the Pesachdik meal can continue normally.

Any actual pieces of roll left after the final meal should be broken into small enough pieces to be flushed down the toilet. One should, preferably, have in mind prior to flushing the chametz down the toilet, that he is being mikayeim the mitzvah of destroying chametz with this act. Preferably, he should have this in mind prior to entering the bathroom.

Eating the Meals

If one uses chametz utensils to eat the meals, complications can arise regarding serving from Pesach utensils onto the chametz utensils. Additionally, one may not wash the chametz utensils on Shabbos – they would have to be put away with the sold chametz as is and wait until after Pesach for cleaning. Therefore, the meals should be eaten using Pesach utensils. If one finds it easier and more relaxing, and therefore more enhancing of their enjoyment of Shabbos, to use paper and plastic, they may do so lichatchila and do not need to be concerned with the apparent lack of kavod to Shabbos that this portrays.³

Additional Halachos

One may not make any of the Seder preparations on Shabbos. Additionally, while one may (and perhaps should) rest on Shabbos in order to be able to be awake and vibrant at the Seder, one may not say that he or she is resting in order to be awake for the Seder. One may learn the Hagaddah and prepare “divrei Torah” for the Seder on Shabbos.

¹ Alternatively, one may use egg matzoh for the Lechem Mishna. If one does opt to do so, he must be careful that everyone present eats a sufficient amount of the egg matzoh (or egg matzoh together with other food) to qualify making a Hamotzi, as according to many poskim, egg matzoh is Mezonos, even when used at a Shabbos meal. If one uses egg matzoh, he must also be sure that the egg matzoh is the kind that is permissible to be owned on Pesach.

² Every person should have a k'beitzah at each meal in order to make the Shabbos meal “chashuv,” as well as to wash Netilas Yadayim with a bracha.

³ See Rema Orach Chaim 306:1.