

A LESSON FROM THE PARASHA

Can't Argue With Silence

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There is a perplexing *Midrash P'liah* brought down in *Parshas Shmini*. After Nadav and Avihu died by Hashem's fire, the *passuk* testifies that Aharon was silent – “*Vayidom Aharon*.” On this, the *Midrash* comments, “*Meh hayah lomar? 'Uvayom hasmnini yimol b'sar arlaso*.” Which means, what could Aharon have said? To answer, the *Midrash* brings down a *passuk* from *Parshas Tazria* that discusses the *mitzvah* of *milah* – “On the eighth day, you shall circumcise his *arlah*.”

What in the world is the connection between the death of Nadav and Avihu and the *mitzvah* of *milah*? How is the *Midrash* clarifying the *passuk* describing Aharon's reaction by citing the *passuk* from the next *parasha*?

The commentary *Y'alas Chein* offers the following explanation: There is another *Midrash* that asks why the *mitzvah* of *milah* is on the eighth day. It answers that if it were any earlier, the mother would still be ritually impure. She achieves days of purity only on the eighth day. So, if the *bris* was on the seventh day or earlier, while everyone else is rejoicing in the *simcha*, the father and mother would be sad due to her state of impurity. Since that would be an inappropriate way to celebrate a *simcha*, the Torah commanded the *milah* be done on the 8th day, when the parents could be fully engaged in the *simcha*.

On this *Midrash* in *Tazria*, the *Y'ales Chein* comments: “Contrast this to Aharon's situation. There, Moshe told Aharon, Elazar, and Isamar, to purposely NOT show any signs of mourning. They must carry on the inauguration in such a way that would not mar the *simcha* of *Klal Yisroel*.”

It seems that *Y'alas Chein* is explaining the *Midrash P'liah* to underscore the praise given to Aharon that he remained silent. He could have said, “It is not fair! The Torah recognizes and is sensitive to the the *baalei simcha* at a *bris*, that it cannot be properly celebrated as long as there is still some aspect of mourning

– if the mother is impure, then both she and the father will be sad – so the *bris* is set for a day when they could be fully engaged. And yet in my situation, when I just lost two of my sons suddenly, the Torah forbids me to mourn!!”

And yet Aharon's response was simply “*Vayidom Aharon*...”

Many stories have been publicized about people that were embarrassed in a public manner...and yet they remained silent. In those moments – where such a person could be swallowed up in the feelings of “it's not fair; I don't deserve this public humiliation,” and yet they remain silent – they have a tremendous power to give *brachos* to those that need them. And many, seemingly impossible, deliverances have come from their *brachos*.

How does this work?

Perhaps the following idea could be a possible explanation. Aharon was famously known as “*oheiv shalom v'rodef shalom*,” one who loved and pursued peace. The most impressive examples of *shalom* exist when two polar opposites, seemingly impossible to coexist, exist anyway. For those that go against the grain, and in an almost supernatural fashion stay silent in the face of an injustice committed against them in order to maintain *shalom* – even when a reaction would be 100% justified – Hashem gives them the power to give *brachos* that go against nature as well. This is power of *shalom* and this is the power of silence. 🤫

Upcoming

Look out for details of
the upcoming Kollel
Lag Ba'omer event on
Thursday April 29th. 🤫

THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI YITZCHOK PREIS

Tazria:

Q) The *parasha* describes childbirth yielding *tumah* (impurity)!? Isn't *tumah* associated with death?

A) The *Kotzker Rebbe* is quoted along the following lines:

Tumah can be seen as the result of the vacuum left when the *neshama* (soul) leaves the body. As the body is detached from that Divine element, there is a void that yields *tumah*.

While carrying a child in utero, a mother is partnering with Hashem in a very intense way, bearing within herself a second *neshama*. (This is in contrast to a man whose partnering with Hashem in reproduction is far more fleeting, and hence yields less *tumah*.) When the *neshama* exits the mother's body at childbirth, there is a void and, as such, a period of *tumah*. Interestingly, the *tumah* period doubles if the baby is a girl. For in that case, the mother was not only bearing another *neshama*. She had contained within herself a *neshama* with the potential to itself carry a *neshama*, an even more intense partnering with Hashem until delivery.

Shmini:

Q) Is it really prohibited to touch a football? Or am I not reading *Vayikra* 11:8 correctly?

A) A simple read of that *passuk* (verse) does indicate that one should not touch the carcass of a non-kosher

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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animal, and I can imagine one assuming that this prohibits handling a pig-skin football. However, the concept of *tumas n'veilah* (impurity of the carcass) only applies to the meat, not the hide.

More so, Rashi, Ramban, and many others explain that there is no innate prohibition of *tumas ne'veilah*. Rather, when we were needing to be particularly conscious of purity and impurity, as when we would prepare for the holiday pilgrimages to Yerushalayim, we were admonished to avoid becoming *tamei* (impure) through the contact with such materials.

Interestingly the *Ksav V'hakabalah* understands that those who are oriented toward greater spiritual heights should limit contact with these materials throughout the year as well. 🕒

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week's)? Ask! If you would like to submit a question on the parasha, please email it to parasha@cincykollel.org. Questions will be selected to address at the discretion of the Rabbi who is answering that week. Questions may be edited for brevity/clarity.

A SHINING EXAMPLE

One Friday afternoon in Ramat HaSharon, a town just north of Tel Aviv, the weather was extremely stormy. Suddenly, the Yohanoff supermarket located in Ramat HaSharon lost electricity. Although a few moments later the generators kicked in, one thing that had not been connected to the generators were the cash registers. The manager was in a pickle. To ask people to wait before they make their purchases to see if the electricity would go back on would be a major inconvenience for people, but to tell people that they cannot buy anything here now and should go find another store on a Friday afternoon in the middle of a big storm was also a major inconvenience. What to do?! An idea struck him like the lightning coming down outside. Walking around the store the manager began to announce, "Everyone please continue shopping! When you are ready to check out, please just write down what you are taking, and you can come back later to pay for what you took." Some people felt bad walking out without paying but were told that it was alright. That Sunday, almost every person returned to pay. By Friday, every single person had paid. 🕒

A BA'AL HATURIM FOR YOU

In *Parshas Metzora*, where the Torah details the purification process of one who was afflicted with the spiritual malady of *tzara'as* known as a *metzora*, the *metzora* is told to bring two birds, one of which is slaughtered and one of which is set free. *Ba'al Haturim* explains the symbolism of the actions taken with these two birds. The one that is set free symbolizes this that the *tzara'as* is leaving or "flying" off the *metzora*, while the one slaughtered symbolizes the prayer of the *metzora* that the *tzara'as* should never return. On the other hand, the bird sent away represents that the *tzara'as* can return if the person does not continue to correct his ways, just like it is possible that this bird will return. 🕒



THE FALSE MESSIAHS OF JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

CRYPTO-SABBATIANS – NECHEMYAH CHIYUN (PART II)

In the winter months of 1711-12, Nechemyah Chiyun arrived in Prague. In Prague, Chiyun's Sabbatian identity went undetected, and he was warmly received by both the general population and the Torah scholars of the city. The chief rabbi of Prague, Rabbi Dovid Oppenheim, a staunch opponent of the crypto-Sabbatian movements (as we have seen from the excommunication which he issued to undermine the cult of Yehudah Chasid in 1701) was also fooled by Nechemyah Chiyun, and therefore appointed his son, Yosef, to personally care for the special guest from Eretz Yisrael. Chiyun stayed in Yosef Oppenheim's home and, although he initially planned to remain in Prague for just two weeks, upon realizing his good fortune he extended his visit and stayed for a full year.

During that year, Chiyun earned the respect of the rabbinic leaders of Prague as a noted *kabbalist* and scholar from Eretz Yisrael. In Prague, Chiyun authored his *Divrei Nechemiah*, a commentary on the Torah containing mystical interpretations, for which Rabbi Dovid Oppenheim wrote an approbation. Had Rabbi Oppenheim found the time to read the entirety of Chiyun's manuscript, he surely would have noticed the subtle traces of Sabbatian heresy contained within. But the chief rabbi, due to his numerous rabbinic responsibilities both in Prague and beyond, hadn't the time to examine the manuscript carefully, so he penned an approbation. In the beginning of this fateful approbation, Rabbi Dovid Oppenheim notes that although only one folio of the manuscript has been brought before him, and it would therefore be appropriate to refrain from endorsing Chiyun, nonetheless the students of the *yeshiva* have attested that he is a great scholar with profound knowledge of both *nigleh* and *nistar*.

Nechemyah Chiyun snickered as he looked over the approbation which he had received from none other than the chief rabbi of Prague. Chiyun continued to gain regard and admiration in Prague as he delivered *kabbalistic* lectures which were built upon Sabbatian beliefs but shrewdly concealed as pillars of authentic *kabbalah*. Chiyun also earned the respect of Rabbi Naftali Cohen, formerly chief rabbi of Frankfurt, a distinguished *kabbalist* and author of *Semichas Chachamim*. Rabbi Naftali likewise was deceived by Chiyun, who provided a number of forged endorsements from leading Italian rabbis as proof of his credibility, and as a result he too wrote an approbation for Chiyun's *Divrei Nechemyah*. With two world-class letters of endorsement, Nechemyah Chiyun prepared himself for the next stage of his crypto-Sabbatian sabotage. 🕒