

A PARASHA THOUGHT

Setbacks in Redemption



RABBI
DOVID
SPETNER

A friend of mine was a visitor to a *shul* on *parshas Va'eira*. Shortly after *krias haTorah* a man came to *shul* and sat near him. After the rabbi was five minutes into his *drasha* on the *parasha*, the latecomer said loudly, "How come the rabbi is talking about Pesach in the middle of the winter?!"

Aside from illustrating the need to be in *shul* for *krias haTorah*, this story underlines something that niggles us in the back of our minds. There is something incongruous about our focus on the story of our springtime exodus during the deep winter. This is especially so in *parshas Va'eira* which focuses almost exclusively on the plagues ~ which are such a highlight of the seder night.

Perhaps this winter retelling of the Exodus is a metaphor for the sometimes difficult lead-up to redemption. Although *yetzias Mitzraim* was a wondrous, miraculous event culminating in a springtime exodus, it didn't start out that way. At the beginning of our *parasha* the people refuse to listen to Moshe and on that basis he objects to Hashem's mission. "Behold *bnei Yisroel* did not listen to me. How then will Pharaoh listen to me?"

At the end of last week's *parasha*, after Moshe and Aharon went to Pharaoh and he responded by taking away the straw, Moshe is confronted by the *shotrei Yisroel* ~ the overseers who had been beaten for *bnei Yisroel's* shortfall in production. *Chazal* identify them as *Dasan* and *Aviram*, but per the *meforshei hapeshat*

(simple understanding) it was the *shotrim* in general who were exiting their meeting with Pharaoh. This would indicate that even if the ones to actually verbalize the strong words were *Dasan* and *Aviram*, it would seem the *shotrim* likely felt the same way. This explains why Moshe took the criticism to heart and even complained to Hashem for sending him in the first place. According to the Midrash, Moshe even left *Mitzrayim* for six months at this point until Hashem told him to go back.

There is a fascinating statement made by the *Chasam Sofer* (*Likutei Shu"t* 98). He writes that the first redeemer of the Jewish people, *Moshe Rabbeinu*, for the first 80 years of his life had no idea that he was destined to be the redeemer. Then Hashem suddenly plucked him out from the rest of humanity (and even then, he fought mightily against the appointment). In the same way, the eventual redeemer, *Moshiach* himself, is unaware of who he is destined to be. In every generation there is someone with the potential to be *Moshiach*. If the generation would merit it, Hashem would then fill that person with the spirit of *Moshiach*.

One has to wonder and certainly consider the possibility that, just like *Moshe Rabbeinu*, *Moshiach* himself may encounter challenges and setbacks until Hashem is ready to truly redeem His people. May we merit the complete and final redemption without any setbacks, speedily, in our days. 🕊️

LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL
(BASAR B'CHALAV)

WITH
RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

Our topic is the *halachos* regarding eating or cooking meat and fish together.

The Gemara (*Pesachim* 76.) teaches us that it is unhealthy to eat meat and fish together, meat which was cooked with fish, or fish which was cooked with meat. This *halacha* is subsequently codified in *Shulchan Aruch* (Y.D. 116:2 and O.C. 173:1). The Magen Avraham and Chasam Sofer suggest the possibility that people are no longer sensitive to the combination of meat and fish, and that eating them is no longer unhealthy. However, common practice is to avoid eating meat and fish together and not rely on the Magen Avraham (*Shu"t Shvus Yaakov* 3:70). If a person ate fish and would like to eat meat, or if he ate meat and would like to eat fish, he is required to take certain actions. The *Shulchan Aruch* (Y.D. 116:3) states that he must wash his hands, but according to the Rema it is not Ashkenazi practice to do so. He must cleanse his palate by both eating another food and drinking something, or at the very least drinking something (*Chochmas Adam* 68, also quoted in the *Shaar Hatziyon* 173:3). If half an hour has passed since he ate the first food, it is not necessary to do so (R' Moshe Heinemann).

L'chatchila (preferably), one should not cook meat and fish together even if

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LEARNING WITH THE KOLLEL (BASAR B'CHALAV)

CONTINUED

there is sixty times as much meat as there is fish, or sixty times as much fish as there is meat (Shu"t Maharsham 3:288). However, *b'dieved* (after the fact), the rules of *Bittul B'shishim* (nullified by 60) apply (*Shach* and *Chochmas Adam*). This *halacha* is applicable to the use of Worcestershire sauce, which contains fish. If the other ingredients in the Worcestershire sauce are sixty times as much as the fish, so that the fish is already *botul*, then the sauce can be cooked or eaten with meat. However, if this is not the case the sauce should not be cooked or eaten with meat, *l'chatchila*. *B'dieved*, the fish in the sauce will be *botul* in the meat and the food may be eaten.

If you look closely at the label, sometimes, kosher certification categorizes the Worcestershire sauce as Kosher-Fish, and other times as Kosher-Pareve. The difference is the percentage of fish in the recipe. If the amount is greater than 1.6% > (שישים), then the Worcestershire sauce may not be used to flavor meat or chicken; when it is less than (שישים) > 1.6%, it is permissible. 🕍

A SHINING EXAMPLE

Avraham Weinstein was a renowned fifth grade rabbi in a Jewish day school. One year at the annual school dinner he met his very own sixth grade rabbi who was then long retired. He said, "Rebbi do you remember me, it's Avraham, I was in your class about 30 years ago?" Yes, yes," the rebbi answered, "it's so nice to see you, how are things? What are you up to?" "Things are great" Avraham responded. "Actually I became a rebbi myself and it was all because of you." "Really," replied the rebbi. "That's so nice to hear, I didn't realize I had such an impact on you." "Rebbi, it was actually one particular story that I'm sure you remember. One day one of the kids in class came into school with a new fancy watch and I couldn't resist so I stole it while the boy wasn't looking. The boy soon realized it was gone and he told you that someone stole his watch. You got up and said that whoever took the watch must return it now but, of course, I was too embarrassed so I just sat there. Then you said, 'Okay, if no one is coming forth I will have to go through everyone's pockets until I find the watch.' I realized that I was doomed and would be labelled a thief forever. But then you said, 'Everyone line up against the wall and close your eyes, everyone's eyes must be closed.' You then went through all the pockets including mine, found the watch, returned it to the boy and never said a word about it to me or anyone. When you saved me that day, I thought to myself,

TEFILLA TIDBITS

RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUK

In the *Modah Ani* prayer we thank Hashem for returning our soul to us each day. We end with the words "You have returned my soul with compassion, great is your faithfulness." The simple meaning is that Hashem returns our soul each morning with the expectation that we will follow His commandments, and in turn He is faithful to reward those who serve Him. However, some commentators explain that the "faith" in this prayer is the faith that Hashem has in us; He believes in us that we will make the new day a successful day in the service of Him. 🕍

I want to be a teacher like that who can save a boy's future. You must remember me, though. It was a most memorable incident, no?" asked Avraham. "Actually," replied the rebbi, "my eyes were closed too. Until this day I had no idea which boy stole the watch." 🕍



THE BAN AGAINST THE MEOR ANAYIM (PART II)

RABBI NOSSON WIGGINS

Many of the Italian Rabbinate (Venice, Rome, Ferrara, Padua, and others) openly protested the *Meor Anayim* and attempted to prevent its publication. However, their efforts were futile and the book was published and disseminated around Europe.

Chief among the vehement opponents of De Rossi's *Meor Anayim* was the Maharal of Prague, who devotes several pages of his *Be'er ha-Golah* [a work defending *Chazal* (our Sages) against the critics of his day] to refute the ludicrous and venomous conclusions which De Rossi makes. Essentially, De Rossi's heretical thesis is that *Chazal's* understanding of the world was limited to the science and knowledge of their day and in De Rossi's enlightened world, *Chazal* came to many erroneous conclusions. The Maharal of Prague, the chief defender of the holy words of our Sages (at times even against *Rishonim* (early commentaries) whom he felt didn't treat the words of *Chazal* with the proper respect), bemoans the desecration of the sanctity of the words of *Chazal* against the *Meor Anayim* and places a ban on the book. Here is an excerpt of the intense grief which the Maharal felt upon reading the *Meor Anayim*: "The book was brought before me, and they said, look at these new ideas. And when I saw it, I approached it with joy just as a joyous groom greets his bride. But when I read from it, my heart was torn and my soul poured out within me, and I said to myself, 'Woe is to my eyes that have seen this, and woe is to my ears that have heard such things.' Cursed is the day on which these matters were revealed and seen." The Maharal continues on his tirade and says that the book must be burned for it is worse than books of heresy. He concludes with an outright ban that the book must not be looked at even superficially and it should be likened to *chametz* on Pesach, not to be seen and not to be found!

However, a lesser-known campaign against De Rossi's *Meor Anayim* emanated from the holy city of Tzfas as revealed by an ancient manuscript which Rabbi Chaim Yosef Dovid Azulai (Chida) discovered in a deceased rabbi's attic.

To be continued... 🕍