

A PARASHA THOUGHT

Someone Once Came Over To Me...

After Hashem tells Yaakov to leave Charan, Yaakov seeks approval from his wives, justifying the need for departure with a detailed description of the abuse he experienced from Lavan. Rachel and Leah agree, also explaining their position as being based on the maltreatment they received from their father. What is puzzling is that surely these great people would have obeyed G-d command even if it was inconvenient or challenging for them. Why, then, did they so extensively rationalize their compliance?

An answer that emerges from the writings of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein and Rabbi Elya Lopian is that, by enumerating the hardships they endured, our ancestors were demonstrating how they understood that doing what Hashem wanted from them was not difficult. They were teaching that although we ultimately do the will of Hashem simply because it is the command of G-d, we also have to recognize that submitting ourselves to Him will bring us happiness.

The optimal state of serving Hashem is with joy, but this can only be accomplished when we embrace our mission and not just tolerate it. When discharging our religious obligations, it is easy to feel a sense of self-sacrifice; we will do what is right even if we do

not appreciate it. However, service of G-d with such a mindset is untenable. We need to be content and happy to live productive lives, but virtually all our interactions and endeavors are governed by Torah values. If following the word of G-d is a constant burden, we will find that necessary joy to be elusive. The key to sustainable spiritual growth and connection to Hashem is to recognize that a life walking in His ways is a pleasant one, in which we are in a perpetual state of accomplishment. Living within a framework set out by G-d, striving to reflect certain ideals, gives meaning to all that we do. It empowers us to face challenges with a sense of purpose, realizing that we are a vital piece to a master plan. It takes effort, but internalizing that the responsibility of representing G-d in this world is a blessing will greatly enhance our lives. After all, it's *geshmak* to be a Yid. 🙏



RABBI
YEHUDA
LEVI



THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

THIS WEEK WITH
RABBI YITZCHAK PREIS

Q. The Torah describes Leah's choice of the name "Reuven" as reflecting "...*ra'ah Hashem b'onyi*" – "G-d saw my affliction..." But the Gemara (*Brachos 7b*) teaches that Reuven's name carries a very different message. Leah declared "*re'ei mah bein b'ni l'ven chomi*" – "see the difference between my son and the son of my father-in-law" (referring to her brother-in-law, Eisav). Leah was contrasting these two first-borns and their radically different reactions to losing their first-born status. Why does the Gemara seek an alternate reason for Reuven's name?

A. The Vilna Gaon draws attention to the fact that throughout Torah, "cause" generally precedes "effect." We see this regarding names. The reason (the "cause") is always introduced prior to the name (the "effect"). This is true for all of the names other than Reuven. In this one instance, no reason is mentioned until after he is named. Given that "cause" is expected to

— CONTINUES ON NEXT PAGE —>

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED ON THE PARASHA

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precede “effect,” it would seem that the reason that follows the name is actually not the primary cause for his name. The Vilna Gaon explains that the primary reason for the name is as described in the Gemara. But this contrast between Reuven and Uncle Eisav was not articulated by Leah, lest it incite Eisav’s wrath. As a means of masking this message, Leah invented a second “reason,” as described in our *possuk*. 🕒

Something always bugged you about the upcoming parasha (or last week’s)? Ask! Submit a question on the parasha by Monday at noon by emailing parasha@cincynkollel.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.

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RABBI YAAKOV MARCHUCK

Mitzvah #7&8

As we are all familiar from our own Pesach seder, there is a strong emphasis on royalty, with many practices instituted based on aristocratic practices, although most, if not all, of these practices may not conform with modern day royal behavior. The *korban Pesach* also has many *mitzvos* which reflect this feeling. In *mitzvah 7* we are told that the *Pesach* must be roasted. The *Chinuch* writes that roasted meat is the way of noblemen, because the average person cooks his meat in liquid to retain every last drop (as is clear from the *Shulchan Aruch*’s typical example of meat being meat cooked in liquid); only wealthy people had access to roasted meat. Additionally, in *mitzvah 8* we are commanded to not leave over any of the *Korban Pesach*. The *Chinuch* again writes that rich people who are not worried about where their next meal is coming from do not leave over leftovers, and in our effort to act as nobility we are commanded to do so as well.

The *sefer Arzei Halevanon* quotes an additional insight on the roasting of the *korban* in the name of Rav Hutner. When the *possuk* about *korban Pesach* tells us how it should be roasted, it writes it in a slightly different order than in other places where we are commanded to roast a sacrifice. For example, in *Vayikra* 1:13 about other *karbonos*, the Torah says “he shall wash the innards and the feet in water,” but regarding the *Korban Pesach* the Torah commands us using a different order, stating “its head its legs with its innards.” Why the discrepancy? As we know, the exodus from Egypt was much more than just an emancipation of slaves. Rather it was, as *Yalkut Shimonei* (V’eschanan 826) writes, “as if the Jewish people were a fetus in the womb of the mother, and G-d pulled us out of the womb.” For this reason, writes Rav Hutner, the Torah commanded us to place the head next to the legs, putting the *korban* in the fetal position, to express the great miracle of the exodus from Egypt, which was “taking out a nation from a nation.” 🕒

TRACING OUR MINHAGIM

RABBI YAAKOV SAKLAD !

The Tur (OC 670:2) quotes the Maharam MiRuttenburg who says that festive meals on Chanukah are regular mundane meals and (unlike Purim and other holidays) there is no special *mitzvah* to have a meal on Chanukah because *Chazal* (the Sages) established Chanukah for praising and giving thanks to Hashem for the miracles He did for us and not for festive eating and drinking.

The Bach (ibid.) asks what is the distinction between Chanukah and Purim? Why is it that *Chazal* established Chanukah only for praising and giving thanks to Hashem and not for festive eating and drinking like we have on other holidays (like Purim)? He answers that on Chanukah the Jews were suffering from decrees which forbade them from serving Hashem in the *Beis Hamikdash* and the reason why Hashem allowed these decrees to happen was because they weren’t scrupulous in performing said service in the *Beis Hamikdash*. The way they fixed this decree was by giving over their very life force for the service in the *Beis Hamikdash*, and this would rectify their original unscrupulousness. Therefore, the way we remember this miracle is by performing our own service, the service of the heart, which is praising and thanking Hashem. Conversely, Purim was a time when the Jews were being punished by the attempted decree of killing out all the Jews because they went to the party of Achashverosh. They rectified this misdeed by repenting and fasting in which they inflicted their bodies that enjoyed this party. The way we remember the miracle of the Jews being saved from their misdeed of enjoying the party of Achashverosh, therefore, is by having a festive meal.

The Bach continues and says that the custom, however, isn’t like the Maharam Miruttenburg, and he has seen many great people who have made special meals for Chanukah. He quotes a Maharshal who deduces from the Rambam that there is indeed a reason to make a special meal for Chanukah and he says that the Mordechai says this as well. He also quotes a Ravyah who says that if one forgot *Al Hanissim* in *bentching* he must repeat *bentching*. This is a clear indication that there is even an obligation to have a meal on Chanukah.

The question, however, is that the Bach already provided a clear distinction between Chanukah and Purim in that the way we rectified our sin was different and therefore the remembrance of the miracle will also be different. So why should there be any reason to have a special meal on Chanukah? What does this have to do with the way remember the miracle?

The Darchei Moshe (ibid.) brings a Maharal MiPrague that says that Chanukah indeed is established for praise and giving thanks to Hashem. He deduces from a Midrash in *Bahaloscha* that there is, however, an element of adding a special meal because it was also the day of the dedication of the altar. He quotes an Ohr Zarua who says this as well. The Darchei Moshe continues and quotes a Hagahos U’minhagim who says that if one says praises of Hashem by the meal one can turn the meal into an elevated meal of *mitzvah*. Rav Shmuel Kaminetsky is recorded in *Kovetz Halachos* (page 244) as saying that one should say words of Torah by the meal as well and this will, without question, turn the meal into an elevated meal of *mitzvah*. 🕒