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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Nitzavim-Vayeilech ✍️ Rabbi Shlomo Neuberger

Committed to Change

The Torah tells us in Parshas Nitzavim, (30:11-14) “For this commandment that I command you today, it is not hidden from you and it is not distant... Rather, the matter is very near to you, in your mouth and your heart, to perform it.”

Rashi comments that “this commandment” refers to the Torah as a whole. The Ramban explains this verse in a different fashion. He states, if “this commandment” was referring to the Torah as a whole, it should have said, “**All** the commandments that I command you today”. Therefore, he says, “**This** commandment” refers to the commandment of “teshuva” – repentance, as is stated in an earlier verse, (30:1-2) “Then you will take it to your heart... and you will return unto Hashem, you G-d.” So according to this understanding of the verse the Ramban goes on to explain the continuation of the verse, “in your mouth and your heart.” “In your mouth” is referring to the idea of repenting for the wrongdoings of ourselves and our ancestors. “In your Heart” refers to the idea of returning in your heart to Hashem and to accept upon yourself today to follow the Torah in its proper way.

The Rambam (Hilchos Teshuva 1:1) says “All commandments in the Torah whether positive or negative if one transgresses any one of them... He, when doing Teshuva, repentance, is required to do a verbal confession.” The Rambam continues (Hilchos Teshuva 2:2) before one says this verbal confession “he must commit in his heart never to do this transgression again.” Once he has come to a realization in his heart and commits himself to change “he should then say a verbal confession using the exact thoughts that he has committed to in his heart.” So the Rambam is telling us what seems to be the obvious order in which to repent. For it seems logical that first a person must come to a full understanding and commitment in his heart that he has sinned and then decide to commit to change. After which he can then verbally confess and orally commit to change.

Therefore this seems to be a direct contradiction to the Ramban’s interpretation of the above verse. For the Ramban explained that the Torah is telling us to first repent our wrongdoings with our mouths, thus a verbal confession, and then commit to change in our hearts. While what seems to be the logical order would be to first commit to change in ones heart and then say a verbal confession.

Perhaps one can explain the Ramban’s interpretation of the verse in

the following manner. It takes a physical action in order to transgress a commandment which thereby causes a lowering of one’s spiritual level. Therefore in order to raise his spiritual level back to its proper level one must first correct their physical actions. With this in mind, we can understand the Ramban’s outlook of this verse. When referring to Teshuva, repentance, the Torah comes to tell us in order to raise “our hearts” to the proper spiritual level one must first commit to change his actions. This is why the Torah wrote “in your mouth” before “and in your heart”. “In your mouth” is an analogy to all actions that one does and “in your heart” is referring to the affect of one’s action on his spiritual level. It is without question that the actual way one repents follows the order given by the Rambam, to first commit to a change in their heart and to then verbalize that commitment. While at the same time the Ramban’s explanation is not contradictory for it is referring to reversing the spiritual void made by the actions of the transgressor.

We say in the Haftorah of Shabbos Shuva (Hoshea 14:2) “Return Israel until Hashem your G-d”. Chazal ask why the word “until” is used in place of “to” Hashem your G-d? The answer given is that when ones actions change for the better the ramifications of this repentance reach all the way until the “throne” of Hashem. May we all merit during these days of Elul as well as during Aseres Ymai Teshuva that our actions change for the better and actually reach the “throne” of Hashem.

Rabbi Neuberger learns full-time at the kollel.

*The community is invited to
a special evening of*
**דברי חיוק והתעוררות
הכנה ליום הדין**
With
HaRav Avrohom Schorr, shlita
THIS Monday, September 10, 2007
8:15 p.m. followed by Maariv
at the Kollel
6506 N. California

HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Eruv Tavshil in

Rabbi Ephraim Friedman

With Rosh Hashanah, Succos and Shmini Atzeres just around the corner, each one falling out this year on Thursday and Friday, I'd like to use this opportunity to review some main aspects of the laws of Eruv Tavshilin.

1 - As a rule, on Shabbos and Yom Tov one is not allowed to do any preparing for a different day. Consequently, even melachos which are permitted on Yom Tov such as cooking, baking, and carrying, may be performed for the needs of that day only. When Yom Tov falls out on Friday, however, the Chachamim permitted preparing food for Shabbos on Friday, provided an Eruv Tavshilin is made in advance. Through the process of Eruv Tavshilin, one actually begins Shabbos preparations on erev Yom Tov, and the melachos which are performed on Yom Tov proper for Shabbos are considered a continuation of these preparations. (Rema O.C. 527:1 See Beur Halacha there for a fuller discussion of the background and mechanics of Eruv Tavshilin.)

2 - The materials necessary to create an Eruv Tavshilin are a portion of bread or matza and a portion of cooked meat or fish or some other cooked food which is customarily eaten together with bread (e.g. a hard boiled egg). The amount of bread should preferably be at least the size of a c'beitza, which is twice the size of a c'zayis. The average challah roll or sheet of matza will serve the purpose. (If the eruv was made with one c'zayis of bread, it need not be repeated.) Even a broken or started roll or matza, or a large slice of bread, can be used for the eruv provided it meets the minimum shiur. Nonetheless, it is a hidur (an enhancement of the mitzva) to use a shalem — a complete loaf.

The minimum shiur of the portion of cooked food required for an Eruv Tavshilin is one c'zayis. Any method of preparing the food for consumption (e.g. cooking, roasting, frying, etc.) is acceptable. Here, too, hidur mitzva dictates that an attractive, tasty portion of food be used. As explained above, the concept of the Eruv is that Shabbos preparations have already begun before Yom Tov begins. In this vein, it is a preference that the food which is used be cooked specifically for the purpose of Eruv Tavshilin, or at least that it be cooked expressly for Shabbos use. It is also preferred that it be cooked specifically on erev Yom Tov as opposed to earlier. (Beur Halacha 527:6 and 14) In practice, however, as long as the food is designated for the Eruv Tavshilin (in the manner which will be explained below) the eruv is valid, regardless of when and for what purpose the food was originally cooked.

3 - The actual procedure of establishing an Eruv Tavshilin is as follows. After selecting appropriate food items, the head of household — or whoever else is making the Eruv — takes the food in his hands and recites a brocha (...asher kidishunu b'mitzvosav v'tzivunu al mitzvas eruv). He then makes a statement, declaring that through this eruv it should be permissible to cook, bake, insulate food, light candles and do whatever else necessary on Yom Tov for the sake of Shabbos. This declaration, which can be found in most siddurim and machzorim in the original Aramaic text, should be recited in a language which is understood by the one saying it.

In the event that the one establishing the eruv neglected to recite the brocha, the eruv is nonetheless valid and should not be repeated. If, however the above declaration was omitted, the validity of the eruv is questionable. Therefore, if you realize your mistake before Yom Tov begins, the food items should be lifted again and the declaration recited. If a brocha was recited the first time it should not be repeated. If you don't realize your mistake until Yom Tov has begun a Rav should be consulted. (See Mishna Brurah 527:63)

4 - After establishing the Eruv Tavshilin the two food items should be carefully

stored away for Shabbos. In the event that the bread of the eruv is eaten or lost before Shabbos arrives the eruv is still valid. Nonetheless, if this happens before Yom Tov begins, take new bread and redo the eruv including reciting the eruv declaration, but do not repeat the brocha. On the other hand, if the cooked food of the eruv is eaten, lost, or spoils, from that point and on the eruv is no longer valid. If this occurs before the onset of Yom Tov, the eruv **must** be redone. If this occurs after Yom Tov has begun, a Rav should be consulted.

Once Shabbos arrives the eruv can be eaten. It is a proper minhag to use the bread of the eruv as part of your lechem mishneh on Friday night, Shabbos morning, and again at shalashudos, at which point it is eaten. Even if the eruv food is not eaten on Shabbos, the validity of the eruv is unaffected.

5 - When Yom Tov falls on Thursday and Friday, the Eruv Tavshilin which is established Wednesday, erev Yom Tov, allows one to prepare for Shabbos on erev Shabbos only. No preparations for Shabbos may be done on Wednesday night or Thursday (until after nightfall). When Friday is the first day of Yom Tov, the Eruv Tavshilin should be established on Thursday, erev Yom Tov, to permit preparing for Shabbos on Thursday night and Friday.

6 - According to one view in the g'marah, the principle behind Eruv Tavshilin is that any food prepared on Friday Yom Tov, although intended for Shabbos, may potentially be used for on Yom Tov itself. If not for this potential the Eruv Tavshilin would be ineffective. It follows from this that any Shabbos preparations being performed on Yom Tov should be done at an early enough point in the day that using the food on Yom Tov would at least be possible. The Mishna Brurah paskens that one must conduct himself in accordance with this view. Therefore one should not wait until late in the day to put up a cholent or to begin cooking other Shabbos foods. Rather, all melacha for Shabbos should be done early enough that the food which is cooking will be at least partially cooked and somewhat edible before Shabbos arrives. In the event that one was delinquent and did not make sufficient preparations early on, one may rely on the opinions which permit cooking for Shabbos as long as it is before sunset. (see M.B. 527:3 and Beur Halacha.)

7 - Only those melachos which are normally permissible on Yom Tov for Yom Tov, are permissible on Friday Yom Tov for Shabbos through the process of Eruv Tavshilin. Anything which is forbidden to do on Yom Tov for the same day, may not be done on Yom Tov for Shabbos even though an Eruv Tavshilin has been established. For example, one may not plug in or turn on an electric crock pot or any other electric appliance or lights on Yom Tov despite the Eruv Tavshilin. Similarly, one may not strike a match to light Shabbos candles nor pick fruits or vegetables from the garden, even to serve at the Shabbos meals.

8 - One Eruv Tavshilin is effective for all the members of the household. According to accepted practice, this includes individuals (e.g. married children or friends) who are members of the household over the days of Yom Tov and Shabbos although they have their own permanent residence. A family which is sleeping in their own home during Yom Tov but eating all the meals at the home of others should establish an Eruv Tavshilin in their own home without reciting the brocha. The eruv declaration (see #3 above) should be recited. A family which is spending the two days of Yom Tov at the home of others, but returning to their own home on Friday to prepare to spend Shabbos at home, should establish an Eruv Tavshilin (on Wednesday erev Yom Tov) and recite the brocha as well.

9 - If one forgot to make an Eruv Tavshilin, or if the cooked food of the eruv is lost or eaten on Yom Tov, a Rav should be consulted.

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