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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Vayakhel ✍️ Rabbi Shlomo Francis

Make Your Money Count

In the year 5697, a big pogrom broke out in the city of Brisk in which many Jewish residents lost their lives and/or properties. In the aftermath of the pogrom, the askonim of the city established a vaad to collect money to help the victims. At the time, the Polish people were campaigning to damage the status and pride of the Jewish residents, and they viewed this pogrom as a sign of triumph. When they asked the Brisker Rav to join the vaad, he encouraged them to continue their important work, however he himself was not willing to actively participate. Despite their apparent surprise, he refused to give an explanation for his response. Due to the political situation between the Polish people and the Jews, the relief effort turned into a Polish Jewish battleground with the Jews focused on making an obvious statement of survival. As a result, the campaign was an outstanding success. The askonim were in turn able to help the victims generously.

There was one man who was killed in the pogrom, who left his wife and children penniless. The almana (widow) came crying to the Brisker Rav that despite her dire needs, she was not able to obtain any funds for her family from the vaad. The Rav explained why so many less deserving individuals received generous help while she was turned away empty handed. In this weeks parsha, the torah praises Betzalel and his suitability for the work of the mishkon. The torah states "and He (Hashem) filled him with the spirit of Hashem with wisdom, insight, and knowledge to think thoughts to work with gold, silver, and copper." What is this "insight" to which the torah was referring to? Rashi explains that Betzalel understood the combinations of Hashem's name from which the world was created. Betzalel was able to apply this knowledge to build a resting place for the shechina. Rav Chaim Voloziner asks how the possuk could then continue to describe his common skill in silversmithing? Would one describe a great Rabbi as Harav Hagon so and so the great tailor! Rav Chaim asks further that if the yidden knew the donations could be utilized for various levels of kedusha, wouldn't everyone insist that their gold be used for the kodesh hakodoshim? The answer he gives is that while anyone could donate for the mishkon, the mishkon could not

be built on physical donations. Hashem does not lack monetary assets. What He desired to see was the nedivos lev of bnei yisroel, the heartfelt feelings that accompanied the donations. The monetary donations were merely a vehicle for the nedivos lev. This, explains R Chaim, is what the torah means when it says, "to work with the gold, silver, and copper". Betzalel had to build a mishkon out of nedivos lev. Every item donated for use in the mishkon was sorted based on the nedivos lev it contained. Those containing the largest were incorporated into the kodesh haka-doshim, and those with less, into the kodesh or the chatzer. The Brisker Rav added, had there been a shortage of gold for the kodesh hakadoshim, would a less deserving gold be upgraded to the kodesh hakadoshim? It could not, he said, because the nedivos lev was a necessity- more important than the gold itself. This, explained the Brisker Rav is what went wrong in the relief campaign in Brisk and this was why he did not want to join it personally. The askonim had stressed the political benefits of supporting the fund and how it will show the goyim that they cannot beat the Jews. As a result, they succeeded in raising a lot of money. However, many of the supporters forgot that they must focus on the great mitzvah of helping those in terrible need. This actually created a shortage of *worthy* funds! Supporting this almana was such a great mitzvah that Hashem would not allow it to be done with undeserving funds, and she was therefore sent away empty handed.

Nowadays there are many great tzedakos vying for our support, and they may offer various incentives to obtain our tzedaka money. While incentives may be necessary, we must not allow ourselves to loose focus on giving tzedaka for the sake of the mitzvah. If we fail to maintain this focus, we create a shortage- not of funds, but of deserving funds, the ones that Hashem will put to good use. Let us be sure to make our hard earned money count. Don't just give tzedaka, but give it with nedivos lev.

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

ADAR RISHON & ADAR SHEINI

Rabbi Yehoshua Goldstein

This year is a *Shanah Meuberet* (leap year). This year the month of Adar is repeated, thus we have Adar Rishon and Adar Sheini. The questions that will be dealt with are, which of these Adars has the actual halachic status of Adar and which is just an additional month, and what are the ramifications.

The Mishnah in Nedarim 63a says that if one makes a *neder* until the month of Adar, he is bound to his *neder* until the first Adar. The Gemara says that we can see from here that the plain usage of the word Adar is referring to Adar Rishon. The Gemara continues that this is in fact a *machlokes* (dispute) among the Tanaim regarding the proper method of dating a *shtar* (legal document). R' Meir's opinion is that in Adar Rishon one must write Adar Rishon, whereas in Adar Sheini one writes Adar. R' Yehudah, on the other hand, says that in Adar Rishon, one just writes Adar, whereas in Adar Sheini one specifies Adar Sheini. Hence, we have a *machlokes* as to which month is referred to simply as Adar in *lashon bnei adam* (common language).

Most Rishonim *pasken* like R' Yehudah (see Ran Nedarim 63b), and so *pasken* the Rema (O.C. 427:1) as far as documents are concerned. However, the Achronim (Magen Avrohom and Taz *ibid.*) say that preferably one should specify which Adar he means because there are opinions that *pasken* like R' Meir. This same dispute would apply to a *neder* as well, that is, that preferably one should be *machmir* with his *neder* until the second Adar (Shach Y.D. 220:17). However, if at the time of the *neder* one was unaware that the year was a *meuberet*, he must keep his *neder* only until the first Adar. This dispute has ramifications for Rosh Chodesh *bentching* (announcing Rosh Chodesh on the Shabbos preceding Rosh Chodesh), when it is preferable to specify Adar Rishon or Adar Sheini (*ibid.*).

Yahrzeit in Adar

On the day of a *yahrzeit*, special customs are observed i.e. lighting a candle, acting as the *shaliach tzibur* (leader of the services) for that day's *tefilos* and/or saying *Kadish*, and fasting (for those who are able to). If one has a *yahrzeit* in Adar, in which Adar should the *yahrzeit* be observed? The Shulchan Aruch in O.C. 565:7 rules that the *yahrzeit* should be observed in the second Adar. The Achronim explain that this is based on the notion that the *yahrzeit* is comparable to the laws of *neder*, for which the Shulchan Aruch would be *paskening* in accordance with the view of R' Meir. This presents a difficulty being that the Shulchan Aruch in Y.D. 220:8 states that the majority of Rishonim *pasken* like R' Yehudah as mentioned earlier (M.A.). The Chasam Sofer (O.C. 163) is also of the opinion that the *yahrzeit* should be observed in Adar Sheini. The *yahrzeit* is an atonement for the deceased who is judged on that day and that judgment occurs in Adar Sheini which is the true Adar. (See Rashi in Rosh Hashana 19b)

The Rema (O.C. 565:7, Y.D. 402:12) argues and rules that one should observe the *yahrzeit* in the first Adar, in concurrence with the *psak* of most Rishonim (with the opinion of R' Yehudah). Additionally, the Trumas Hadeshen (294) explains based on the concept of *ein maavirim al hamitzvos* (one should not pass over a mitzvah – in this case meaning not to miss an opportunity to do a mitzvah) one should observe the *Yahrzeit* as early as possible which would be the first Adar. The gemara in Megillah 6b says that

based on this principle, the megillah should really have been read in Adar Rishon. It is for other reasons, i.e. to juxtapose the redemption of Purim to that of Pesach, megillah is read in Adar Sheini, and in fact there is a small measure of simcha observed on Purim Koton, the 14th and 15th of Adar Rishon. Others say that the *yahrzeit* should be observed in both Adars (M.A. and Gra). The Mishna Brurah in 568:42 concludes in the name of the Magen Avroham that if one made a proper *neder* to fast on the *yahrzeit*, he should fast on both Adars, whereas if one did not make a *neder* rather he just acted in accordance with the *minhag* (custom) of *yahrzeit*, he should continue as he did in the first leap year. As far as initially determining his custom, it is preferable to fast in both Adars. However, if it is too difficult he should only fast in the first Adar. Kaddish, leading the services and lighting a candle should be done in both Adars. This is all true if the *niftar* passed away in a *shanah peshutah* (a non-leap year consisting of merely one Adar). If the person passed away in a leap year, then when the *yahrzeit* falls out in a *shanah meuberet*, the *yahrzeit* is observed in the same Adar that the person passed away. When this *yahrzeit* falls out in a *shana peshutah*, it is observed only in Adar. (Rema O.C. 565:17, Y.D. 402:12, Shach Y.D. 402:12). There is an opinion that in the latter case, one observes the *yahrzeit* in the month of Shevat as well as Adar.

Some *tzadikim* fast on the 7th of Adar, the *yahrzeit* of Moshe Rabeinu. The Magen Avrohom in O.C. 580:8 rules that this would be done in the first Adar. However, the Chasam Sofer (O.C. 183) quotes the Chacham Zvi that it is observed in Adar Sheini. The Mishna Brurah concludes that the prevalent custom is to fast in Adar Rishon.

Bar Mitzvah

If a boy is born in a *shanah peshuta* in the month of Adar and his bar mitzvah falls out in a *shana meuberet*, would his bar mitzvah be in Adar Rishon or Adar Sheini? The Rema in O.C. 55:10 rules that his bar mitzvah would be in Adar Sheini. The Mahari Mintz (9) is the source of this ruling. He goes to great lengths to prove that the **real** Adar is the second, while Adar Rishon is the additional month added to coincide the lunar and solar years. It is merely called Adar, but the actual Adar is the 2nd one, the one closer to Nissan. Even though in *lashon bnei adam* (common language) many Rishonim say that the first Adar is referred to as Adar, as mentioned earlier, the real Adar is the 2nd one. The physical level of maturity reached at the age of 13, which renders him a *gadol* (adult) is affected by the Jewish calendar. (See Gra O.C. 55:10 based on Yerushalmi Kesubos.) However, if the boy was born in a *shanah meuberet* and his bar mitzvah falls in a *shana peshuta*, then regardless of which Adar he was born in, his bar mitzvah is in Adar (and not Shevat). This leads to a fascinating phenomenon. If two boys were born in a *shanah meuberet*, one on the 29th of Adar Rishon and the 2nd on the 1st of Adar Sheini, if their Bar Mitzvah year falls out in a *shanah peshuta*, the 2nd boy would have his bar mitzvah first, at the beginning of Adar, and the first boy's bar mitzvah would be at the end of Adar, the 29th of the month (Shulchan Aruch *ibid.*). It is interesting to note that the first boy born has the halachic status of *bechor* (first born) as far as inheritance is concerned, even though his bar mitzvah is later and is halachically younger.

If both the birth year and bar mitzvah year are a *shanah meuberet*, the Magen Avrohom rules that the bar mitzvah is always Adar Sheini. However, many Achronim disagree with this ruling and maintain that the boy born in Adar Rishon has his bar mitzvah in Adar Rishon and the boy born in Adar Sheini has his bar mitzvah in Adar Sheini. The Mishna Brurah *pasken* like the latter opinion.

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