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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

27 Kislev 5768 / Dec. 7, 2007

Parshas Mikeitz  Rabbi Meir Stern

Enlightened

"Vayomru Ish El Achiv, Avol Asheimim Anachnu Al Achinu".

"The brothers said to each other, 'we have sinned regarding our brother'." (42:21)

After twenty-two years, the Shevatim began to realize that they had acted incorrectly when selling Yosef. However, what were the Shevatim thinking during all these years? Were they truly able to justify selling their brother? One can only imagine what every Yom Kippur looked like throughout those twenty-two years. Yitzchok Avinu, Yaakov Avinu, the Shevatim and their families would say the Yom Kippur Vidui ten times. Yaakov would be mourning over his son, refusing any consolation. He was frightened that perhaps he was liable for what happened to Yosef. As explained in the Tana Dvei Eliyahu, "it was not over Yosef that Yaakov was crying. Yaakov was afraid that perhaps he was liable for marrying two sisters, or maybe he had derived pleasure from Lavan's money, or maybe he had derived pleasure from Shchem's money thereby desecrating the covenant with Hashem". Apparently, if Yaakov was confessing all these possible sins as reasons for losing his son, and the Shevatim were all watching and aware of this! They certainly went through penetrating introspection, whether or not they had been correct in selling their brother. Had there been any doubt in their minds about the correctness of their actions, they would certainly have gone down to Mitzrayim in search for Yosef to return him to his father. Obviously throughout twenty-two years and during 22 Yom Kippurs, they staunchly believed that they had acted correctly when selling Yosef. As Rashi explains, the shevatim included Hashem in their quorum excommunicating anyone who reveals the truth about what happened to Yosef. Hashem "obeyed", so to speak, and did not reveal their secret to Yaakov. Bearing this in mind, what caused the shevatim to suddenly recognize their mistake now?

Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian Zt"l explains this based on the Gemora in Brochos which states that suffering cleanses a person from his sins. A body becomes soiled from sin, and through pain and affliction it becomes purified and radiant. Says Rabbi Lopian, that through suffering, the mind too becomes clearer and enlightened, and one can understand matters that had previously been unperceivable.

The Torah tells us that the brothers were jealous, and they hated Yosef. Of course, the jealousy was infinitesimal and would have not been obvious to us. However, these feelings did exist without the Shevatim even being aware of them, and this affected their judgment of Yosef. This was the circumstance for twenty-two years until Yosef incarcerated them, and they endured suffering. Now, with their purified bodies and minds, they once again reviewed all their deeds and were able to say, "Avol Asheimim Anachnu", we have sinned.

The Shem M'shmuel concurs that their suffering purified the minds of the Shevatim enabling them to realize their mistaken ways. In truth, this principle applies to us all. He adds that on Shabbos and Chanuka, our minds become enlightened from the day itself (or from the Chanuka lights), and we can perceive imperfections in ourselves without suffering. On Shabbos Chanuka, our minds become especially enlightened. This enlightenment can last after Shabbos Chanuka ends when Vidui and full repentance is possible.. May we all merit a complete repentance.

Rabbi Stern learns with the Zichron Aharon mechanchim chaburah at the kollel.

HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

“V’sain Tal Umatar L’vrocha”

Rabbi Ephraim Friedman

With December 5th now behind us, Jews in all areas of the world are davening for rain by reciting *v’sain tal u’matar l’vrocha* in the ninth brocha of each weekday *Shmoneh Esrei*, *Birchas Hashonim*. An interesting halachic dispute surrounds the circumstance of an individual who neglects to recite this phrase in its proper place and realizes his error immediately upon concluding the brocha. Let us examine the background of this dispute.

The Rosh in Mesechta Taanis (1:1) cites the view of the Ravyah that when one omits a critical phrase from a brocha of *Shmoneh Esrei* and realizes his omission only after concluding that brocha, but before beginning the next one, he need not repeat the first brocho. Rather he should recite the omitted phrase at that juncture between the two brochos and then proceed with the next brocha as usual. The underlying principle behind this view is that one is not considered to have fully completed the previous brocha until he has begun the subsequent one, thus allowing him the latitude to make certain necessary corrections.

The Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 114:6) rules in accordance with this view with regard to the recital of *mashiv haruach u’morid hagoshem* during the winter season. Although omitting it invalidates one’s *Shmoneh Esrei* (unless *morid hatal* was recited in its place), one who has completed the brocha of *michayei hameisim* need not necessarily return to the beginning of *Shmoneh Esrei*. If the next brocha (*Atoh Kadosh*) was not yet begun *mashiv haruach u’morid hagoshem* should be recited immediately and *Shmoneh Esrei* should continue as usual with *Atoh Kadosh*. Similarly, with regard to *Ya’aaleh Vijavo* on Rosh Chodesh, the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 422:1) rules that at Shacharis and Mincha when the inclusion of *Ya’aaleh Vijavo* is critical, one who upon completing “*hamachazir shechinaso liTzion*” realizes he omitted *Ya’aaleh Vijavo*, should recite it immediately and then proceed as usual with *modim*.

With regard to *v’sain tal u’matar l’vrocha*, however, the position of the Shulchan Aruch is not entirely clear. We find in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 117:5) that one who omits this phrase from *Birchas Hashonim* can rectify his error by reciting it in the brocha of *Shma Koleinu* before saying “*key atah shomayah*.” The Shulchan Aruch further states that if one forgot to say it there as well, and realizes his error immediately upon completing the brocha “*shomayah tefila*,” he should recite *v’sain tal u’matar l’vrocha* right there before beginning *Ritzei*. This ruling is based of course on the view of the Ravya. However, the Shulchan Aruch does not mention that if one originally realizes he omitted *v’sain tal u’matar l’vrocha* upon completing *Bircas Hashanim* before beginning *Tika BiShofar*, that he should recite it there. Is this an intentional omission on the part of the Shulchan Aruch and, if so, what is the reason behind it?

This question was posed to the famous Gaon, Rav Yechezkel Landau *zt”l* by a member of his community (as recorded in *Teshuvos Nodeh B’Yehuda* [vol II O.C. 9]). The questioner wished to suggest that the Shulchan Aruch’s omission was indeed intentional. Being that one still has an opportunity to include *v’sain tal u’matar* within the text of a brocha (i.e. in *Shma Koleinu*), perhaps it would be preferable to wait for that brocha, than to rely on the chiddush of the Ravya and recite it between the brochos. Only if the individual forgot once again and omitted it from *Shma Koleinu* would he be advised to recite it between the brochos, before beginning *Ritzei*.

The Nodeh B’Yehuda responded by completely rejecting this theory. Why, he

asks, should one hesitate to rely on the ruling of the Ravya, particularly in light of the fact that many other Rishonim are in agreement with his position? As for the Shulchan Aruch’s omission of this ruling, the Nodeh B’Yehuda contends that the Shulchan Aruch saw no need to mention it, having just taught us the very same concept a few simanim earlier with regard to *mashiv haruach u’morid hagoshem*. Only when one forgets *v’sain tal umatar* in *Shma Koleinu* as well, did the Shulchan Aruch deem it necessary to mention that it can be recited immediately after the brocha, before beginning *Ritzei*, although that is not its primary location. However, to recite it immediately after *Bircas HaShanim* before *Tika B’shofar* is obviously an acceptable – and therefore recommended – course of action for one who forgot to mention it within the brocha. In support of his ruling, the Nodeh B’Yehuda cites the Magen Avraham (117:5) who also rules this way.

The Chofetz Chaim, however, approaches this issue very differently than the Nodeh B’Yehuda. In the Be’ur Halacha (114:6 s. v. *B’lo Chasimah*) he writes that in fact many Rishonim – and some very prominent Achronim – disagree with the Ravya on this matter, and hold that reciting any vital phrase in between brochos of *Shmoneh Esrei* is unacceptable. Therefore, concludes the Be’ur Halacha, although one should not veer from the explicit ruling of the Shulchan Aruch with regard to *mashiv haruach u’morid hagoshem* and *Yaale V’yavo*, nonetheless, in the case of *v’sain tal umatar l’vrocha*, the proper course of action for one who omitted this phrase from *Bircas Hashanim* would be to include it in the brocha of *Shma Koleinu*, rather than reciting it in between the brochos, before *Tika B’shofar*. This psak halacha of the Chofetz Chaim is reiterated in the Mishna Brura 117:15 where he also cites that the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch (19:6) rules this way as well.

There is one final point to consider. One who forgot to recite *v’sain tal umatar* in its primary location, i.e. *Bircas Hashanim*, is probably a likely candidate to forget as well to include it in *Shma Koleinu* where it is not a regular feature. For this reason, one who realizes his error before saying *Tika B’shofar* may be best advised not to pass up the opportunity for reciting it there. To comply with the psak of the Mishna Brura, he may recite it again upon reaching *Shma Koleinu* if he should in fact remember to do so. [See Sefer *Shgjos Me Yavin* chapter 13, note 12.]

Other Related Halachos

- One who realizes that he omitted *v’sain tal umatar* after uttering Hashem’s name in the concluding brocha of *Shma Koleinu* (i.e. “*baruch atoh Hashem... Shomei’ah tefillah*”) should, according to the Mishna Brura (117:19) recite immediately “*lamdeini chukecha*,” then continue with “*v’sain tal u’matar [l’vrocha] key atah shomei’ah tefilas...*”
Note: Some Gedolai haposkim do not allow saying “*lamdeini chukeycha*” in *Shmoneh Esrei*. (See for example Igros Moshe O.C. 4:93) Time and space constraints do not allow for an elaboration on this issue currently.
- One who realizes his omission after beginning *Ritzei* must return to the beginning of *Bircas Hashanim* (i.e. *Bareich Aleinu*) and continue from there.
- One who realizes his omission only after completing *Shmoneh Esrei* must repeat the entire *Shmoneh Esrei* (see Shulchan Aruch 117:5 and Mishna Brura 18 for exact details as to when *Shmoneh Esrei* is considered complete).

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