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PARSHA ENCOUNTERS

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Parshas Chayei Sarah  Rabbi Yehoshua Goldstein

Appreciating the Good

The Torah says that Hashem blessed Avraham “bakol,” with everything. The Gemara in Bava Basra 16b quotes R’ Shimon bar Yochai with the following explanation: There was a precious stone hanging on Avraham Avinu’s neck that cured any sick person who looked at it. When Avraham Avinu was *niftar*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu hung this stone in the sun. The Maharsha explains that there are two types of cures – natural cures and supernatural cures *i.e.*, *segulos*. Avraham Avinu’s stone was a “*segula*” cure. After the *petira* (passing) of Avraham Avinu, Hashem hid the “*segula*” cures, leaving only natural cures. This is symbolized by hanging the stone in the sun, because the sun exercises a significant natural influence over sickness and recovery by controlling the four seasons. The Maharsha suggests that *segula* cures were hidden to humble our hearts and cause us to *daven* to Hashem for a cure instead of looking for the easy way out.

The Chasam Sofer notes that Chazal are also teaching us an important lesson. The Zohar says that one can only discern light because there is also darkness. If there would be no darkness, we would not appreciate the goodness of light. The same applies to poverty and wealth. One who was born rich may not fully appreciate his prosperity. But a poor person who acquires a fortune doesn’t take his wealth for granted. Avraham Avinu started out poor and sick and Hashem subsequently blessed him with wealth, etc. When a poor or sick person saw Avraham Avinu his heart was filled with hope and *bitachon* that if he followed in the footsteps of Avraham Avinu, he too would rise from the dumps and become healthy and wealthy. The “precious stone” hanging on Avraham Avinu’s neck is a figurative reference to this les-

son. After the *petira* of Avraham this lesson continues to be taught by the sun. In the same way that darkness is necessary to truly appreciate the sun’s light,, we must understand that “bad” days help a person to appreciate the “good” days. For example, after Iyov was afflicted with his terrible *yisurim*, he told his wife: “**also** the good shall we accept from Hashem, and the bad we should not accept?” The Chasam Sofer says the word “**also**” hints that a prerequisite for fully receiving Hashem’s goodness is to first experience suffering.

The Chovos Halevovos states that one reason we fail to fully appreciate the numerous good things Hashem provides to us is that we are born with them before our *seichel* is developed. By the time we mature, these good things have become part and parcel of our lives and we take them for granted. All natural bodily functions are in truth great gifts bestowed upon us through Hashem’s kindness, notwithstanding that we have grown accustomed to them and don’t properly appreciate them (see Chovos Halevovos in Shaar Habechina at length). Chazal instituted many *brochos* each day to wake us up and help us realize the numerous gifts Hashem provides so that we will in turn strengthen our *avodos Hashem*. If Hashem sees that we don’t recognize His goodness, he may, *chas veshalom* remove it so that we will take notice when it is returned. Let us *chap arein* and appreciate our gifts while we still have them.

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HALACHA ENCOUNTERS

Kiddush and the *Challos*

Rabbi Akiva Niehaus

Before one recites *Kiddush* on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov*, he must make sure that the two *challos* of *lechem mishna* are placed on the table (A.H. 271:22). The Shulchan Aruch (271:9) writes that one must also make sure that the *challos* are covered on the top and bottom. Three reasons are given for this *halacha*.

1) We wish to remind ourselves of the *man* (manna), which had a protective layer of dew on the bottom and on top. The tablecloth or *challah* board reminds us of the bottom layer of dew, and the *challah* cover reminds us of the top layer (*Tosfos Psachim* 100b).

2) The *bracha* on bread is usually recited before the *bracha* on wine because the Torah mentions grain before grapes when describing the seven species of *Eretz Yisroel*. On *Shabbos*, however, one must first recite *Kiddush* before the *bracha* on *challah*. Since we bypass the *challah*, we hide it so that it won't be "embarrassed" (*Rosh Psachim* 10:3).

3) The *challah* is covered during *Kiddush* to show that the *seudah* we are about to eat is in honor of *Shabbos*. Since the entire table is set before *Kiddush* begins, it is not readily apparent that the *seudah* is in honor of *Shabbos*. Thus the *challah* is covered so that it appears as if the table is empty until after *Kiddush* is recited (*Rashbam Psachim* *ibid.* in the name of the *Sh'iltos*). [According to this reason it is better to cover the entire table - not just the *challah* (*P.M.G. M.Z.* 271:12, *Toras Shabbos* s.k. 8).]

Let us discuss the relevant *halachos* of covering the *challah* and see how these *halachos* are affected by the various reasons stated above.

I: Can the *challah* cover have holes in it or be made from transparent material?

According to the first and last reasons there is no problem because the bread is in fact covered. However, many *Poskim* feel that according to the second reason such a cover should not be used because the bread can still be seen, thus causing it "embarrassment" (*Yeshuos Chochma siman* 77, *S.S.K. Tikunim perek* 47 s.k. 116). [Some say that a white *challah* cover should be used, similar to the color of the *man* (*Elya Raba* 271:16, *Be'er Moshe* 6:134), but others say that any color is acceptable (*Tehila L'Dovid* 271:13).]

II: Should the *challah* remain covered during the *bracha* of *hamotzi* or can one uncover them after *Kiddush*?

According to the last two reasons it is unnecessary to leave the *challah* covered during the *bracha* of *hamotzi* because there is no longer any reason for the *challah* to be embarrassed and the *challah* is appearing after *Kiddush* in honor of the *seudah*. Some say that the first reason also doesn't apply because the reminder of the *man* has already been accomplished (*P.M.G. M.Z.* 12). However, other *Poskim* say that the reminder of the *man* should continue until after the *bracha* of *hamotzi* has been recited and the *challah* must therefore remain covered (*M.B.* 271:41 in the name of the *Chayei Adam* 6:13, *A.H.* 271:22 who says that this is the prevalent custom). [Assuming the *challos* do remain covered, one should be careful to place his hands underneath the cloth and hold the *challos* during the *bracha* of *hamotzi* (see *M.B.* 167:23 and *Toras Shabbos* 271:15).]

III: Is it necessary to cover the *challah* during the morning *seudah*?

The last reason does not apply because *Shabbos* already arrived the night before. Nevertheless, many *Poskim* say that the other two reasons do apply and one should therefore cover the *challah* (*M.B.* 271:41, *A.H.* 299:14).

IV: Must one cover the *challah* by *Shalosh Seudos*?

Some *Poskim* feel this is unnecessary because the third reason does not apply, as previously stated, and the second reason also doesn't apply because *Kiddush* is not recited (*A.H.* 291:10). However, other *Poskim* say that the *challah* should be covered in view of the first reason because we still want to remind ourselves of the *man* (*Kaf HaChaim* 271:54, *A" A Butchatch*).

V: If many people are gathered together for a *Shabbos seudah* (e.g., in a *yeshiva*) and one person will recite *Kiddush* for everyone but each person will recite *hamotzi* for himself on his own *challah* rolls, is it necessary to cover all the *challah* on the table or does it suffice to cover the *challah* of the person reciting *Kiddush*?

Many *Poskim* say that all the *challah* rolls must be covered (*IG" M O.C.* 5:20:18, *Rivevos Ephraim* 1:200, *Oz Nidberu* 13:6). In this case the first reason certainly applies because it is appropriate for each person to make a remembrance for the *man*. In addition, the third reason applies (on Friday night, as explained above) because we wish to show that the *seudah* is in honor of *Shabbos*. However, some *Poskim* say that the reason of embarrassing the *challah* doesn't apply because the wine is not on the table together with each set of *challah* rolls and therefore one need not cover all of the *challah* rolls (*Leket Yosher* pg. 50). [If many people are gathered together and each person recites *Kiddush* individually, each person must cover his *challah* only during his own *Kiddush* and it may stay uncovered during the *Kiddush* made by others (*S.S.K.* 47:25).]

VI: If one makes *Kiddush* and is planning to eat cake or cookies, does he have to cover the pastries in front of him? Similarly, by a *Kiddush* where one person recites *Kiddush* for everyone present, is it necessary to cover all the cake and cookies on the table?

Some *Poskim* say that with regard to covering cake and cookies there is room to be lenient because these items do not require a remembrance for the *man*. Additionally, the reason of showing honor for *Shabbos* doesn't apply by day. Regarding the reason of embarrassment, there is a dispute in the *Poskim* if this applies to *mezonos* foods. Some *Poskim* say that even *mezonos* items must be covered so that they shouldn't be embarrassed (*Kitzur S.A.* 55:5), while others say that *mezonos* items need not be covered. Since one may not recite *Kiddush* on such items they will not be embarrassed (*Taamei Minhagim Kuntres Achron* 365, see *A.A. Butchatch siman* 182). Therefore, some say that one need not cover all the pastries if it is difficult to do so (*Oz Nidberu* 2:8). Others say that the one reciting *Kiddush*, and all others that plan on tasting the *Kiddush* wine, should cover the cake and cookies that they plan on eating because then there is concern of embarrassing the pastries (*S.S.K.* 47 s.k. 125).

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