

Ohr Shabbos

Shoneh Halachos - Hilchos Pesach (Part 2)

The following is a translation of an excerpt from the Shoneh Halachos, a sefer by Rav Chaim Kanievsky that summarizes the halachos found in Mishnah Brurah and other sefarim.

3) There is a minhag to collect wheat to distribute to the poor of the community for the sake of Pesach. This is known as Maos Chittin. This is an ancient custom from the times of the Gemarah. The citizens of a community can compel one another to give this wheat. And in our nation, the minhag is to distribute flour instead of wheat. This is because it is easier for the poor to benefit from flour than from wheat.

Anyone who lives in a city for 12 months of more is chayav to give to the poor of this city, even if it is not his intention to live in that city. Nowadays, the minhag is to shorten this timespan to merely 30 days. However, if a person moves into a city and his intention is to live there long term, he must give even if he has not been there for 30 days. And even a Talmud Chacham who is normally patur from paying taxes is still chayav to give.

4) The correct amount to give to Maos Chittin is dependent on each person's financial circumstances. One who withholds from giving Maos Chittin bares guilt for his transgression. It is well known that poor people look forward to Maos Chittin, and when they are left bereft and hungry, and a person turns a blind eye to it, the Gemarah in Sanhedrin 35 applies, see there and perush Rashi. And this that Chazal made this takanah

only for Pesach and not for other Yomim Tovim is because it is not permissible to eat chametz on Pesach, and matzah, it's substitute, is not so commonly found. And so, if we don't prepare wheat or flour for the poor for all the days of Pesach, the poor person may very well go hungry or be compelled to transgress the issur of eating chametz. Furthermore, Pesach is a time of celebrating freedom; this is why we sit reclined at the seder. And each person in his own home should be in great joy. Therefore, it is not showing proper Kavod to Hashem if we allow the poor to go hungry and thirsty. So we must supply them with flour or wheat for all the days of Pesach so that they can also celebrate the exodus with joy.

Parshas Tazria

R' Moshe Rubanowitz



Last week's פרשה ends with זאת תורת הבהמה והעו and this week's פרשה begins with אשה רבי שמלאי. כי תזריע כשם שיצירתו של אדם אחר כל בהמה חיה ועוף במעשה ועו בראשית כך תורתו נתפרשה אחר תורת הבהמה חיה - the אדם מעשה בראשית was created after all the other creatures, so too אשה כי תזריע זאת תורת הבהמה והעוף follows מדרש stands in conflict with another מדרש in the פרשה. In תהלים קלט it says אדם אחר וקדם צרתני לו אתה קדמת לכל מעשה בראשית ואם לאו אומרים... יתוש קדמך - If a person is meritorious, it can be said that he preceded all of creation, as we are נשמת כלל ישראל preceded מעשה בראשית. However, if he is not meritorious it can be said that even the mosquito preceded him. It appears that the sequence of our פרשה is only for one who is not meritorious, how does the פרשה coordinate with a person who is meritorious? ר' מרדכי יהודה ליב explain that the distinguishing factor between man and all other creatures lies with his ability to be בוחר - to choose. If he chooses, he can rise to incredible heights and may even be mistaken for הקב"ה. When a person is born - אשה כי תזריע וילדה זכר בעל מום and understandably created after the animals. However, וביום

a person is given a ברית מילה and כניסה לבריתו של אברהם אבינו provided with the בחירה to soar the סולמו של יעקב אבינו, rising higher than even the מלאכים. It truly can be said of a Ben Torah: אתה קדמת לכל מעשה בראשית.

Based on what we just learned, it becomes apparent that it is the מילה of מילה in this week's פרשה that empowers the gift of בחירה that lies at the heart of פסוק החודש הזה לכם ראש חדשים ראשון הוא לכם לחדשי השנה - This month is the beginning of all months, it is for you a first for the months of the year. The ספורנו explains: ראשון הוא לכם - כי בו התחיל מציאותכם הבחירי is a beginning of the year because it is then that you became free to initiate your life of בחירה. Rav Shimshon Pinkus Zt"l explains how every year, during the first month of the year, a person is obligated to make use of the opportunity, apply his כח הבחירה, and redefine his מצוות תורה and תורה. According to the ספורנו, החודש הזה לכם means to exercise the הבחירה with new choices of דביקות to ה', choosing what to do and what to stop doing, all to enhance our דביקות. A yid must muster the תענוגי his strength to relinquish his עולם הזה and embrace עולם הבא. ראש חודש על ה' he will truly rejuvenate his relationship for the entire year.

Inspiring Stories

As the full, fearsome effects of the coronavirus began to make themselves known around the world, public officials decreed limits on the number of people who were permitted to gather in one place. For couples whose weddings were scheduled during those critical weeks, all their careful planning collapsed. Getting the couple married as quickly as possible, before the bans became even more restrictive, was the top priority. Bewildered kallahs heard such news as, "Your wedding is this afternoon in our neighbor's nice backyard! Mazel tov!" For a young woman named Chana, this meant that the wedding of her dreams would now include just 50 people, who would gather outdoors and be forced to disband by 8 p.m., when the citywide curfew required everyone to be off the streets. She took the news hard. Her father, broken-hearted to see his daughter in tears when she should be suffused with joy, didn't know how to comfort her. He turned to Rabbi Fishel Schachter and asked him to give his daughter some much-needed encouragement. Shortly before her chuppah, Chana got on the phone and asked Rabbi Schachter, "What is Hashem doing to me? Why would He do this? I can't believe this is happening!" Rabbi Schachter tried to find the right words to help her, but he saw that his efforts were falling short. "Before you were born," he said, "this is exactly what Hashem had planned for you. It's all in the hands of Hashem." The kallah began to cry. "I know, I know, but it doesn't help. Please tell me something I can hold onto," she sobbed. As Rabbi Schachter tried to think of some calming words, he prayed to Hashem for the right idea. Suddenly, he saw that his son was trying to reach him on the phone. Normally he wouldn't interrupt a call to pick up another one, but because he needed some time to think, he decided to put Chana on hold for a few moments. "Hi, Tatty," his son said. "My menahel asked me about the chocolate-bar story you once told. He wanted to get the details exactly and I couldn't remember. Can you remind me, please?" Rabbi Schachter gave him a quick synopsis of the story and excused himself. "Sorry, but I'm busy on the other line talking to a kallah," he said, "I'll call you back later and give you the whole story. But thanks for reminding me about it. You're Hashem's messenger!" Back on the line with Chana, he told her this story. One day, as Rabbi Mendlowitz taught his class, he told them that whoever could memorize the Mishnayos they had learned that day would get a chocolate bar. That night, a boy reviewed what he had learned in school. The next day, Rabbi Mendlowitz tested him and he passed. However Rabbi Mendlowitz had brought only nine bars of chocolate, while there were 10 boys who had memorized the Mishmayos. This boy was the one who didn't get his chocolate. "Don't worry," Rabbi Mendlowitz told him. "Come to me tomorrow and I'll have a bar of chocolate for you." But the next day, the boy was embarrassed to ask for his chocolate. He assumed that his rebbi would offer it to him if he had remembered to bring it. When the end of the day came and he still hadn't been given his chocolate, he felt dejected. At home, he told his mother what had happened. She calmed him down and helped him to overcome the feeling that he had been forgotten. The boy returned to school the next day ready to learn, and went on to become one of Rabbi Mendlowitz's top students. In fact, this boy grew up to be a leading disseminator of Torah in a small Jewish community. Fifty years after the chocolate-bar incident, this student, now a middle-aged man, had a massive heart attack and fell into a coma. His doctor gave him a slim chance of survival. However, the day after his heart attack, he began to emerge from the coma; from there, he made a miraculous recovery. When he recovered enough to speak, he told his wife that he knew he was going to live. "How do you know?" she asked. "While I was unconscious, Rabbi Mendlowitz

came to me and said, 'Don't I owe you a bar of chocolate? I'm going to make sure you are repaid. You are going to live.' That's how I knew!" the man said. Rabbi Schachter then connected the story to the kallah and the disappointment she was feeling. "Never in the history of America, since Jews came to this country, did anyone have to get married the way you are getting married tonight," he said. "Hashem certainly has a reason for it, but realize that you are not going to lose out. He is going to store that simchah for you and repay you at a later date when you need it most, just like the story of the chocolate. You will not lose out on all the simchah you were supposed to have on your wedding night. Rest assured that Hashem has a plan, and you will be rewarded for the emunah you display in this difficult situation." This is a heartening message for every chassan and kallah or bar mitzvah boy whose plans had to be changed and drastically scaled down. It was difficult to have your simchah during that period, but Hashem has a plan, and He has great reward in store for every person who strengthens his or her emunah during a challenging time. The day will come when your "chocolate-bar" reward will be paid in full.

Weekly Challenge

"I've always been healthy and a I'm a first born male, my parents are observant Jews yet I'm exempt from circumcision. Who am I?"

Last Time: Which Tractate's name is the antonym (opposite) of the name of the seder of which it is part? **Answer:** Chulin is in the seder Kodshim

A Glimpse Inside

R' Ari Nussbaum



I'm a born and bred Torontonionian. In fact my family has a lot of history in Toronto. My great-grandfather was one of the cities Shochtim, and my grandfather was one of the original founders of the Clanton Park Synagogue. I attended Yeshivas Eitz Chaim for elementary school and Yeshivas Ner Yisroel for high school and Bais Hamedrash. I spent a year and a half in Eretz Yisroel, and 4 years in the Lakewood Yeshiva. Following the advice of my Rebbe, Rabbi Meyerfeld Shlita, I joined the Thornhill Kollel. It was one of the best things that ever happened to me. Besides being able to learn in the Kollel, I was given the opportunity to lead the Kinyan Hamasechta Chabura. It has been a game-changer for me ever since. I have tremendous Hakaros Hatov to the Rosh Kollel to be part of such an amazing matziv. What makes this Kollel and community so special, is that everyone can be themselves, and that we're all here for one reason. To Shtaig!