



# שמיני קולנו

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## LECHEM MISHNA

*Rabbi Michael Taubes*

When Moshe discusses with Bnai Yisrael the procedure for collecting the Manna, he explains that no Manna will fall on Shabbos (Shemos 16:26). The Torah indicates that a two day supply fell on Friday and kept fresh through Shabbos (16:24), and reports that on Friday people indeed collected double the amount of Manna (16:22). The Gemara in Shabbos (117b) derives from here that one is required to begin each Shabbos meal with two whole loaves of bread to commemorate this double portion of Manna; this requirement is known as the Mitzvah of Lechem Mishneh.

There is a dispute, however regarding the nature of this obligation. The Taz, for example (Orach Chaim: Siman 678 Seif Katan 2) holds that it is MideOraisa; the Magen Avraham (Siman 254: Seif Katan 23) writes, though, that it is not such a strict obligation, implying that it is only MideRabbanan, and this seems to be the majority opinion. In ruling that women too are obligated in the Mitzvah of Lechem Mishneh, Rabbeinu Tam (Sefer Hayashar L'Rabbeinu Tam: sh'ut: Siman 70: chelek 4) concurs with the latter view, explaining that since the Mitzvah is only MideRabbanan, the usual exemption of women from time-governed Mitzvos does not apply. But this point is itself subject to dispute. Rashi in Berachos (20b s.v. *v'chayvin*) holds this way, but Tosafos there (20b s.v. *B'tfillah*) and others disagree. There is also some question as to the accuracy of the text in this part of Rabbeinu Tam's teshuvah.

Rabbeinu Tam, however, advances another reason for obligating women in Lechem Mishneh despite its being a Mitzvah governed by time: they too benefitted from the double portion of Manna, and they are thus obligated because "*Af hein hayu be'oso ha'nes*", they too were beneficiaries of the miracle. This reason is suggested by others

as well (Pri Megadim *b'mishbitzos zahav laorach chaim* Siman 274: Seif Katan 1, in the name of the Avudraham). The Maharam of Rothenburg, however, (Sh'ut *Maharam M'rutenberg, hotza'at mosad harav cook* Siman 255) objects to this, saying *Af hein hayu be'oso ha'nes* is a reason to include women only in Mitzvos designed to commemorate a miracle which saved the Jewish people from danger, such as hearing the Megillah on Purim, lighting candles on Chanukah, and drinking the Arba Kosos on Pesach. But a Mitzvah like Lechem Mishneh does not commemorate a miraculous salvation. The Maharam appears, however, to agree in principle that women are obligated in Lechem Mishneh.

Rav Shlomo Kluger (Sh'ut *ha'elef lecha Shlomo*: Siman 114) attempts to defend the practice of women who do not observe the Mitzvah of Lechem Mishneh by saying that the rule of *Af hein hayu be'oso ha'nes* is inapplicable here for a different reason. Kerias HaMegillah, Ner Chanukah, and Arba Kosos were all instituted to give thanks to Hashem for a specific miracle. Hence women, who also benefitted from the miracle, must also give thanks. But having Lechem Mishneh does not involve thanking; it is rather a mere commemoration of the fact that a double portion of Manna fell on Fridays. It therefore has the status of a regular Mitzvah which, since it is time-governed, women are exempt from. Rav Ovadyah Yosef, though (Sh'ut *Yabia Omer: Chelek 6*: Siman 28 Ot 4) finds this logic highly questionable and says that it is against the view of most authorities. It is interesting that the Ran in Shabbos (48a *B'dapey ha'rif s.v. uchtav*) writes that applying the reason of *Af hein hayu be'oso ha'nes* is altogether unnecessary; women are obligated in Lechem Mishneh simply because they are included in all positive obligations of Shabbos, as indicated by the Gemara in Berachos (20b). It should be noted that one person at the table may recite HaMotzi over Lechem Mishneh on behalf

בשלה—יתרו  
Beshalach—  
Yisro

of everybody else present.

The Shulchan Aruch (Siman 271: Seif 9) notes that a tablecloth should be on the table beneath the bread, and another covering should be placed on top of the bread. Several reasons are suggested for this practice. The Rosh in Pesachim (Perek 10; Siman 3), among others, quotes that this is in order not to “embarrass” the bread. This is based on the fact that ordinarily, the Beracha on bread should precede the Beracha on wine (*Ayain Berachot 41a. Shulchan Aruch Siman 211: Seif 4. Saif 5* in the Rama). But because we recite Kiddush over wine and not bread, the Beracha on wine must obviously come first in this case; the bread is thus covered and becomes as if it were not there. Two other explanations are cited by Tosafos in Pesachim (100b. s.v. She’ayn); one is that covering the bread constitutes an act of Kavod Shabbos, as implied by the Gemara there, and the other is that just as the Manna was “sandwiched” between two layers of dew, so too the Lechem Mishneh which commemorates the Manna is “sandwiched” between two cloths. The Mishnah Berurah (Siman 271; Seif Katan 41) points out that the question of whether the bread may be uncovered immediately after Kiddush or must remain covered until HaMotzi will depend on which of the above is the primary reason for covering the bread.

## YISRO AND MOSHE'S CHILDREN

*Chaim Miller*

In this *parsha* Moshe and his wife Tziporah had two children. The names of the children tell over the story of his wandering before he returned to Egypt to be Hashem’s messenger who would redeem the Jewish people. We learn that the name of his first born son was Gershom because, “I was a stranger, in a strange land.” We also learn the reason for his second son, Eliezer is because “The lord of my father, helped me and rescued me from the sword of Pharaoh.” Seemingly, Eliezer’s name seems

to be straightforward. However, Geshom’s name seems to include extraneous words.

The Baal Haturim explains that these words elude to a *Midrash* in Parshat Shemot. The *Midrash* states that Yisro gave Moshe permission to marry Tzipporah only on the condition that he deliver his firstborn son to be trained for the priest hood of Avodah Zarah. Moshe had no choice but to allow Yisro to have his firstborn son, who turned out to be Gershom. Why did Moshe give Gershom to Yisro? Many of us know the answer to be that he was a stranger in a strange land and was not in a position to reject his prospective father-in-law’s conditions to marriage. The Baal Haturim further explains that Moshe believed this was the right thing to do. He wanted to bring Yisro close to Hashem, and he felt he could do this by marrying Tziporah. However, the obvious question is—what was Yisro thinking? According to the *Midrash*, Yisro was a real truth seeker. He came to the realization that the Avodah Zarah of Midian was nonsense. He then traveled all over the world to investigate the cults of different kinds of Avodah Zarah, and he rejected them. He then publicly renounced his Avodah Zarah. So why exactly did Yisro want the firstborn son of Moshe for Avodah Zarah?

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz offers an answer to this question. Yisro believed the Torah was the truth, however, he believed like what he had done in his lifetime, that the only way to discover truth is to find the fault in the rest of the world. This was what he wanted to do with Gershom. He wanted to prove to him that the Torah was the best way of life, through research, however, this is not the way of the Torah. We do the *Mitzvos* because we are obligated to perform them as servants. Children do not have the ability to choose from a platter of ideas in the world and pick the truth. The truth is right in front of them. For this reason we do the *Mitzvos* with an inner will, knowing that this is what Hashem wants.

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## PAROH: DESERVEDLY EVIL?

*Abraham Wein*

Parshas Beshalach continues the story of Bnei Yisrael in Mitzrayim. Throughout this episode, the Egyptians and specifically Pharaoh are viewed as being very evil for their actions to the Bnei Yisrael. There is a very simple question that can be asked. Why do we view Pharaoh and the Egyptians as being so evil?

During that time period, slavery was an extremely common practice. Is it fair to dub the Egyptians as evil for doing such a common and normal practice? A suggestion as to why it may be fair to call Pharaoh and the Egyptians evil is because of the lack of gratitude they showed to Bnei Yisrael after Yosef. Another possibility is the other actions Pharaoh and his emissaries did; such as throwing babies into the river. Rashi comments though (14,4), that the reason the punishment began with Pharaoh was because he ignited the sin, clearly referring to slavery. This still leaves us with the original question of why we consider Pharaoh and the Egyptians to be so evil.

I would like to suggest an answer to this question. Perhaps everyone was practicing brutal slavery at this time. Nonetheless, does that change it from being a sin? The concept of justifying your actions by saying others were doing the same bad action, is not one that is acceptable in Judaism. The fact that others were practicing slavery, does not change brutal slavery from being a terrible sin for the Egyptians.

This idea is very powerful. We must evaluate our actions without considering what others are doing. We must act ourselves- is our action inherently wrong regardless of whether others are doing the same action? Hopefully, by practicing this type of self-evaluation we will be lead towards improving our service to G-d.

Weekly Chasidishe Mayseh

Reb Zusha Ma'anipole was famous for his unconditional happiness throughout his poverty stricken and often ill life. In that same town of Anipole, the rav of the town was a man living comfortably, always receiving much respect from the community but yet he always found himself in a sad mood. When the Rav couldn't handle it any-

more he decided to sneak out of his house late at nite and see R Zusha. When he arrived he asked R Zusha what the reason for his constant sadness was while R' zusha was always in high spirits. R' Zusha explained to the rav- "Last weak one of the big philanthropists in town, named Reb Moshe made a wedding and sent someone around inviting all the guests. When the messenger got to your house you found you were 14<sup>th</sup> on the invitation list and became enraged. You decided to come to the wedding two hours late and when you did there were no seats left and all the food was gone. You ended up in the back of the room with left over food and left the wedding fuming. The messenger got to my house after yours and I was elated that R Moshe had decided to invite me. I showed up to the wedding early to see if I could help set up. I sat at a table with good food and even became the *Misader Kiddushin*." R' zusha

\*\*\*\* YU Contributor \*\*\*\*

## THE POWER OF SHIRA

*Elithu Abbe*

Have you ever been to Machteish Rimon in Eretz Yisrael? It's a gigantic crater that you can hardly see across. When I was in Eretz Yisrael for the year, we went to the Negev for a Yeshiva Shabbaton. We said Kabbalas Shabbos at an observation point overlooking the crater. The breathtaking view, and a feeling of belonging to such a beautiful world created by such a powerful Ribbono Shel Olam, were the inspiration for one of the sweetest Kabbalas Shabbos's I have ever experienced.

The Ohr Hachaim explains the passuk of "az yashir" in this manner. "When an appreciation of Hashem's awesomeness and a complete faith entered their hearts, they merited to sing *Shirato* Hashem with *Ruach Hakodesh*."

At a time of inspiration, we turn to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and sing *Shira*. And if one can inspire oneself to the point

where he sings *Shira*, it is possible to reach levels of spirituality that can even culminate in *Ruach Hakodesh*.

The Gemara in Sanhedrin (94a) learns out an amazing thing from the last few pesukim of our Haftorah. The pesukim refer to the time of Chizkiyahu as a time of endless peace. The Gemara teaches that Hashem considered making Chizkiyahu the Mashiach but decided not to, because Chizkiyahu had not sung *Shira* after being miraculously saved from Sancheiriv's army. So we see, amazingly, *Shira* has the power to bring mashiach and the power to withhold mashiach.

Rashi on the first passuk of Shir Hashirim brings a statement of Rabbi Akiva: "The world was never as worthy as the day Shir Hashirim was composed. All of Tanach is holy, but Shir Hashirim is the holiest of the holy." There is nothing that tops singing to Hashem.

After Klal Yisrael defended themselves successfully against Sisrah's army, Devorah sings her famous *Shira*. The subsequent perek begins by saying that Bnei Yisrael sinned. Rashi notes that throughout Sefer Shoftim, whenever Bnei Yisrael sin, the pasuk says that "They continued to sin." Here, the passuk doesn't say the word "continued." Rashi explains that when Devorah sang her *Shira*, all of Bnei Yisrael's aveiros were forgiven. Hashem considered it as if they hadn't sinned in the past. Therefore, the passuk couldn't say that they "continued" to sin.

The Mishnah Berurah quotes a Zohar that one should sing the *Shiras Hayam* every morning with a simcha. One who does so, says the Zohar, will have his aveiros forgiven.

At the end of the first paragraph of Kabbalas Shabbos, the passuk talks about the sins of the "Dor Hamidbar". The next paragraph begins with an expression calling us to sing to Hashem. The paragraph ends by telling us that Hashem will judge the world with righteousness. The pesukim are teaching us this very idea. If one has sinned what should his response be? Should he be depressed or feel lowly? No! Shiru laHashem shir chadash! And through *Shira*, the aveiros will be forgiven and Hashem will judge the world with righteousness.

The Gemara tells us that if one does sincere Teshuva out of love for Hashem, the aveira will be transformed into a mitzvah. This could be the understanding behind the power of *Shira*. The inspiration that generates the *Shira* is a love

for Hashem. The *Shira* itself then magnifies that love. That is the power of *Shira* that leads to atonement.

The *Targum* at the beginning of Shir Hashirim lists ten songs that are sung to Hashem. The last song mentioned is the song that we will sing as Hashem takes us out of galus and brings us to Eretz Yisrael, the song that will introduce "*yemos hamashiach*". May we be zoche to sing that ultimate *Shira* very soon.

## שבת שלום

## Good Shabbos

**Menahel:** Rabbi Michael Taubes

**Rabbinic Advisor:** Rabbi Baruch Pesach Mendelson

**Distribution Coordinator:** Binyamin Pfeiffer

**T.S.A.:** Philip meyer

**Associate Editor:** Akiva Schiff

**Editors-in-Chief:** Meir Finkelstein, Yoni Schwartz