

PARSHAS VAYEIRA

לעילוי נשמת ר' ניסן בן ר' שמואל והעניא בת ר' גרשון • ולעילוי נשמת וועלוועל בן שלמה הלוי ז"ל • ולעילוי נשמת ר' אלטר חיים בן ר' יצחק • ולרפואה שלימה מיכאל איסמר בן אורלי

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What Makes a Mitzvah Zman Grama?

R' Akiva Landy

One of the mitzvos we encounter in this week's parsha is bris milah. The Torah tells us that Avraham Avinu gave Yitzchak a bris when he was eight days old: "וַיִּמַּל אֲבְרָהָם אֶת יִצְחָק בְּנֵוֹ בֶן שְׁמֹנֶת יָמִים כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה אֹתוֹ אֱלֹקִים"

The Gemara in Kiddushin (29a) learns from the words "אֹתוֹ וְלֹא אֻתְּרָה" that the father is the one chayuv to give his son a bris milah, while the mother is exempt from this mitzvah. This raises an obvious question. Why do we need a special pasuk to exempt women? After all, נשים פטורות ממצות עשה שהזמן גרמא, women are not obligated in time bound mitzvos. Since milah must be performed on the eighth day, why shouldn't it be considered a מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא?

Tosfos in Kiddushin raises this very question and answers although milah should initially be performed on the eighth day, if it was not performed then, the chiyuv still remains after. Since the mitzvah can still be fulfilled after its initial time has passed, milah is not considered a regular מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא.

However, the question still remains. Milah may only be performed during the daytime. Why shouldn't that make it a מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא?

The Ramban offers two answers. The first answer is that the Gemara is following the opinion that a delayed milah may be performed both during the daytime and at night. According to that opinion, the daytime restriction would not present a problem.

The Ramban then offers another approach. Perhaps מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא applies specifically to mitzvos performed on one's own body, such as tefillin. Milah, however, is a mitzvah performed on someone else. Therefore one might have thought that a mother should also have the chiyuv of milah for their sons just as fathers have

a responsibility to ensure that milah is performed. The Torah therefore teaches us "אֹתוֹ וְלֹא אֻתְּרָה", the father is obligated, but the mother is not.

The Divrei Yechezkel (סימן מ"ה אות ד') takes this a step further. A lot of people have difficulty with the Ramban on why he considers Sefiras HaOmer to not be a מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא when we only count from Pesach until Shavuot, so how can it not be time-bound?

The Divrei Yechezkel takes the definition of מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא a step further and explains that we need to distinguish between a mitzvah whose timing is intrinsic to the mitzvah itself and a mitzvah whose timing is determined by another factor.

Sefiras HaOmer is connected to the Korban HaOmer. Its counting begins in connection with the bringing of the korban. The fact that the mitzvah takes place on a particular date is therefore not necessarily because that date itself is the source of the obligation. Rather, the date follows from the requirement to bring the Korban HaOmer. As the Divrei Yechezkel explains, its timing is מצד "ההכרח", a consequence of the underlying requirement rather than "מצד זמנו בעצמותו", meaning that the time itself is intrinsic to the mitzvah.

We can apply this distinction back to bris milah.

The father's mitzvah is to circumcise his son. The bris must be performed on the eighth day, but the Divrei Yechezkel explains that the timing is not intrinsic to the father's obligation in the same way that a fixed calendar date defines a mitzvah such as sukkah. Rather, the timing is determined by the milah that must be performed on the child.

This gives us a deeper understanding of מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא. The question is not simply whether a mitzvah has a specific time, but whether that time is intrinsic to the mitzvah itself or is determined by something else.

No Questions Asked

R' Yaakov Gewirtz

Rav Nochumke of Horodna ז"ל was once giving a Chumash shiur when someone asked, "What was so great about the Akeida? If Hashem commanded me to do it, I would also listen!"

Rav Nochumke explained that when Hashem told Avraham Avinu, "Es bincha, es yechidcha, asher ahavta, es Yitzchak," with every word, Hashem was instilling within Avraham an even greater love for Yitzchak. Each word strengthened his emotional attachment to his beloved son, making the nisayon that much more difficult. Despite this overwhelming love, Avraham Avinu was prepared to fulfill the ratzon Hashem.

Rav Elya Ber Wachtfogel shlita explains another aspect of what made the Akeida such a tremendous nisayon.

Avraham Avinu had spent his entire life bringing countless people close to Hashem. He taught the world that the ways of Hashem are pleasant and peaceful, unlike the avodah zarah of those who sacrificed their own children to their gods.

Now, Hashem was commanding him to do something that seemingly contradicted everything he had spent his life teaching. What would all those people think? Wouldn't this destroy everything he had accomplished in spreading kavod Shamayim?

Furthermore, Avraham Avinu knew that Klal Yisrael was destined to come from him through Yitzchak. By sacrificing Yitzchak, he would seemingly be giving up the tremendous zechus of having Klal Yisrael descend from him.

Despite all these seemingly valid concerns, Avraham Avinu did not question Hashem or attempt to negotiate. He understood that his responsibility was simply to fulfill the ratzon Hashem, regardless of whether he understood it.

This is our avodah as well. We may sometimes have convincing reasons for wanting to do things differently. However, once we know what Hashem wants from us, there is no room for negotiations.

Our guiding question must always be, "What is the ratzon Hashem at this moment?" Once we know the answer, our responsibility is to follow His will wholeheartedly.

WEEKLYTIDBITS

Chessed for Us

Rabbi Efreim Goldberg quotes the Alter of Kelm, who explains that the Torah shares the story of Avraham Avinu welcoming the malachim to teach us an important lesson about the true value of chessed.

When we read about the tremendous effort Avraham Avinu put into welcoming his guests, we might wonder what was accomplished. After all, the malachim did not need to eat! Avraham Avinu went to great lengths to prepare a meal for guests who had no need for the food he served them.

The Torah is teaching us that the value of chessed is not measured only by what the recipient gains, but also by what the person performing the chessed gains.

Every act of chessed helps us develop our middos and become more caring and giving individuals. When we give to others, we are not only helping them, but we are also working on ourselves, becoming less focused on our own needs and more sensitive to the needs of those around us.

Chessed is therefore not only about what we do for others. It is also about the kind of person we become through giving.

The Segula of Hachnasas Orchim

Rav Chaim Palagi zt"l says that the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim protects a person's home from fire. This mitzvah brings kedusha to the walls of the house and protects it from tzaros.

Rav Moshe Shternbuch shlita relates in the name of the son of the Brisker Rav zt"l that a person who opens his home to guests and makes his house available to others is zoche to have sons. If he already has sons, he is zoche that they will become gedolim in Torah and yiras Shamayim.

Rav Shteinman zt"l would advise people who were, lo aleinu, seriously ill to invite guests into their homes. He explained that Avraham Avinu was healed in the zechus of the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim.

Hosting guests and doing chesed are not always easy. Sometimes they require extra effort and sacrifice. However, Chazal teach us that **לפום צערא אגרא** – the greater the effort involved in performing a mitzvah, the greater the reward.

When we go out of our way to make others feel welcome, we not only bring happiness to our guests, but also bring tremendous zechusim and bracha into our own homes.

Shabbos Inspired

This week's parsha teaches us the importance of chesed and hachnasas orchim, as demonstrated by Avraham Avinu.

Every Shabbos, we have the privilege of hosting a very special guest, our neshama yeseira. The Zohar refers to Shabbos as Yoma D'Nishmasin, a day of the neshamos.

Just as a good host understands what his guests need, we must recognize what our neshama needs. It does not come simply to enjoy delicious food and rest. It longs for the nourishment of Torah, zemiros and the kedusha of Shabbos.

During the week, our daily responsibilities can cause us to overlook the needs of our neshama.

Shabbos gives us the opportunity to practice chesed with our own neshama by providing the spiritual nourishment it needs.

When we nourish our neshama yeseira, its influence can remain with us long after Shabbos ends.

WEEKLYSCENARIO

Someone insulted you, and you feel hurt by what was said. You know that in reality, the insult is meaningless and should not bother you, yet you are having difficulty getting past it. What can you do to move on?

Something to think about:

Rabbi Zelig Pliskin quotes Rav Yitzchok Blazer zt"l, who gives a mashal:

Someone has a rotten tooth causing tremendous pain. Another person angrily slaps him, knocking out the tooth. Although

he would never have chosen to be slapped, he can appreciate that it relieved his pain.

Similarly, although insulting someone is wrong, the insult can serve as a kapara for our aveiros. This is something we can appreciate even while feeling hurt.

Furthermore, everything comes from Hashem. The insult was meant to happen, and the person was merely the messenger. Recognizing this can help us let go of our hurt rather than remain upset with him.

A change in perspective can make it much easier to let go of the hurt and move forward. It is all up to us how we choose to look at the situation.

WEEKLYZMANIM

FRIDAY

5:36 Candle Lighting
5:54 Shekiya

SHABBOS

7:26 Neitz
9:21 Kriyas Shema (MA)
10:02 Kriyas Shema (Gra)
10:55 Zman Tefillah
12:39 Chatzos
1:09 Mincha Gedolah
5:53 Shekiya
6:35 Tzeis Hakoachavim
7:05 72 Minutes

RIDDLE ME THIS

Can you name at least two people in the Torah whose grandfather also became their father-in-law?

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LAST ISSUE - Q: How can you have someone who came to shul on Shabbos or Yom Tov, who may not do פתחת ארון הקודש? A: One is not allowed to walk past the entrance to a shul while they are davening (there are exceptions), however one is allowed to ride past on an animal. א"י צ"ח