



Benevolent Blossoming: Parshat Bo

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

Summary by Channie Koplowitz Stein

From the verse in Parshat Bo, "Today you are leaving, in the month of springtime," to dual references in Parshat Ki Sisa, and an additional reference in Parshat Re'eh, we are repeatedly reminded of the connection between Pesach, the holiday of redemption and the spring season

Rashi writes: "See the kindness that He has done for you, that he brought you out in a month that is fitting to go out, not too hot and not too cold..." The Dorash Mordechai notes that almost all the time we were in the desert we were surrounded by the clouds of glory. Why then did we need such perfect weather? The only time we were not so surrounded by the clouds of glory was immediately after we left Egypt, when Hashem carried us on eagles' wings from Ramses to Succot, a voyage of less than eighteen minutes, when the dough did not have time to rise. This is precisely the proof that Rabbi Broide presents of Hashem's great love for us. He wrapped the gift of redemption, so to speak, by placing it in a perfectly decorated time box. Even these eighteen minutes were to be pleasant and beautiful.

One could say that Hashem redeemed us from the slavery of Egypt because He had pity on us. Rabbi Goldwicht cites the Gemara to

prove that this was not the case. A Jew is characterized by three major traits; mercifulness, feeling shame, and doing loving kindness. Mercy is triggered by external factors. We see someone drowning or a child crying and we rush to help. But as soon as the crisis is over, we move on and forget about it. In contrast, loving kindness, finds its source and foundation within ourselves, from a place of love. Saving the drowning man may simply be an act of mercy, but sewing the button back on his shirt so that he looks presentable when he meets those waiting to greet him is an act of pure kindness that goes beyond simple mercy. Such is Hashem's relationship to us, and such is the relationship He desires from us, not only towards Him, but to others. Hashem modeled this behavior for us, doing for us even what we did not ask but what would be pleasant.

Rabbi Broide explains that Hashem took us out of Egypt during the month of spring as an analogy to our relationship with Him which should always be fresh, blossoming and growing. Hashem planned it this way so that our souls would be revitalized as our bodies were being redeemed. The name Pesach itself is a leaping forward, contrary to nature which takes its time. On Pesach, especially on the first night, we have the ability to take giant

leaps in spiritual development, sensitivity and growth, for the redemption itself took place in the blink of an eye. As Rabbi Tatz explains, it was necessary for the redemption to take place supernaturally so that we would recognize the spirituality behind it. If it had proceeded slowly, we would have perceived ourselves as a product of nature, rather than as a people with a spiritual destiny. The difference between *chametz* and *matzah* is only a second of time just as the difference in writing the words in Hebrew is only in a speck of ink. One moment's difference can make the outcome a *mitzvah* or a sin punishable by excision. Therein lies the lesson for the performance of any *mitzvah*; to keep it fresh and vital and prevent it from becoming stale, it should be performed with alacrity, for every second counts.

Therefore the Torah insists, "Today you are leaving, in the month of springtime..." "We are always to be moving away from complacency and apathy. Every day should be a day of renewal and growth, says the Ozorover Rov. This is why Hashem created the month of spring, to inspire us to grow spiritually as the natural world grows physically. This was the great *chessed* that Hashem did for us by taking us out of Egypt precisely during this time.

The Project of Parenting

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hershel Reichman

There are three very important principles that every Torah Jew should implement in every major project he undertakes, *hishtadlut* (action), *bitachon* (trust), and *tefilah* (prayer). The Torah is an action based system. We have 248 positive commandments almost all of which involve doing. This goes back to the original creation of Adam and Chava who were placed in Gan Eden to work and guard it. It says in Iyov, "Man was created to work." We read in Bereishit, "Six days you shall work..." The Torah places great confidence in humanity's ability to do and create and be a partner with Hashem as it says, "*Asher bara Elokim lasot.*" Hashem created the world but He left it unfinished for people to bring it to completion. We are meant to accomplish. Likewise, we have to be active parents.

Parenting must involve *hishtadlut*. Raising children relates to the positive commandment of, "You shall teach your children ..." It's not sufficient to say, "Parenting will happen on its own. I'll send my children to yeshiva and they will learn there." Children need nurturing and guidance to develop into Torah true Jews.

Just as every *mitzvah* needs preparation, being an active parent involves preparing for the role. The Torah says, "*V'lemadetem et beneichem.*" Teach your children. It follows that parents must first educate themselves. Then they must have a plan how they will impart their knowledge. And finally they must actualize it. There are numerous books on the topic, some written by Jews and some by non-Jews. If it's not a Torah book you don't necessarily have to accept it. But you have to

read widely and study what the experts say. It's also important to find Torah true role models who have successfully parented their own children with whom you can discuss questions and get advice. The goal of Jewish parenting is to produce an *ish shalem*, an upright Torah Jew who loves and fears Hashem, who performs *mitzvot* with joy and stays far away from sin. Anything necessary to attain this goal is what we must do as parents. We must also study the Torah and learn what it tells us about parenting. Sometimes the Torah is explicit such as when it says, "*Chosech shifto sonei et beno.*" (One who spares the rod hates his child.) But there are also many implicit lessons. There's a significant amount of discussion related to teaching Torah which definitely impacts how we should parent. We

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must learn from all of these sources, develop a plan, and put it into action.

There are no instant results, which leads to the second principle - *bitachon*. With anything we do in life, we have to invest effort while at the same time keeping in mind that we are limited and in fact have very little control. Hashem says, do and I will help you succeed.

We must trust that He will support and assist us in achieving our goals. So much can go wrong in the 20 or so years of child-raising. We have to have faith that Hashem will stand by us, which leads to the third point, *tefilah*. We have to pray that Hashem assist us in the fulfilling yet formidable task of raising righteous children dedicated to Hashem. We ask Hashem every day, "Let us be busy with

Torah... make it sweet... let all of our children know Your name... and let them study the Torah for its own sake."

May we merit to invest the right measure of *hishtadlut*, *bitachon*, and *tefilah* in the incredible endeavor of raising children to grow into true *avdei Hashem*.

Ask The Dayan #4

Based on a Naaleh.com Q&A Series by Dayan Shlomo Cohen

Question:

Rachel took her broken Shabbat candlesticks to her local silversmith to fix. Before she could come to collect them again, there was a break-in in the shop and the candlesticks were stolen. Rachel told the silversmith, "You have to pay me for the damage of the theft." He countered, "Well, I don't have insurance," as if that would exempt him. Is he in fact responsible?

Answer:

In Jewish monetary law, there are different levels of responsibility. An unpaid guardian is only liable for negligence. He is not held responsible for theft or lost items. However a paid guardian is held liable. The Gemara rules that a professional who earns his livelihood by fixing items accepts the responsibility of a paid guardian and is responsible if the item is stolen. It follows that the silversmith is liable for the theft of the candlesticks.

When the customer gave in the broken candlesticks they were worth approximately \$1,000. But after they were fixed, their value increased two fold. Does the silversmith have to pay the value of the broken or repaired candlesticks? The Rishonim argue about this. The Shulchan Aruch rules that all improvements on the object belong to the owner. Therefore the silversmith must pay the full value of the stolen candlesticks. The Shach says the final ruling is not so clear from the

Gemara. Therefore we must say that the *halacha* is *hamotzi l'chavero*. The side that wants to obligate the other side to pay must prove they are right. It follows that according to the Shach, the client would only be able to get the value of the broken candlesticks.

What difference does insurance coverage make in cases of damages? The Ohr Somayach cites a case of a person who rented a wooden bungalow and accepted upon himself all responsibilities in case of fire. Unfortunately the renter wasn't careful and the bungalow caught fire and burnt down. The person paid the damages as promised. But it turned out that the owner had insurance and claimed coverage from the insurance company as well. So he got paid twice for the same damages. The question now arose, did the fact that the owner had insurance exempt the renter who took responsibility for the damages?

Nowadays this question wouldn't be relevant. The insurance company won't let you claim twice. They themselves will make a claim from the offender. And if you do try to claim again, you're cheating the insurance company which is stealing. The Ohr Somayach brings a case from the Gemara. Reuven and Shimon had to cross a river and both of their horses got washed away. Shimon told Reuven to dive into the water and save his horse and he'd pay Reuven for losing his own horse. Reuven agreed and saved Shimon's horse. It then

turned out that Reuven's horse had managed to get out of the water by himself. So now Reuven would be paid for saving Shimon's horse while he still had his own horse. The Ohr Somayach points out that this is similar to the case of the insurance company. The fact that the owner had a deal with the insurance company is his business. It's no reason to exempt the renter who caused the damages.

One night, a man inadvertently smashed into his neighbor's Buick and caused serious damage to the car door. He was embarrassed to admit what he had done and since no one saw him, he didn't say anything. The owner had the car repaired. He paid \$500 out of his own pocket and his insurance company covered the rest of the bill which amounted to \$9500. *Erev Yom Kippur*, the neighbor began feeling pangs of guilt and admitted his mistake to his neighbor. He said, "I'll pay you back the \$500 you had to pay." Is that in fact all the damage he has to pay? We learn from the case brought by the Ohr Somayach that insurance coverage won't exempt the offender from any damages that he caused unless a clear condition was made beforehand. For example, if you borrowed someone's car and you told the owner before you started driving, "If I damage the car I'm not going to pay for the whole thing. I'll just pay what your insurance company won't cover." Then the driver is exempt from paying full damages as a clear condition was made.