

Bringing the Farbrengen Home

ROCHEL IMEINU

by Shoshi Wertheimer

Yaakov asks Yosef to bury him in Ma'arat Hamachpela in Eretz Yisroel, despite the fact that he himself didn't bury Rochel there. Rashi says that the reason that Yaakov didn't bury Rochel there was so that in the future when the Jews would pass by her kever on their way to golus, they would daven there.

"I want you to know that I buried her there according to the words of Hashem," Yaakov said to Yosef.

The commentaries offer various explanations; Sforno explains that Yaakov was just too overwhelmed and didn't have the strength to bury her in Ma'arat Hamachpela. Ramban says that Yaakov was not able to leave and abandon his children and cattle in order to take Rochel to Ma'arat Hamachpela.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe asks two questions on Rashi:

1) Why does Rashi bring a midrash, while Sforno & Ramban explain according to pshat (usually it's the opposite)?

2) Rashi says that Rochel is being rewarded for her actions. What actions did she take?

In order to answer these questions we first need to understand that when Yaakov says to Yosef, "I know that you have ...in your heart on me," it doesn't mean that Yosef is holding a grudge. Yosef was not holding a grudge because he knew that Yaakov loved




Rochel and would have done anything for her. Rather, Yaakov is acknowledging that Yosef is still pained by the fact that his mother was not buried in Ma'arat Hamachpela. This feeling in Yosef is being strengthened now because Yaakov is emphasizing the importance of being buried in Ma'arat Hamachpela.

We can understand why Rashi took an answer from Midrash because that answer spoke to comforting and removing the pain in Yosef's heart.

The action that Rochel was rewarded for was giving up being buried in Ma'arat Hamachpela in order to help her children when they were in need.

Rochel was the Akeret Habayit. The main character trait of an Akeret Habayit is to give up their own advantages for her children – just like Rochel gave up being buried in Ma'arat Hamachpela for her children.

Both men and women were created to serve Hashem. The Avodah of men is through Torah, Mitzvos & Tefillah, which is a revealed kind of kedusha. The status of a Yisroel, Levi & Kohen is passed down through the father because it's revealed kedusha. The Avodah of women, however, is not time-bound and is to prioritize her home and family. The status of being a Jew is passed down through women because it's a less revealed kedusha.

The places where Yaakov and Rochel were buried correspond to their Avodah. Yaakov's burial in Ma'arat Hamachpela is revealed while Rochel's burial on the side of the road is not. Rochel gave up her burial plot for her children and therefore Hashem will forgive our sins when she davens on our behalf. 

Me שו"ת Just A Question


Q: In terms of "credits" for davening with a minyan, what is missed out on if one leaves minyan after the repetition of the Amidah, but before Tachanun?

A: It says in Halacha states that one should hear seven *kaddish-es* during davening, and thus if one were to leave after the repetition of the amidah, they would miss out on some of them. It is also proper to recite aleinu with a minyan.

Tefillah AKA prayer AKA davening is about developing a relationship with Hashem. In fact, the word tefillah means connection.

So what happens if you leave before davening is over? Well, what happens if you walk away from someone in the middle of a conversation?

What happens if you "check the boxes" in a relationship (intimate or just a friendship), and just want to make sure that you "did your end of the deal"?

So if a person must leave synagogue early, before prayers are over — due to extenuating circumstances— firstly they should still recite the remaining parts of prayer even without the minyan; and secondly, one should consider if this is a good way to develop a meaningful relationship with Hashem. 

א גוט שבת!

Like riding a bike

Bitter but Good

by Rabbi Shaul Wertheimer

Anybody can appreciate a piece of candy, or a sweet dessert. Certain tastes, however, require a so-called sophisticated palate. Dry wine, beer and coffee, for example, are not usually found at the top of a child's wish list. They are, if you will, acquired tastes.

Now, there were two brothers who went on to become leaders, each in their own right. Rabbis Zushe of Anipoli and Elimelech of Lizhensk are considered among the foremost Chassidic leaders.

Once, in their childhood, their teacher offered them a glass of beer. Reb Elimelech lifted the glass, pronounced the appropriate blessing, and took a sip. His lips pursed, his eyes indicating his distaste.

"It's bitter," he declared.

The teacher then handed a glass to Reb Zushe, who, like his brother, took a sip after saying the blessing.

Making a face similar to that of his older brother, he said, "It's bitter." After a brief pause, he continued, "But it's good."

The teacher quoted a verse from this week's Torah portion, Vayechi (Genesis 48:10), "the older one will be great, but his younger brother will be greater than he."

I don't think that their teacher intended that the boys become beer drinkers. Certainly he had a lesson in mind.

Perhaps the message is that things -- especially bitter things -- are not always what they seem. Sometimes, we need to take a more panoramic view of the events



of our life, and recognize the growth and depth of character that we gain through the "bitter" experiences of life.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not wishing anything bitter on any of you. On the contrary, I wish all of us only blessings for revealed good!

We all experience ups and downs in life. It's easy to appreciate the "sweet" ups -- yet much more trying to appreciate the "bitter" downs. It's kinda like riding a bike: Going downhill may seem like we are descending, yet a broader view suggests that we are merely gaining momentum to climb to even great heights. ☯

Hayom Yom

14 Teves

The Shpola Zeideh ("Grandfather of Shpola"), a disciple of the Maggid of Mezritch, was a man of intense fervor, far more than any of his colleagues - the Maggid's other disciples. When he visited the Alter Rebbe in Liadi in 5569 or 5570 (1809 or 1810) he related that when he was a child of three he saw the Baal Shem Tov. "He placed his holy hand on my heart and ever since I have felt warm."

A gesture of a tzadik, certainly seeing him and hearing his voice, must make an impression never to be forgotten.

Chassidic Story

(continued from last week)

After having ignored a starving beggar, Reuven is forced to live in poverty for 12 months and not allowed to accept help. He is unrecognized by his family. He is only allowed to beg from his family when at the brink of death.

After three days, feeling that he could not go another hour without food and drink, Reuven dragged himself to his family's home and knocked on the door. "My master disappeared without a trace," said the maid, "the family is distraught and you have some nerve begging for food," and she slammed the door shut.

He longed to tell his wife and kids that he was alive but starving but he could not break his oath. Since this was the only place he was allowed to accept food, he was forced to knock again. The maid slammed the door again but he persisted screaming, "give me food or I will die right here tonight."

Reuven realized how cruel he had been all those years to the beggars that had come to his door. Eventually he heard his wife instruct the maid, "let the beggar into the kitchen and give him something to eat." This dynamic repeated itself for many months. Reuven would wait until he was at the brink of starvation and then beg at his family's home.

As per his oath, he rejected many invitations to people's homes and they called him, "the meshugener."

Finally after 12 months he returned home a changed man. His family was overjoyed upon his return. Reuven hosted a grant seudas hoadah and made sure to invite all of the town's poor people to enjoy. After that Reuven accepted every beggar and made set times to distribute Tzedaka. ☯

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