



BEIT MIDRASH ZICHRON DOV TORONTO TORAH

PARASHAT NASO

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DVAR TORAH NASO RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Lessons from a Sotah?

When there are laws found within a narrative text, they often help provide a deeper meaning and understanding of the story line. The narrative text leading up to our parasha deals with counting and organizing the nation in their encampment in the desert as they prepare to enter the land of Israel. In this week's parasha, we find the laws of gifts to the Kohanim followed by the laws of a Sotah, a wife suspected of infidelity. The gifts owing to the Kohen fit the general theme of organizing the nation since one of the financial obligations given to the Kohen is payment for theft when the wronged party has died with no heir. Rashi (5:8) explains that the only situation where a person has no heir would be a convert. After delineating the number and location of each tribe within the encampment there might be a feeling that the property rights of converts wouldn't be respected. The Torah emphasizes that the theft of a convert is equivalent to the theft of a tribal member. The laws of the Sotah could be connected to the general theme as they are a way to determine the lineage of each member of the nation since the tribal identity of each individual follows their father. In the case of suspected infidelity, it becomes essential to determine who the father of the child is. (Ramban, 5:6)

Rashi explains that the law of Sotah, is brought at this point in the Torah not due to its connection to the general theme but rather due to its connection to the previously mentioned law of the requirement to give gifts to the Kohanim.

If you withhold the gifts due to the priest, by your life, you will have to come to him in order to bring him your faithless wife. (Rashi, 5:12)

These traits create distance in the marital relationship

At first glance, this connection seems to be inappropriate. If a person sins then it would make sense for only the person who sinned to suffer a consequence that is commensurate with their action. Why does the husband's sin against the Kohen cause the wife to have to suffer the ordeal of being accused of infidelity? If the goal is to cause the husband to appreciate the Kohen then perhaps it would have been more appropriate to have the husband get the affliction of *tzara'at* and then need the Kohen to help him with the purification process that would allow him to return to society.

A deeper look into the original sin committed by the husband can perhaps help us

understand the connection between the two events. A person who does not give what is owed to the Kohen was likely motivated by greed, selfishness, a lack of appreciation, a sense of self importance or self righteousness. Traits like these that are found in their dealings with the Kohen will then likely manifest in the interpersonal relationships with their family. These traits create distance in the marital relationship that could eventually lead to a wife having an emotional affair with someone else. The Torah isn't telling us that the punishment of the person's sin is to have a wife who becomes a Sotah but rather that the consequence of the presence of these traits within a marriage is that the marriage becomes at risk.

Perhaps Rashi's approach can also now be connected to the general theme of Bamidbar. The Torah is describing the construction of the nation and this nation is built from individuals, families and tribes. The Torah is teaching us what it takes to build strong family units. There is a requirement of generosity, respect, a selfless commitment to the other and an appreciation for each other. May we all merit to internalize these messages so that each of our homes will become a *bayit ne'eman b'Yisrael*, a faithful home in Israel.



Yirmiyahu 24

Much of Yirmiyahu's prophecy to this point has been presented without a date, addressing the general period of decline before the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash. That changes with Chapter 24.

The greatest king of Yirmiyahu's era was King Yoshiyahu. He was followed by his son Yehoachaz, who reigned for just three months before Pharaoh Necho of Egypt exiled him to Egypt, replacing Yehoachaz with his brother Yehoyakim. Yehoyakim was succeeded by his son Yehoyachin (a.k.a. Yechonyah). During Yehoyachin's reign, King Nevuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem. Yehoyachin surrendered, and Nevuchadnezzar exiled him to Babylon. Nevuchadnezzar replaced Yehoyachin with King Tzidkiyahu, the last king of the first Beit HaMikdash (*Melachim II 24*).

When Yehoyachin was exiled, thousands more went with him: nobles, warriors, and

a group identified as *charash* and *masgeir* (*Melachim II ibid.*). Many commentators identify these as artisans and city guards, but the Talmud (*Sanhedrin 38a*) describes them as the leading sages.

Hashem shows Yirmiyahu two baskets of figs

Our chapter begins after Yehoyachin and his allies have been exiled. Hashem shows Yirmiyahu a vision of two baskets of figs; one basket holds very good figs, and the other holds figs that are so bad as to be inedible (24:1-3).

Hashem explains to Yirmiyahu that there are two groups of Jews.

- The Jews who have been exiled to Babylon are the good figs, and Hashem is going to bring them back to Israel and

build them up. Hashem will give them a heart with which to know Hashem, and they will repent of their sins and become Hashem's nation.

- The Jews who are still in Yehudah, along with King Tzidkiyahu, as well as the Jews who have fled to Egypt for protection from Babylon, are the bad figs. They will be attacked with sword, famine and plague, and nothing will remain (24:4-10).

Many prophets compared the Jews to figs; see Hoshea 9:10, for example. The metaphor is almost always positive, and our sages continued that positive view of figs. The Talmud (*Ketuvot 111b*) contends that when Israel is called "a land flowing with milk and honey," the honey is actually sweet figs. Even the Jews criticized in our chapter are figs; the potential is always there to become sweet.



Week 6: The Importance of the Obligations of the Heart

We conclude our discussion of the obligations of the heart, the category that Rabbeinu Bachya is most responsible for bringing to the front of religious consciousness, proving and illustrating them and why they are so important.

Rabbeinu Bachya notes that Chazal took pains to write about these issues, such as in Avot. Furthermore, he notes that the Gemara (*Avoda Zara 17b*) notes that while the later generations may have studied more topics in Mishna, the earlier generations merited more miracles. The Talmud explains that this is because the earlier generations sacrificed more for God. This proves that:

[A]ll the roots of deeds which one intends for His Name are founded on purity of heart and mind and singleness of mind. Where the motive is tainted, good deeds, however numerous and diligent, are not accepted. (Sebag translation)

As noted previously, consistency is of primary importance:

You should realize that the aim and value of the duties of the heart is that our exterior and interior be equal and consistent in the service of G-d, so that the testimony of the heart, tongue, and limbs be alike, and that they support and confirm each other instead of differing and contradicting each other. This is what Scripture calls "tamim" (innocent/perfect), in saying: "You shall be perfect with the L-ord your G-d" (Deut. 18:13), and "Noah was a righteous man and perfect in his generations" (Gen. 6:9)... if our physical activities are not consistent with the convictions of our soul - our service to our G-d will not be whole, for He will not accept from us fraudulent service... (ibid)

As we have seen, while often neglected, the obligations of the heart are numerous and of primary importance. Thus, we cannot attempt to examine them all here. However, this brief overview should convince us that we must seek to understand them, truly internalize them, both because of their intrinsic importance and because they provide the meaning to all that we do.



What is The Beracha for Schnitzel?

Question: I was enjoying a schnitzel for lunch and recited the beracha of "Shehakol." However, a friend sitting next to me said I was wrong, and the correct beracha is "Mezonot." Who is right?

Answer: Generally, when we have a mixture of foods with different berachot, we bless the food that constitutes the majority of the dish. For example, if there is a salad composed of tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce (whose blessing is "Ha'adama") and olives (whose blessing is "Ha'etz"), we bless the salad "Borei Pri Ha'adama" because the tomatoes, cucumbers, and lettuce constitute the majority.

However, there is an exception to this rule. The Gemara in Berachot 36 says that anything containing one of the five grains (wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt) requires the blessing "Borei Minei Mezonot" even if it is a minority ingredient in the dish.

In light of this law, many have raised the question: Why do many people say "Shehakol" on schnitzel when it contains a minority of baked or fried bread crumbs, which

seemingly require the beracha of "Borei Minei Mezonot"? (It should be noted that some people, following this law, do indeed say "Mezonot" on schnitzel, or at least make sure to eat another food that requires the "Mezonot" beracha to avoid doubt.)

The later authorities have provided several explanations, not all of which stand up to scrutiny:

1. Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul explained that the bread crumbs are not intended to add flavor to the schnitzel but only to prevent the chicken breast from sticking to the pan during frying. Since it is not meant to add flavor but serves another purpose, the Beracha will remain "Shehakol". However, this view can be challenged as it is clear that the bread crumbs are intended to add flavor.
2. A similar explanation is given in the name of Rabbi Nissim Karelitz, stating that the beracha "Shehakol" is used because the bread crumbs are not meant to add flavor to the chicken breast, but historically, they were added during times of poverty

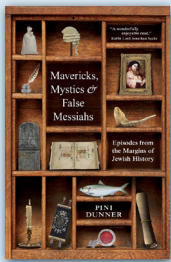
to stretch the meal. However, this answer does not hold up to reality as people deliberately choose to eat chicken breast with bread crumbs for the taste, not just to stretch the dish.

3. An explanation that satisfies me is found in the *Rivavot Ephraim* (Part 3, Siman 122), which quotes Rabbi Moshe Feinstein. The rule that any food containing an ingredient with the "Mezonot" beracha requires a "Mezonot" even if it is a minority ingredient applies when both foods are the main components of the dish. However, when the grain is only intended to season and add flavor to something else, in this case, we still follow the principal food, which is the chicken breast. Just as one can season chicken with salt, pepper, or garlic, it can also be seasoned with bread crumbs. Therefore, since it is only a seasoning, the blessing for schnitzel remains "Shehakol" and not "Mezonot."

Have a halachic question? Share it with Rabbi Mann at ymanntorontorah.com.



Next Book: *Mavericks, Mystics & False Messiahs*



Mavericks, Mystics & False Messiahs
By Rabbi Pini Dunner
Toby Press, 2018

As we enter into the summer we will be shifting to a lighter read with Rabbi Pini Dunner's *Mavericks, Mystics & False Messiahs*. Containing the subtitle, "Episodes from the Margins of Jewish History," in this book Rabbi Dunner tells seven lesser-known anecdotes from the annals of Jewish history, each of which centres around one or two distinct individuals.

As he explains in his introduction, "Rather than looking at the broad narrative of history, the uniting theme of

this book is the very individual personalities of these marginal characters and the impact they had during the time in which they lived" (page xix). Each story focuses on a specific event or controversy that, at least for its time, defined the era.

Ultimately, Rabbi Dunner writes that his goal is to encourage a broader interest and exploration of Jewish history. He writes, "Perhaps, after reading about the characters and episodes in this book, the reader will want to find out more about the rather more mundane aspects of the origins of Jewish life ... Knowing how Judaism evolved throughout its history can only enrich Judaism and the engagement with Jewish identity" (xxi-xxii). By learning about even the more obscure moments in Jewish history, we can become more involved and inspired Jews.

I hope you will join me in reading this entertaining and educational book over the next few weeks! A preview of the introduction and first chapter can be found at tinyurl.com/InsideMMFM.

The Soul can be purchased from Koren Publishers at tinyurl.com/KorenBMZD. Use the code *TorontoTorah* for a 10% discount on this or any other book on their website



TABLE TALK RABBI NOAH SONENBERG, DEAN

Source: Rashi (Bamidbar 6:2)

Why is the section dealing with the Nazarite placed in juxtaposition to the section dealing with the סוטה? To tell you that he who has once seen a סוטה in her disgrace should abstain from wine, because it may lead to adultery

Questions to Discuss

- Why does seeing the result of another person's sin imply that the person who saw this result is at risk of the same sin?
- Have you ever seen something happen to another person that caused you to change the way you live your life?

After Shabbat, please share your family's answers with us at nsonenberg@torontotorah.com to enter our raffle for a \$15 voucher for Grodzinski Bakery!

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Shabbat	Halacha from the Parasha	Clanton Park	After Hashkama Minyan	Rabbi Mann
	Gemara	BAYT	Between Mincha & Maariv	Rabbi Gutenberg
Sunday	Tzurba M'Rabanan – Halacha	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 AM	Rabbi Shor
	Men's Semichat Chaver: Hilchot Smachot	Clanton Park	9:00 AM	Rabbi Spitz & Rabbi Mann
	Shiur b'Ivrit	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	9:00 AM	Rabbi Mann & Rabbi Lax
	Sefer Shemot	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Cancelled this week	David Koschitzky
Monday	David and Batsheva	Zoom: tiny.cc/shlomo2024	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
	Men's Halacha	Shomrai Shabbos	8:30 PM	Rabbi Mann
	Introduction to Gemara: Learn how to learn	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
Tuesday	Then and Now: Returning to the Land of Israel – a Study in Tanach	Zoom	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Women's Gemara Shiur	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:30 PM	Rabbi Anstandig
	Women's Contemporary Halacha Shiur	Clanton Park	8:00 PM	Rabbi Mann
Wednesday	Men's Contemporary Halacha	Clanton Park	1 hour before Mincha	Rabbi Mann
	The Torah's Insights on Building a Just and Equitable Society	Zoom	10:00 AM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Men's Gemara Bekiut	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Sonenberg
	Antisemitism: From Tanach to our Campuses	Shaarei Tefillah	8:00 PM	R' Rakovsky
Thursday	Tanach: Sefer Shmuel	Zoom: tiny.cc/BMZDtanach	1:30 PM	Rabbi Horovitz
	Men's Tzurba M'Rabanan	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00 PM	Rabbi Turtel
	Men's Gemara Iyun	BAYT (Milevsky/Mizrachi)	8:00 PM	R' Diena
Sun–Thu	Men's Community Night Seder	Yeshivat Or Chaim	8:00-9:00 PM	

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

The Reincarnation of the Soul: Were You a Mushroom in Your Past Life—with Rabbi Anstandig	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Sunday, June 16, 2024	8:00 PM
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YOUR BEIT MIDRASH

Rosh Beit Midrash

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