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DAF KESHER

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DVAR TORAH WHEN DO PEOPLE LISTEN?

Near the end of Parshat Tzav, Moshe was instructed by Hashem to gather the People together, “וְאֵת כָּל הָעֵדָה” וְאֵת כָּל הָעֵדָה – **You shall gather** together the entire Congregation at the opening of the Tent of Meeting” (Vayikra 8:3). This implies that Moshe was to actively gather them together. Yet, in the next verse, when the Torah records what actually happened, it says, “וַתִּקְהַל הָעֵדָה אֶל פְּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד” – The Congregation **was gathered** at the opening of the Tent of Meeting” (Vayikra 8:4). The verb וַתִּקְהַל implies that they gathered together by themselves. The Rav of Krakow, Harav Yosef Nechemyah Kornitzer, זצ"ל (1881-1933, in *חידושי* (רבנו יוסף נחמיה על התורה), points out this discrepancy and offers the following explanation.

The Gemara quotes Rabbi Chelbo who quotes Rav Huna: “Anyone who has **יראת שמים**, fear of Heaven, within him, **דבריו נשמעין** – his words are heard” (Berachot 6b). He points out that the Gemara does not say **דבריו נשמעין** – people hear his words, but **דבריו נשמעין** – implying that this happens automatically. This is in line with what we say in our daily Ashrei: “... **רְצוֹן יִרְאֵי יַעֲשֶׂה** – [Hashem] does the will of those who fear Him ...” (Tehillim 145:19).

Moshe was an extreme example of this principle. When Hashem told him “Gather them together,” Moshe was filled with a powerful will to gather the People. But that will brought about that it should be done automatically, that they should themselves gather – for “Hashem fulfills the will of those who fear Him.” Rav Yosef Nechemyah then rereads the verse in the following way: “**וַיַּעַשׂ מֹשֶׁה כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה'** – Moshe [**always**] did what Hashem commanded” for he was full of Yirat Shamayim; **therefore** “וַתִּקְהַל הָעֵדָה אֶל פְּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד” – the nation was automatically gathered together at the opening of the Tent of Meeting.” This is because “Someone who has fear of Heaven within him his words are automatically fulfilled.”

Why do people listen to the words of one who has fear of Heaven? The simple answer is that a G-d-fearing person is less inclined to have ulterior motives. People are willing to take his advice or follow his instructions because they sense that his advice is for their own good and his instructions are in sync with what Hashem wants them to do. Someone who walks around with a constant consciousness of G-d's Presence is probably thinking: “What does Hashem want?”

Harav Chaim Ibn Atar, זצ"ל (1696-1743), in his Or Hachaim commentary on the first verse of the Chumash, uncovers another layer of meaning within Rav Huna's principle. A person listens to mussar, to Torah teachings, to advice, with his or her **nefesh**, their inner being. He or she will be receptive to communication that comes from deep within, from the nefesh, from the heart of the person. But if a person lacks Yirat Shamayim, then his speech is external – the communication comes from the body, not the soul. Therefore the soul of the listener is not receptive. The speaker and listener are on different wavelengths.

This is hinted at, he says, in the daily Shema: Only when “these words will be **על לבבך** – on your heart – will you be able to fulfill “**ושנתתם לבניך**” – you should teach them to your children.” The child's soul will be receptive to a message coming from the soul – but not to one that is merely external, **מן השפה ולחוץ**.

SOURCE GUIDE: PESACH AND MILAH: THE TWO STITCHES

On Pesach, the Chag that celebrates the love between Hashem and His People Israel, there is a custom to read Shir Hashirim, the Song of Songs. The Song speaks of the beloved knocking at the door, G-d calling to Israel to do teshuvah while they are still in Egypt. This source guide is based on the Midrash describing that first knocking on the door.

A. The Knock on the Door

The beloved knocks at the door:

<p>1. Shir Hashirim 5:2 I am asleep but my heart is awake. [I hear] the sound of my beloved knocking: “Open up for me, my sister, my companion, my dove, my pure one. For my head is filled with dew and my curls the drops of the night.”</p>	<p>שיר השירים ה:ב אָנִי יְשָׁנָה וְלִבִּי עֹר קוֹל דּוֹדִי דּוֹפֵק פֶּתַחַי לִי אֲחֹתִי רֵעִיתִי יוֹנָתִי תִמְתִּי שְׂרָאִשִׁי נִמְלָא טָל קְנֻצוֹתַי רְסִיסֵי לַיְלָה.</p>
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The Sages of the Midrash read this verse in the context of the beginning of the relationship between G-d and Israel as a newborn People in Egypt:

<p>2. Shir Hashirim Rabbah 5:3 “The sound of my beloved knocking” – through Moshe, when he said, “Moshe said, ‘Thus says Hashem: At midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt’ (Shemot 11:4).” “Open up for me” – Rabbi Yasa said, “The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, ‘My sons, open up for me one opening of repentance as big as the point of a needle, and I will open for you openings that wagons and carriages can go through.’”</p>	<p>שיר השירים רבה ה:ג “קול דודי דופק” – על ידי משה, בשעה שאמר, “ויאמר משה כה אמר ה’ כחצות הלילה אני יוצא בתוך מצרים” (שמות י”א:ד). “פתחי לי” – רבי יסא אמר: אמר הקב”ה לישראל, “בני פתחו לי פתח אחד של תשובה כחודה של מחט ואני פותח לכם פתחים שיהיו עגלות וקרונות נכנסות בו.”</p>
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The Midrash continues by telling us that if Israel would do teshuvah for even one day they would immediately be redeemed. It then expands on the four ways the beloved calls out to his beloved: my sister, my companion, my dove, my pure one. Here is the meaning of אחותי, my sister:

<p>3. Shir Hashirim Rabbah 5:3 “My sister” – for they were connected (שנתאחו) to me in Egypt through two mitzvot: the blood of Pesach and the blood of Milah. This is what is written (Yechezkel 16:6): “I passed over you and saw you were wallowing in your bloods. And I said to you in your bloods you will live” – this refers to the blood of Pesach – “And I said to you in your bloods you will live” – this refers to the blood of Milah.</p>	<p>שיר השירים רבה ה:ג “אחותי” – שנתאחו לי במצרים בשתי מצות, בדם הפסח ובדם המילה. הה”ד (יחזקאל ט”ז:ו): “ואעבור עליך ואראך מתבוססת בדמך. ואומר לך בדמך חיי” – זה דם הפסח – “ואומר לך בדמך חיי” – זה דם המילה.</p>
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The word for sister, אחות, is read here in light of the word אחה, used in Rabbinic sources for connecting. But the Midrash leaves us with a number of questions:

- Why did Hashem pick these two mitzvot to connect with Israel?
- If all He wants them to do a small act of teshuvah, to open up a small opening, why was there a need for two mitzvot? Shouldn’t one be sufficient?

B. Shem Mishmuel: Connecting Through Mind and Heart

Harav Shmuel Bornshtein, זצ”ל (the Sochotchover Rebbe, 1855-1926, Poland), sheds light on this Midrash. He points out that these two mitzvot share a significant characteristic:

<p>4. Mishnah Kreitot 1:1 Thirty-six transgressions bring about the “cutting off” punishment ... Among the positive mitzvot the Pesach sacrifice and Brit Milah are [the only ones] listed.</p>	<p>משנה כרתות א:א שְׁלִשִׁים וָשֶׁשׁ כְּרִיתוֹת בְּתוֹרָה ... הַפֶּסַח וְהַמִּילָה בְּמִצְוֹת עֲשֵׂה.</p>
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Not offering the Pesach sacrifice and not doing Brit Milah carry with them the extremely severe כרת punishment. They are the only positive mitzvot that share this severity. Reasons the author of the Shem Mishmuel: If not fulfilling those two mitzvot brings with it the cutting off punishment, somehow severing the tie with Hashem; fulfilling them must powerfully connect us with Hashem. Hence, Hashem began with these two mitzvot in order to forge a connection with His People in the Egyptian exile.

But why were both needed? According to the author of the Shem Mishmuel, the Pesach and Milah each corrected a different area of life that had degenerated in the Egyptian exile. One level of exile began immediately when Yaakov Avinu passed away and it manifested itself in two ways:

<p>5. Rashi's Commentary on Bereishit 47:28 "Yaakov lived" – Why does this Parshah (Vayechi) begin in a closed line of the Sefer Torah (not where one of the breaks in the line of the Torah appears)? This is because when Yaakov our father passed away, the eyes and hearts of Israel were closed up because of the distress of the enslavement, for the Egyptians began to enslave them.</p>	<p>רש"י על בראשית מז: כח "ויחי יעקב" – למה פרשה זו נתומה? לפי שכיון שנפטר יעקב אבינו נסתמו עיניהם ולבם של ישראל מצרת השעבוד, שהתחילו לשעבדם.</p>
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"Closing the eyes," he says, refers to the Israelites beginning to adopt Pharaoh's crooked thinking. "Closing the hearts" refers to the Israelites adopting the corrupt Egyptian morals and character. Pharaoh-style thinking leads to idolatry – a corrupt mind represented by the עיני השכל, the inner eye. Living with Egyptian-style morals leads to licentiousness – a corrupt heart. Israel had disconnected from Hashem in these two areas; and Hashem reached out to them through Pesach and Milah:

<p>6. Shem Mishmuel Vayakhel-Pekudei-Hachodesh 5678 Therefore, in order to be worthy of redemption of the mind and redemption of the heart – the opposite of the closing of the eyes and heart of Israel – they needed these two mitzvot, Pesach and Milah. Pesach is the opposite of the "power of Pharaoh," that drags towards idolatry. As the Rashi we quoted above says: "Israel was to pull their hands away from idolatry and take for themselves the sheep for the mitzvah" (Rashi on Shemot 12:6). Milah is the opposite of the "power of Egypt," that drags to licentiousness. In other words, through these two mitzvot Israel became connected with their Father in Heaven in the mind and in the character traits of the heart.</p>	<p>שם משמואל ויק"פ וחודש שנת תרע"ח וע"כ למען יהיו ראויים לגאולת השכל וגאולת הלב, היפוך סתימת עיניהם ולבם של ישראל, צריכי לשתי מצוות אלו פסח ומילה. פסח הוא היפוך כח פרעה המושך לע"ז כברש"י הנ"ל, "משכו ידיכם מע"ז וקחו לכם צאן של מצוה." מילה היא היפוך כח מצרים המושך לערוה. והיינו דבשביל שתי מצוות אלו נקשרו באביהם שבשמים בשכל ובמדות שבלב.</p>
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A comment by the RadaL, Harav David Luria (Lithuania, 1798-1856) complements the Shem Mishmuel's:

<p>7. RadaL Commentary on Shir Hashirim Rabbah 5:2:9 "For they were connected to me in Egypt through two mitzvot" – This is a complete joining and connecting, like the image of sewing two stitches forming a connection.</p>	<p>פירוש הרד"ל על שיר השירים רבה ה:ב:ט "שנתאחו לי במצרים בשתי מצות" – והוא איחוי וחיבור גמור, כמשל התופר שתי תפירות חיבור.</p>
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He refers here to the Mishnah (Shabbat 7:2), that lists the 39 types of work activities that are forbidden on Shabbat. One of them is "וְהַתּוֹפֵר שְׁתֵּי תְּפִירוֹת" – sewing two stitches." Two stitches make a connection last; if they were only a fleeting connection it would not be prohibited on Shabbat. Hashem wanted the People of Israel to forge a permanent connection with Him so He gave them two mitzvot, Pesach and Milah.

Pesach, according to this Midrash, is a holiday of teshuvah – the very beginning stages of teshuvah. Our focus on Pesach is to begin a lasting connection with Hashem. We begin our Jewish life anew by responding to our Beloved's knock on the door. He is calling us to break away from Pharaoh and Egypt, from Pharaoh's warped thinking and from Egypt's corruption. He calls us to open up our eyes and our hearts to Him through the Korban Pesach and Brit Milah. We pray that just as the People of Israel responded to His knock; we should as well. On Pesach, the holiday of redemption, we celebrate the redemption of our eyes and hearts.

THE FIRE THAT DOESN'T BURN BY RABBI ELIE SILVERBERG

Parshat Tzav opens with instructions for a קָרְבַּן עֹלָה; the Olah offering was completely burnt, completely consumed by fire.

Indeed, the theme of fire plays a major role in all the korbanot, offerings. One of the generic references to a korban is "אֵשׁ," from the word "אֵשׁ," fire.

Fire represents התלהבות, one's excitement and enthusiasm in one's 'עבודת ה', service of G-d. It is the "how" component of our 'עבודת ה'.

Yet, it is important to note, that the initial fire for the מִזְבֵּחַ, the altar, had to come down directly from Hashem. The two elder sons of Aharon Hakohen, Nadav and Avihu, brought their own source of fire, and were killed from Heaven for having brought a fire from the outside, an אֵשׁ זָרָה. Why this harsh punishment? Did this not show a great zeal and enthusiasm on their part?

One can suggest that although it is important to have fire, התלהבות, as a component in our 'עבודת ה', the source of this fire must be pure, and not driven even in part by some of our negative characteristics. Often an act done under the banner of לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם, for the sake of Heaven, or כְּבוֹד הַתּוֹרָה, honor of the Torah, may contain אֵשׁ זָרָה, and therefore be unfit for the מִזְבֵּחַ.

Furthermore, even within fire that is all קָדוֹשׁ, completely holy, there are different levels one can attain. The Gemara (Sukkah 28a) tells us that when Yonatan son of Uziel, the greatest of the students of Hillel Hazaken, learned Torah, the intensity was such that if any bird flew directly overhead at this time the bird would go up in flames.

On this point the author of the Sfat Emet (Harav Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter, זצ"ל, the Gerrer Rebbe, 1847-1905) asked the following question: What happened to birds that flew in the area of Hillel Hazaken when he learned? [And I add my own embellishment – it would probably create a forty-mile wide "no-fly-zone" for birds.]

Answers the Sfat Emet that the greatness of Hillel Hazaken was such that when the birds flew over him when he learned, nothing happened to the birds. The highest level of התלהבות is where a tremendous fire burns within but the exterior remains calm.

Our enthusiasm and fire for 'עבודת ה' should never die out. "והאש ... תוקד בו לא תכבה" – And the fire should burn ... it should not be extinguished" (Vayikra 6:5). But we should remember that it should always be "על המזבח – on the altar" – within a framework of קְדוּשָׁה and going higher and higher in qualitative level.

שבת שלום ומבורך וחג כשר ושמח

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Shapell's Darché Noam
דרכיה דרכי נועם

The following digital Torah resources have been extremely helpful in researching and preparing the Shapell's Daf Keshet:
DBS – Hataklitor Hatorani, Otzar Hachochmah, the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, and Hebrewbooks.org.

We pray for a refuah shleimah, a complete healing, for all those wounded in the attacks against our People.