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TORAH PERSPECTIVES

RABBI AHARON SHMUEL WEALCATCH



COMPLETE REDEMPTION

This Shabbos, we lein Parshas HaChodesh as we usher in the upcoming month of Nisan. Interestingly, Rosh Chodesh Nisan is mentioned in this week's regular Torah reading as well. In Parshas Pekudei, the Torah tells us that the Mishkan was finally erected on the first day of the first month, א' ניסן. Later this week, we will celebrate Rosh Chodesh Nisan. Our Chachamim tell us (see Rosh Hashanah 11a) that just as we were redeemed from Mitzrayim in Nisan, so too in the future will we be redeemed in this month. What exactly does redemption — גאולה — mean? And what does it have to do with the erecting of the Mishkan in the same month, one year after we left Mitzrayim?

To answer these questions, let us look back at the Ramban's introduction to Sefer Shemos, which we conclude this Shabbos. The Ramban there lays the groundwork for the entire Sefer Shemos, known as Sefer HeGeulah, the Book of the Redemption. We understand why the first half of the Sefer is called that, but once we left Mitzrayim in Parshas Bo and Beshalach, what more of our redemption is left to discuss? The Ramban explains: The purpose of the Geulah is to return to the spiritual plane of the Avos — Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. The Avos lived with Hashem's Shechinah in their midst. Going down to Mitzrayim was a necessary process to ensure that this lofty madreigah would not be lost in future generations.

Everything that we went through was a means to bring us out and return us to living in Hashem's Presence with a clean slate. That was accomplished through Mattan Torah and ultimately the Mishkan. The Ramban

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RABBI AVI GOLDSTEIN

THE MAHARAM M'ROTEBURG

Rabeinu Meir of Rotenburg, known as the Maharam M'Rotenburg, was born in 1220 in Worms, Germany, at the tail end of the period of the Baalei HaTosfos. He was a talmid of both Rabeinu Yechiel M'Paris and Rabeinu Yitzchak M'Vienna (the אור זרוע). Early in his life, in 1242, he was in France when the French burnt twenty-four wagonloads of Gemaros and other seforim (a devastating tragedy that caused a huge loss of many Torah writings that still have not been recovered). In response, he wrote a very powerful kinah about the tragedy.

Afterwards, he returned to Germany, first in Rotenberg for many years and then in Worms. He had many well-known students, including the Mordechai, the Hagahos Maimoniyos, the Tashbetz, and the Rosh. The Maharam wrote an incredible amount of responsa, which are still extant, as well as many piyyutim, a commentary on Meseches Ohalos, and a sefer on Chumash. He also compiled the Tosfos on Meseches Yuma. The Maharam wrote about a lot communal affairs, including the power of majority, how to deal with informers, and beating one's wife (he was against). Many of psakim and personal hanhagos have become accepted as the halacha and common minhag.

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powerfully concludes that until we achieved that madreigah, we were still considered to be in galus, and only once we had the Mishkan was the Geulah complete. Thus, Geulah is not just a salvation from a difficulty; it is the process of getting back to where we belong. Perhaps this gives more understanding as to why the Mishkan was erected in Nisan. Indeed, it is the month in which we were redeemed. However, leaving Mitzrayim was only the beginning of the process. The complete Geulah was only achieved just under a year later, when the Mishkan was erected on Rosh Chodesh Nisan! That's when we were redeemed in the truest sense of the word; having been brought back to the state that we yearned to return to, the madreigah of the Avos.

Regarding the future Geulah as well, we find this to be true. In this week's Haftarah, Yechezkel HaNavi tells us about the inauguration of the third Beis Hamikdash, may it be built speedily in our days. When will it be? On the first day of Nisan, the month of our redemption! The Radak explains: Leaving galus is only the beginning of the Geulah, and that will have already taken place before Nisan. But the inauguration of the Beis Hamikdash will take place in Nisan. According to the Ramban, this is very understandable, as this inauguration will mark the return of Hashem's Presence to our midst, in the same month as the inauguration of the Mishkan, which was the completion of the original Geulah.

Let us focus our yearning and prayers on the awaited complete redemption, when we will once again return to that desired state of living with Hashem's Presence, our eternal calling. ▲



Rabbi Yosef Fund in the Kollel

Sages through the Ages

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He also wrote a lot of tragic teshuvos about dying *Al Kiddush Hashem*, unfortunately a big topic at the time. Two of his main students, the Mordechai and the Hagahos Maimoniyos, were in fact killed *Al Kiddush Hashem* in the Rindfleisch massacres.

The Maharam M'Rotenburg is most famous for how he met his end. While living in Germany, the local king, King Rudolph, considered the Jews his personal property and did not allow them to leave the country. He also taxed them extremely heavily, while also laying a lot of horrible decrees against the Jews, making their lives unbearable. The Maharam decided to try to escape the country and made it as far as Italy, where he was recognized and informed on by a Jewish apostate and then shipped back to Germany, where the king had him imprisoned in the Ensisheim Tower. The Jewish community wanted to redeem him, but the king demanded an extraordinary sum. Although the community was willing to do whatever it took to free him, the Maharam did not allow them to, quoting the halacha that we are not allowed to redeem captives for more than their value (since doing so would encourage further investment into this industry). Although as the Gadol Hador the Maharam was worth every sum of money, redeeming him would have encouraged the king to arrest more rabbonim and the situation would have gotten out of hand. After seven years in the jail, the Maharam passed away, and his body was held for an additional 14 years until the Jews were finally able to redeem it and give him a proper burial.

The Maharam M'Rotenburg was considered the closure the Baalei HaTosfos and the signifies the end of that period of German Jewry. He left a legacy of leadership and mesiras nefesh at a very trying and tragic time in Jewish history. He passed away in 1293. ▲

פאָרשאַ פֿאַר אַלע אַרבעטן

PARSHA PIX SOURCE



A story as old as time. You're making the cholent for shabbos, you add all the ingredients, and turn on the croc pot. Around five hours later it hits you- you had accidentally cut the onions with the milchig knife! Regardless of your halachic expertise you know it's a sheilah- milchig and fleishig can never be mixed and with an onion it only gets worse! Yet again you call the Rabbi hoping he's got some halachic nuances to save you.

Before diving into the sugya of onions one must be aware of the basics regarding ta'am (flavor). Even when there is no actual milk in a fleishig dish, if there's ta'am of milk present, it's also a problem. This issur of ta'am comes up regarding the use of keilim (vessels or utensils). If you cook meat in a pot, the pot is now fleishig since it absorbed the ta'am of the meat. It may not be used to cook milchig since the fleishig ta'am will go into the milchig food.

Generally, the concept of ta'am is only applicable in situations where there's heat. Heating up the food causes it to give off it's flavor to the kli that's holding it (or to pull ta'am from the kli into the food). Therefore, if the food isn't sufficiently hot, the ta'am would not transfer. So for instance if you accidentally put cold chicken soup into a pareve container, the container doesn't become fleishig, it just needs to be washed out really well.

Even though keilim absorb flavor from the foods they contact, the ta'am in the kli has a short life span. After twenty four hours of lying dormant in the kli, the ta'am becomes pagum (ruined) and therefore will not prohibit a food it goes into. Still, the Rabbanan instituted an issur to use a kli that had absorbed ta'am of milk more than twenty four hours prior for fleshing, and vice versa. They did this as a safeguard to ensure we don't use such keilim before the twenty four hour mark.

With this introduction we can begin to discuss the onion. The onion isn't the same as the standard vegetable. Most vegetables have a simple taste, while onions are notably more sharp. This sharpness may play a role halachically. The Gemara in Chulin (111b-112a) says that if one cuts a tznon (a type of sharp radish) with a fleishig knife he may not eat that tznon with cheese. The Gemara explains that this holds true specifically by the tznon, who, due to it's sharpness is able to absorb [the flavor from the knife]. Rashi explains that the sharpness of the radish enables it to either absorb ta'am from residue on the knife, or absorb ta'am that is expunged due to dochka dsakina (friction of the knife pushing down). The sharpness of the radish acts

instead of the heat that is normally necessary to absorb ta'am from a kli.

There's another chumra to *davar charif* (sharp thing). The Gemara in Avodah Zara (39a) relates the halacha that one may not purchase a *kort shel chiltis* (a kort sized piece of a certain sharp food) from a nonJew. The Gemara explains that a *kort shel chiltis* was cut to size with a knife from a nonjew and is thus infused with ta'am of *issur*. The Gemara goes on to explain that even if the knife hadn't been used in more than twenty four hours (making it *pagum* and presumably harmless), the sharpness of the *chiltis* reinvigorates that ta'am. For this reason it's forbidden to buy a *kort shel chiltis*.

Knowing that a *davar charif* has its own set of rules, we now need to determine what is considered a *davar charif*. Do we assume that anything with a sharp taste will carry the rules of the *tznon* and *chiltis*, or is the Gemara specifically mentioning these to the exclusion of everything else? The Rishonim in Avoda Zara quote the *Sefer HaTerumos* who includes all sharp vegetables in the stringency of *chiltis*, enabling them to reinvigorate the ta'am of an *aino ben yomo*. However, both *Tosfos* and the *Mordechai* in Avoda Zara bring down the *Ram* who disagrees. He is quoted as saying that only the legendary sharpness of the *chiltis* (which could give someone an ulcer) is sharp enough to reactivate ta'am *pagum* in a kli. Regarding the stringency of *tznon*, *Tosfos* in Chulin understand that it applies to all sharp vegetables such as garlic or onions etc. Even without heat these foods can absorb ta'am from a kli. However, the *Beis Yosef* quotes *Rabbeinu Yechiel* who argues and says that both these *chumras* only apply in the cases brought in the Gemara, and therefore are only relevant for *chiltis* and *tznon*.

Turning to halacha, the *Mechaber* (Y.D siman 96) sides with *Tosfos* in Chulin who hold that any sharp vegetables can extract ta'am from a knife without heat. However, he seems to indicate that only *chiltis* can turn an *aino ben yomo* into a *ben yomo*. The *Rema* disagrees and says that any sharp food can reactivate an *aino ben yomo* just like *chiltis*. Accordingly, what emerges seems rather bleak for our aforementioned cholent. The onion is seemingly sharp enough to both extract ta'am and reinvigorate it, putting ta'am from the milchig knife into the cholent.

However, the *poskim* are clear that with enough *tzedadim lhakel* one may be lenient. In our case, aside from the two *tzedadim lhakel* based on *Rabbeinu Yechiel* and the *Ram*, there are other *tzedadim*. Firstly, there is a debate whether or not a *davar charif* has the ability to bypass the heter of *not bar not*. *Not bar not*

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