

Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce

ZMANIM FOR PARSHAS YISRO

Hadlokas Neiros: 5:12
Mincha Erev Shabbos: 5:15
Friday Night Learning: 8:15

Shacharis: 8:45
Kids Program: 9:30
Mincha: 5:00

Shabbos Ends: 6:16
Shabbos Ends R''T: 6:43
Sunday Shacharis: 8:00

Eliezer — The Son of Moshe Rabbeinu

Parshas Yisro

Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The Medrash Rabbah teaches that when Moshe ascended to Heaven to receive the Torah, he heard G-d expounding on the laws of the Parah Adumah [Red Heifer]. G-d was quoting a Mishna, and was citing the teacher mentioned in the Mishna by name. “Rabbi Eliezer says the decapitated calf (Eglah Arufah) needs to be within its first year of life (bas sh’nasah) and the Parah Adumah needs to come from a calf that has already entered its second year of life (at which time it may be considered a ‘Parah’)” [Parah 1:1].

Upon hearing this, Moshe entreated G-d “May it be Your Will that this Rabbi Eliezer be one of my descendants.” G-d swore to Moshe that this wish would be granted. This is alluded to by the verse, “And the name of one of them was Eliezer” [by the birth of Moshe’s son in this week’s parsha – Shmos 18:4].

This Medrash begs for an explanation.

Another Medrash teaches that when Moshe asked Yisro to marry Yisro’s daughter Tzipporah, Yisro stipulated the following condition: Your first born son from her will be dedicated to Avodah Zarah — idol worship. All subsequent children may be raised for the sake of Heaven. Moshe accepted the condition and took an oath to abide by it.

This too is a mind-boggling teaching of our Sages. It is not only mind-boggling that Moshe agreed to the condition, but even the fact that Yisro asked for such a condition is mind-boggling! Even though Yisro’s career had been serving as a priest to Avodah Zarah, other Medrashim indicate that by this stage in Yisro’s life, he had already “seen the light.” He no longer believed in Avodah Zarah as a ‘true religion’. Why then would he want his first grandson to follow in the ways of his original folly? It is incomprehensible that Yisro should have made such a request, and it is incomprehensible that Moshe Rabbeinu should have acquiesced to it.

Rav Chaim Shmulevitz and Rav Shimon Schwab both explain this latter Medrash as shedding light on an important

dispute in terms of the best way to raise children. Yisro did not want his first grandson to be an idolater. Heaven Forbid. Yisro had seen the light, but Yisro was a person who came to the Truth through experimentation. He did not just accept revelation of the Torah on a silver platter. He was a searcher and a seeker. He tried out other alternatives first. Our Sages say he had tried out all the religions in the world and concluded that they were all fraudulent.

Yisro’s philosophy was “I found the truth on my own, and I feel that this is the best way to raise children.” Yisro felt that it is best for children have to see for themselves, make their own mistakes, and come to the proper conclusion on their own.

Moshe Rabbeinu did not favor this approach. He argued that it is only necessary to learn through experience when one is still searching to find out what the truth is. However, if one already knows the truth for certain, there is no point in experimenting any further. Moshe knew that the truth was “Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad” [our G-d is the One and only G-d]. But to win Yisro’s agreement to marry Tzipporah, Moshe compromised and cut a deal with Yisro. His first-born son would follow Yisro’s approach of searching for truth and experimentation with other religious beliefs. All subsequent children would follow Moshe’s approach of unquestioning faith and certainty that Hashem is One and His Name is One. Both Yisro and Moshe fully contemplated and expected that even the first son would conclude his religious search with the same realization that Hashem is the only true G-d.

This explains the verses “And the name of the one (shem ha’echad) was Gershom … and the name of the one (v’shem ha’echad) Eliezer” [Shmos 18:3-4]. This is not the normal way to write a sentence. It should say, the name of the one was Gershom and the name of the *second* was Eliezer. Why is Eliezer called “ha’Echad”, as if he were the first son?

The answer is they were both ‘firsts’. Gershom was the first to follow Yisro’s curriculum, so to speak, and Eliezer was the first to follow Moshe’s curriculum.

If Yisro’s approach of logically searching and coming to understand the basis of a true religion makes sense at all, it only makes sense when one is approaching mitzvos that themselves have logic and rationale behind them. But what will such a searcher do about a ‘chok’? What will the seeker do when he approaches a mitzvah that makes no sense? He will not accept it!

We can find some rationale or reason for virtually all the mitzvos in the Torah, even those categorized as ‘chok’. Parah Adumah is the exception to this rule. It is the quintessential ‘chok’. Shlomo Hamelech [King Solomon] said, “I will be wise, but it is distant yet from me” [Koheles 7:23]. What will happen when the searcher and experimenter encounters the Parah Adumah?

The answer is that here too, the Rabbis do attempt to find some type of rationale. They explain that the Parah Adumah is an atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf. “Let the mother come and clean up the mess of the child.”

Rav Shimon Schwab makes the following brilliant insight which sheds light on the first Medrash quoted above. The rationale given for Parah Adumah only makes sense according

to the opinion that a Parah Adumah must be three years old. If it is three years old, then it can have a child. (A cow cannot give birth until it is three years old.) The reasoning that a Parah Adumah is the mother of the calf that cleans up for her child does not make sense according to the opinion that a Parah Adumah can be made from a “two year old” calf, because a two year old calf cannot be a mother. But that is exactly is the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer in the Mishna. So according to Rabbi Eliezer, Parah Adumah is a chok through and through — there is absolutely no rationale for it!

Clearly, then, it was necessary for Rabbi Eliezer’s philosophy to be that the way to accept Torah is through Emunah — pure belief, not through experimentation and finding rationales and reasons that appeal to us logically.

When Moshe Rabbeinu heard G-d quoting the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, he said “I want this individual to be from my children” — meaning, may he follow my philosophy of education in life, namely that one accepts based on belief rather than on experimentation and understanding.” G-d assured Moshe that this was the case and brought the fact that the name of Moshe’s son was in fact Eliezer as a supporting allusion.

FNL this week – 8:15 Shiur at 8:45
This Week’s FNL is sponsored by:
Sruli & Lindy Wolff
Leeilu Nishmas Lindy’s father Yechiel Michel ben Meir Zvi

Kiddush this week is sponsored by:
Rafael & Clara Buxbaum
In honor of the Yartzheit of Rafael’s father Akivah ben Arye Layb
And by
Sid and Denise Levin
for the yahrzeit of Sid’s father Mendel Ber ben Baruch Halevi z'l which will be on the 22nd of Shevat
Seudas Shlishis is sponsored by:
Rafael & Clara Buxbaum
In honor of the Yartzheit of Rafael’s father Akivah ben Arye Layb
The guest speaker for seudas shlishis is Doctor Manny Solnick

The cholim list is being updated for Chodesh Shevat. If you would like to submit a name to the cholim list please email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one of the gabbaim.

New Shovavim Shiur

Rabbi Kaufman will be giving a Shiur in Hilchos Yichud Tuesday night at 8:00 PM in the Shul

Upcoming Weekday Schedule for Parshas Mishpatim – Parshas Shekalim

Shacharis	Mincha
Sunday: 8:00 am	
Monday: 7:00 & 7:55	
Tuesday: 7:00 & 8:00	
Wednesday: 7:00 & 8:00	
Thursday: 7:00 & 7:55	
Friday: 7:00 & 8:00	
Maariv	
	5:45 pm

To sponsor Kiddush/Seudas Shlishis contact Baruch Klein (kiddush@agudahsouth.com)
To sign for the bulletin, submit announcements, add names to the cholim list or yahrzeit calendar
go to www.agudahsouth.com/mailing-lists, email [mailings@agudahsouth.com](mailto$mailings@agudahsouth.com) or speak to one of the gabbaim.