

Parsha Shiur by Rabbi Mayer Friedman

פרשת ויחי

ועתה שני בניך הנולדים לך בארץ מצרים עד באי אליך מצרימה לי הם אפרים ומנשה כראובן ושמעון יהיו לי
“And now, your two sons who were born to you in the land of Egypt before my coming to you in Egypt shall be mine; Ephraim and Menashe shall be mine like Reuven and Shimon” (48:5)

The Baal HaTurim says that the numerical value of Ephraim and Menashe equals the value of Reuven and Shimon. Thus, Ephraim and Menashe were given the status of full tribes and were considered completely equal to Reuven and Shimon. The Rosh points out that these two numerical values are off by one. This is supported by a later posuk (48:22) in which Yaakov promises Yosef "one portion above your brothers." The Bnei Yisaschar uses this gematria as a prime example of the principle that a gematria is permitted to be off by one.

ומולדתך אשר הולדת אחריהם לך יהיו על שם אחיהם יקראו בנחלתם
“But progeny born to you after them shall be yours; they will be included under the name of their brothers with regard to their inheritance” (48:6)

Rashi explains that while Ephraim and Menashe were granted a status equal to the other tribes, any children born to Yosef in the future would not have this status because they would have been born after Yaakov's arrival in Egypt. R' Moshe Feinstein asks: Shouldn't it be the other way around? Wouldn't it make more sense to say that the ones born after Yaakov arrived should be more dear to him because they would be closer to him and grow up with him? The answer is that Yaakov was attached to Ephraim and Menashe because he could see that they had been brought up to follow his ways. The chinuch that a father gives a child should not only be noticeable when the father is around, but should follow the child everywhere and should be passed to future generations. Yosef always had a vision of his father in front of him which kept him from sinning even while in the foreign culture of Egypt. He kept the mesorah of his father and transmitted it to Ephraim and Menashe. Upon meeting his grandchildren who were born in Egypt, Yaakov could clearly see that they had been brought up in the tradition of their illustrious ancestors. This was obvious because they were different from the Egyptian culture around them. They were easily recognizable as descendants of Yaakov, thanks to the training of Yosef. Any future children would have been brought up in a Jewish settlement and their chinuch would not have stood out so much. It was this special character that made Ephraim and Menashe more dear to Yaakov than any future children.

וימאן אביו ויאמר ידעתי בני ידעתי גם הוא יהיה לעם וגם הוא יגדל ואולם אחיו הקטן יגדל ממנו וזרעו יהיה מלא הגוים
“But his father refused, saying: I know, my son, I know; he too will become a people and he too will become great; yet his younger brother shall become greater than he and his offspring will fill the nations” (48:19)

The Chofetz Chaim notes that Yaakov referred to Ephraim as "his smaller brother" and says that Ephraim's greatness lay in his ability to make himself small. He reached great levels of midos which enabled him to become a greater scholar. He excelled in his midah of humility and that is why he was greater and deserved the blessing of the firstborn. The type of personality that a person has affects how he will grow in his Torah pursuits. If a person wants to succeed in his learning, it is important for him to refine his character. Better character traits bring a person closer to Hashem. In the Iggeres HaRamban, the Ramban advises his son to work on various midos in order to become closer to Hashem. We should not mistakenly think that they are independent of one another. Without working on one's personality, one will not be able to grow as much in his spiritual endeavors.

ויקרא יעקב אל בניו ויאמר האספו ואגידה לכם את אשר יקרא אתכם באחרית הימים

“Then Yaakov called for his sons and said: Assemble yourselves and I will tell you what will befall you in the End of Days” (49:1)

The Gemara in Pesachim 56a relates that Yaakov wanted to tell his sons when Moshiach would come but, at that moment, prophecy was withheld from him. He feared that he had lost prophecy because one of his sons had acted improperly and was not worthy to hear the prophecy. He asked his sons if they had done anything wrong. They answered him by declaring "Shema Yisrael," affirming their faith in Hashem. Yaakov responded with "Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso Le'olam Va'ed." However, when we say Shema, we only whisper Baruch Shem because Moshe Rabbeinu did not include it in the Torah along with Shema Yisrael. Why was it left out? If we cannot say it aloud, why do we do so on Yom Kippur?

R' Moshe Feinstein says that when Yaakov saw that all of sons answered Shema Yisrael as one, he said Baruch Shem because they were completely perfect. Moshe, when writing the Shema, left out Baruch Shem because not everyone in the Jewish nation was righteous. Therefore, since today we are not completely righteous either, we say it in an undertone. However, on Yom Kippur, when we lose our evil inclination and have the same status as angels, we can say it out loud. The ability to say Baruch Shem aloud depends on the completion of the Klal Yisrael.

R' Moshe Feinstein gives a second answer. The statement Baruch Shem serves as a reinforcement of belief Hashem. That is why one is obligated to have kavana while saying Baruch Shem. This is also why one is required to say Baruch Shem after saying Hashem's name in vain, such as after making a bracha levatala. When one says Hashem's name needlessly, it indicates that he is lacking fear of heaven because he takes Hashem's name lightly. By saying Baruch Shem, he reinforces the need to have proper respect for Hashem in the future. Along these lines, Yaakov said Baruch Shem as an expression of chizuk, strengthening his sons to keep up their belief of Hashem which they had just affirmed. Moshe, on the other hand, did not need write Baruch Shem because the generation that traveled in the wilderness did not need chizuk in their belief in Hashem, as they witnessed amazing miracles daily. Today, we need chizuk because we are among the gentiles and are sometimes lacking in emunah, because we see the success of the gentiles

around us despite their lack of faith. This can lead to skepticism. Therefore, we say Baruch Shem so that we should not be lax in our emunah. However, it would be degrading to announce publicly that we need the chizuk of Baruch Shem due to our lack of emunah. The gemara compares our recitation of Baruch Shem to a princess who smells a food which is beneath her dignity to eat. Her servants did not want to give it to her because it was not proper to do so. However, she persisted that she needed to eat the food or she would be ill. Her servants agreed, but they brought her to a secret place and gave her the food there. We too need the chizuk of Baruch Shem, but to do so aloud would be inappropriate, so we say it quietly. On Yom Kippur, when we confess our sins and the error of our ways, we say these words of chizuk aloud as if to say that we are looking for chizuk in order to do teshuva. Since we are open our shortcomings anyway and are not trying to hide our failures and our lack of closeness to Hashem, we can say it publicly.

**וישבע יוסף את בני ישראל לאמר פקד יפקד אלקים אתכם והעלתם את עצמתי
מזה**

“Then Yosef adjured the children of Yisrael saying: When Hashem will indeed remember you, then you must bring my bones up out of here” (50:25)

R' Meir Shapiro says that Yosef promised that the redeemer would use this double expression of "pakod yifkod." Why was there a need for a double expression? He answers that the true redemption would be a physical redemption from exile as well as a spiritual redemption from the error of their ways. The double expression indicates the dual nature of the redemption. This is indeed what happened when Klal Yisrael left Mitzrayim. They received Eretz Yisrael as a land of their own and they received the Torah and became the nation of Hashem.

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