

NOW IS THE TIME

by Rabbi Yochanan Zweig

"Hashem spoke to Moshe and Aharon and commanded them regarding the Children of Israel...." (6:13)

The Talmud Yerushalmi relates that prior to leaving Mitzrayim, Hashem commanded Moshe to teach Bnei Yisroel the details involved in fulfilling the mitzva of "shiluach avadim" - "emancipation of slaves".^[1] However, the laws connected to slavery were not pertinent to Bnei Yisroel until the laws of Yovel, the Jubilee year came into effect in the Land of Israel, over fifty years later. Why then is this the most opportune time to instruct Bnei Yisroel concerning these laws?

The Talmud states that giving charity on a fast day is the most effective manner to harness the energies of the day^[2]. Why is charity essential to fasting? Furthermore, Rashi interjects that the best time to give the charity is immediately after the conclusion of the fast. How does Rashi draw this conclusion?

The most effective way to perform a mitzva which involves human interaction in an act of chesed is to become completely sensitive to the plight of the recipient. A fast day is the most opportune time to empathize with the needy. When a person suffers from the pangs of hunger, he understands the daily struggle of the recipient of his charity. Therefore, Rashi teaches that after the conclusion of the fast, prior to sitting down to a meal, a person should give charity, for this creates the greatest level of empathy for the needy recipient.

When Bnei Yisroel were about to embark upon their passage from slavery to salvation, Hashem commanded Moshe to instruct them regarding the emancipation of slaves. It was at that moment that Bnei Yisroel could internalize the sensitivity required to perform this mitzva. They could empathize with the slave who they were commanded to set free and would treat him with greater sensitivity.

- 1.Rosh Hashana 3:5
- 2.Berachos 6b

From The Mouth of Babes

"Aharon took Elisheva daughter of Aminadav, sister of Nachshon..."(6:23)

We find the genealogy of Moshe and Aharon in this week's parsha. The Torah uncharacteristically records not only Aharon's wife, Elisheva, but her brother Nachshon as well. From this the Talmud derives that if a person desires to know the true nature of his wife-to-be, he should investigate her

brothers[1]. It would seem logical to think that in order to discover the nature of a future spouse, a person should investigate her parents. Furthermore, the Talmud on numerous occasions espouses the desirability of a spouse based upon the parents' qualities[2]. Why then does the verse emphasize investigation of the brother?

An adult is capable of projecting an image which does not truly reflect his or her essence. The facades which people create for themselves make it impossible to assess their true nature. Children are not as sensitive to the need to project an image which will give them good social standing as are adults. Therefore, a child's behavior generally reflects his true nature. The nature which a child reflects is not only his own, but that of his parents as well, for they mold his behavior patterns during his formative years. Consequently, investigating a woman's brother is the best way to investigate her parents, for the behavior of the child, impervious to any facade his parents may be hiding behind, reflects every nuance and inflection of the parents' behavior. The reason why the brother exhibits the parents' traits to a greater extent than his sister, is that a Jewish girl is, by nature, more reserved, and this may impede the detection of character traits and attitudes imbued in her by her parents. On the other hand, her brother, who is more aggressive and therefore, less reserved, can offer a more comprehensive evaluation of the parents' attitudes and nature.

1.Bava Kama 110 See however Rashbam

2.See Kiddushin 69-70, Berachos 64b the Talmud describes the importance of marrying a bas Talmid Chacham