

A New Yavneh Publication

28 Adar II 5768 // 04 April 2008

Obscure Halacha

How Frum are You?

By Boaz Haberman

Bleeding on Shabbos is halachically very problematic. The Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 328: 48) states that one may not put a cloth on a bleeding wound because the blood will dye the cloth, and dyeing is prohibited on Shabbos. This presumably also applies to tissues and bandaids. If you accidentally bled all over your nice Shabbos clothes, however, you're probably OK: the Mishna Brurah clarifies that since bleeding on things is generally considered to be ruining them, this is only prohibited L'chatchilah, since you're allowed to destroy things on Shabbos. Furthermore, you can't cause blood to come out of your body more rapidly than it otherwise would. Sucking on your wound, for example, is definitely Asur - in fact the Mishna Brurah states that it is also forbidden to suck the blood from between your teeth on Shabbos. Leeches might also be problematic.

Minyan Times

Friday Mincha	5:50 PM
Kabbalat Shabbat	After Mincha
Saturday Shacharit	8:45 AM
Saturday Mincha	7:00 PM
Saturday Maariv	8:18 PM

Announcements

- This Friday night is Shabbat 360, so there will be dinner neither at the CJL nor Chabad. Instead, there will be an awesome catered dinner in the Carl Icahn Atrium, and we will all head over there together after services.
- Kiddush this week is sponsored by Dr. Wolf in honor of his parents' anniversary. If you would like to sponsor a Kiddush in future weeks, contact Mendy Fisch, at mendy@princeton.edu.
- Rabbi Ross will be giving shiur Shabbat morning right after kiddush.

Want to Write?

Have a good idea for a column? Contact Greg Burnham (gburnham@) if you are interested in writing for this publication. We'll publish most anything relating to Judaism or Judaism at Princeton.

A Taste of History

Anecdotes from Yavneh's Past

By Toby Robison

During the summer that I was saying kaddish for my father, we really struggled to make Shabbat minyans. I invited people I knew who rarely came to Stevenson Hall. One Saturday morning when we were short, one of these people, let's call him "A," disappeared into a back room, and I had a dreadful suspicion that he was using the phone to get us another person. Soon A rejoined us, and ten minutes later a friend of his, "B," showed up. After making a quick count, A said "B, it's okay, we don't need you, we have ten." So B left.

Shortly after that we got to a part of the service requiring a minyan, and we skipped it. "Why are you skipping?" A asked. We quietly told him that one of our regulars was studying to convert and could not be counted. Well, A was really annoyed, and I was fascinated to know that, if indeed A had used the telephone, nothing had come of it.

A Quick Thought

By Rabbi Josh Ross

There is a great deal to talk about this week. All kinds of things are coming together. We have the parsha, rosh chodesh, and of course Pesach on the horizon. With such an abundance of things to discuss I thought I would look at something that links all three together. I am of course talking about women. After all, our parsha starts by talking about women and birth. Without birth there could be no Jews, and it is really the women who are physically responsible for the childbearing. We also see a strong Jewish tradition that women are responsible for far more than simply carrying children to term . . . As Pesach draws near we would all do well to remember what Rabbi Akiva says:

Rabbi Akiva said in a discourse: Israel was redeemed from Egypt on account of the righteous women of that generation. What did they do [...] They used to feed them, wash them, anoint them and give them drink, and cohabitated with them. (Shmot Rabbah 1:1)

So according to Rabbi Akiva the only reason we will get to celebrate Pesach at all is because of the actions of the women in Egypt. While all the men were running around in despair and getting divorced and assimilating into Egyptian culture and generally feeling sorry for themselves, it was the women that saved the Jewish people. There is also the midrash:

“Then drew near the daughters of Zelophehad.” In that generation the women built up the fences which the men broke down. Thus you find that Aaron told them: Break off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, but the women refused and checked their husbands; as is proved by the fact that it says, “And all the men broke off the golden rings which were in their ears,” the women not participating with them in making the Calf. It was the same in the case of the spies, who uttered an evil report: “And the men... when they returned, made all the congregation to murmur against him, and against this congregation the decree [not to enter the Land] was issued, because they had said: We are not able to go up.” The women, however, were not with them in their counsel, as may be inferred from the fact that it is written in an earlier passage of our section, For the Lord had said of them: “They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh.” Thus the text speaks of “a man” but not of “a woman.” This was because the men had been unwilling to enter the Land. The women, however, drew near to ask for an inheritance in the Land. Consequently the present section was written down next to that dealing with the death of the generation of the wilderness, for it was there that the men broke down the fences and the women built them up. (Bamidbar Rabbah 21:10)

As I already mentioned in a previous week, Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer goes a step further and explains that

there was a specific reward for the behavior of the women, and they were given rosh chodesh after the sin of the calf, which is reflected to this day in the Shulchan Aruch (Orech Chayim 417:1) who writes that “there is a custom that women do not do work on rosh chodesh, and that custom is a good and proper one.”

While this is an inspiring story in and of itself the question for me has always been - why specifically was rosh chodesh given to women? They deserved a reward, certainly, but why that in particular? The Menoras HaMaor (Isaac Aboab, 14th century) gives one answer explaining that each of the three major holidays represents one of our forefathers. Pesach is representative of Avraham, because it was on Pesach that Avraham was informed by the angels that he was going to have a son. Shavuot is Yitzchak because when the Torah was given, a shofar made from the ram that was sacrificed instead of Yitzchak was sounded. Succot is representative of Yaakov because we find in the Torah that Yaakov built booths in a place he named Succot. However, the three major holidays are not the only festive occasions which are associated with someone. Originally, the twelve months were representative of and carried significance to each of the twelve tribes. Because the tribes sinned by the incident of the Golden Calf, this “holiday” was taken away from them as a punishment. It was given instead to the righteous women of Israel.

In the same way that the behavior of the women and not the behavior of tribes was responsible for bringing us out of Egypt, so too here the women deserved the reward. Unlike the waxing and waning of the moon, it was always the women who kept faith in God and acted in the correct way. Erev rosh chodesh and erev (erev) Pesach it is important for us to consider these traits and emulate them to the best of our ability. Let us keep faith with God and build up instead of tear down. Let us not stray from the Torah. Instead, like the women of the Torah, let us do everything we can to keep the nation together and whole, in Princeton and in the world at large and let us involve ourselves in the holy and not the profane. Let us have faith and perhaps, perhaps, if we really take the lesson to heart, next year we really all will be in Jerusalem.

Things to Anticipate

- Next year in Jerusalem!