

ו' כסלו תשפ"א

## NURTURAL, NATURAL, AND SUPERNATURAL

Generally speaking, marriage is one of the most important aspects of someone's life. The

person you choose to marry is the person who you spend the rest of your life with, working together to build a family and pass the מסורה on to the next generation. This is no small task; it is important to choose the right partner in order to properly fulfill your duties towards the world. One's spouse is chosen by the days before they are born, and even for the הקב"ה, choosing the right people to put together is as difficult as יקרעת ים סוף<sup>1</sup>. The importance of finding the right partner is so fundamental, that one can delay getting married until they find that partner, given certain parameters. We saw this with our אבות as יצחק got married at 40, and יעקב at 84.<sup>2</sup> When I first saw this, I asked a glaring question. The גמרא<sup>3</sup> tells us that ישעיה הנביא rebuked המלך חזקיהו for not engaging in the מצוה of פרו ורבו, even though he knew through נבואה that he'd have a son, who would turn out to be the evil king מנשה. In that case, ישעיהו told חזקיהו that he has to do his part, and whatever the הקב"ה chooses is not his problem. Why, then, is one allowed to delay marriage for the sake of a proper זיווג, but is faulted for bringing a רשע into the world?

I posed this question to Rav Hershel Reichman שליט"א, and based on the answer he gave, I want to develop a מהלך. Rav Reichman said that even though חזקיהו had a נבואה that he would have a son who would be a רשע, ultimately מנשה had בחירה חפשית to choose which path he would ultimately follow. The question of free will vs. predeterminism is a legitimate question, and there are legitimate answers given, but I don't have the requisite knowledge to delve into that question. However, Rav Reichman continued that parents often guilt themselves if the children went down the other path. If the parents do their due diligence, and the child ends up somewhere else, that is just a function of בחירה חפשית, and the parents are not to be faulted. חזקיהו wasn't faulted for fathering a רשע; his shortcomings came in trying to avoid the problem by not engaging in פרו ורבו.

However, when it comes to marriage, we have a principle that under certain circumstances, we can delay a מצוה to do it in a more מהודר way. This runs contrary to principles such as שיהיו מצות לא שיהיו מצות לא, and משהינן מצוה הבא לידך אל תחמיצנה, as we do things such as delaying קידוש לבנה until after יום כפור and תשעה באב, in order to do it in a state of שמחה.<sup>4</sup> When to employ which principle is another question in and of itself, and one should consult a competent רב before doing anything.

I believe that this perspective gives us a certain insight into life. When one is looking to get married, we have an idea of striving towards perfection; we want to find the best partner. After that happens, the years of raising children are hard years with a lot of investment. At the end of the day, while the parents may want the child to end up a certain way, it is ultimately not in their hands. When viewing anything in life, we can say the same thing. We strive to achieve perfection, and put in all of the necessary השתדלות and labor. Yet, at the end of the day, some things are just not in our control. We may often have the incorrect attitude of כחי ועצם ידי עשה לי את החיל הזה, that my labors are the cause of my success. While our efforts are a necessary prerequisite to success, they are not the reason.

We are coming off the day of Thanksgiving. While Thanksgiving may not inherently be a Jewish holiday, הכרת הטוב is no doubt a tenet of our religion. I think it is no coincidence that Thanksgiving always falls out around חנוכה. If there is any holiday that shows that we are not in control, it is חנוכה. We should not have won the war. We were severely outnumbered and overpowered. Yet, every day

<sup>1</sup> סוטה ב.

<sup>2</sup> שו"ת מהר"ם שיק אהע"ז א (ועיין מגילה יז).

<sup>3</sup> ברכות י.

<sup>4</sup> עיין ערוך השולחן א"ח תכ"ח.

ו' כסלו תשפ"א

## NURTURAL, NATURAL, AND SUPERNATURAL

of חנוכה, we say מעטים ביד רבים ורבים ביד חלשים. If things were purely based on natural order, we would have been wiped out. Additionally, there is no natural reason that one tiny jug of oil was found in the המקדש, and that it ended up lasting 8 days. These miracles are no doubt supernatural. However, in our everyday lives, we put in our השתדלות, and any outcome is really an act of הקב"ה, whether for good or for bad. The way to merit supernatural miracles when we don't deserve them is to recognize the miracles that happen when we do everything we can, but we recognize that it is not solely because of our actions that a certain result came to be.<sup>5</sup> If the past 8 months have taught us anything, it is that all of a sudden, the world can turn over on its side. If we truly recognize הקב"ה's Providence in this world, we should be זוכה to again see the world turned over on its side, and an end to this terrible pandemic, and this terrible גלות as well. Let us be זוכה to see another חנוכה הבית and the real light of the מנורה very soon.

---

<sup>5</sup> רמב"ן שמות יג.טז