



RABBI SHALOM

ROSNER

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Maggid Shiur, Daf Yomi, OU.org
Senior Ra"m, Kerem B'Yavneh

A Son is Not an “Other” (אחר)

Elders of the tribe of Menashe approached Moshe voicing concern that once the daughters of Tzlofchad were able to inherit their father’s property, they feared that were they to marry into another tribe, that property which was designated to the tribe of Menashe would be transferred to their respective husband’s tribe. This would detract from the property apportioned to the tribe of Menashe. Moshe appreciated this concern and declared, based on God’s directive, that inherited property cannot be transferred from one tribe to another.

וְלֹא־תִסָּבֵב נַחֲלֵה מִמַּטֵּה לְמַטֵּה אַחֵר (במדבר לו:ט)

And no inheritance will be transferred from one tribe to another tribe

This limitation is understood with respect to the daughters of Tzlofchad. The gemara in Bava Batra 113a discusses whether such limitation applies to the transfer of land via a husband or son. The gemara concludes that the pasuk cited above cannot be referring to a transfer via a son because a son is never classified as an אחר (an “other”, the term that appears at the end of the phrase above). A son is connected to his father by blood and that bond cannot be broken. A son can never be classified as an אחר – an other!

Rav Soloveitchik (cited in Masoret Harav) explains that the term אחר that appears in our pasuk, reminds us of an individual who was known by this appellation. Elisha Ben Avuya was one of four individuals who entered the Pardes (mystical learning) and later became a heretic (אפיקורוס). From that point on he was referred to as אחר the “other one”.

The gemara in Hagiga (15a) recounts how he allegedly heard a voice from heaven quoting the pasuk from Yirmiyahu 3:22 שׁוּבוּ בְּנִים שׁוֹרְבִים, *return rebellious sons*, but with an exclusion appended “with the exception of אחר, at which point he was convinced that for him repentance was precluded. Elisha Ben Avuya was of course mistaken. No matter how far a Jew strays he is never so distant that repentance is precluded. God remains hidden in the depths of the heart of even the worst transgressor. We are his children and can never be considered removed as an other – an אחר.

The thirteen attributes begin with the repetition of the name of God. “Hashem, Hashem, Kel rachum...” Rashi explains that this repetition highlights that He is our God before man sins and He is our God after man sins and repents. When one transgresses it creates a distance between the individual and God. That distance is only temporary, God is waiting there for our return.

As we begin chodesh Av, we should

recognize that we all are all בנים לה – sons of God, which makes us brothers! Nothing upsets parents more than when they witness sibling rivalry. The *Beit Hamikdash* were destroyed due to *sinat chinam*- so let's do what we can to correct our behavior and spread brotherly love and acceptance so that we can merit the rebuilding of the *Beit Hamikdash* in our time! ■



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