

Parshat HaShavuah
**ACHAREI MOT-
 KEDOSHIM**
 אחרי מות – קדשים
 MAY 05, 2012
 י"ג אייר תשע"ב

A PUBLICATION OF

The Weinbaum
Yeshiva
 High School
 INSPIRE & CHALLENGE



Candle Lighting
7:36
 S"Z Kriat Shema
9:58

Sunset
7:55
 Motzei
 Shabbat
8:32

Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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HOLINESS FROM WITHIN

RABBI JOSH GRAJOWER

The opening verse of פרשת קדשים states, "דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת להם קדשים תהיו," "Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy."

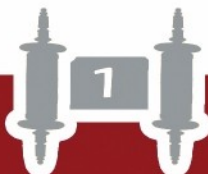
Rashi notes that the commandment for every Jew to be holy is unique in that it is taught by Moshe to the entire Jewish people at one time, while the norm is for Moshe to teach the mitzvot to smaller groups.

Why is the commandment, "You shall be holy," singled out as one that was taught to the entire Jewish people?

Rabbi Avraham Shmuel Sofer, known as the Ktav Sofer, explains that one would think that in order to attain holiness one would need to isolate and seclude oneself from the community; that a person striving to be holy would need time away from the chaos and immorality inherent in society. However, explains the Ktav Sofer, ultimate holiness must come from within our communities.

Therefore, the Torah specifically teaches us the law of "קדשים תהיו," "You shall be holy," while we are gathered amongst the entire congregation. The whole society must internalize the message that true holiness comes from working with our surroundings, and not despite them.

While you might seek temporary isolation in order to help focus or concentrate on personal goals, it is essential for all of us to know that our spirituality and strengths are ultimately meant to be incorporated into our families and communities.





STANDING BY HASHEM

YONATAN RUBIN ('15)

This week's parsha answers many questions that bother teenagers on a daily basis. One of these questions is: "What is the difference between Bnei Yisrael and every other nation or religion on Earth?"

After we receive the Torah from Har Sinai, Moshe Rabeinu interprets all of the laws for us, and throughout this week's parsha, Moshe gives over the following idea in the name of Hashem:

I, Hashem, have given you all these mitzvot so that you can be holy. If you behave differently than the other nations and in a holy matter, I will protect you and save you from trouble. But if you don't behave in a holy matter, then I will allow your enemies to attack you and I won't save you from their hands.

There is a very important lesson we can learn the words Moshe shares with us.

There is an idea in Judaism that we, as the Jewish people, are Hashem's *am hanivchar*— His chosen nation. But, as Rabbi Menachem Leibtag explains, what Hashem is telling us here is that we are not a nation chosen *because* we are better, but we are chosen to *be* better.

Hashem is explaining to us that He has given us such a precious gift, and that is His Torah and mitzvot. Hashem is handing us the key to success, the key to being holy. We cannot simply act like the other nations because that is not why we are here. We are here to be an *or lagoyim*, a light unto the nations, to rise above the everyday world and spread Hashem's light and ideals and morals to those around us.

It is through following Hashem's mitzvot that we will become holy, protected, and the best versions of ourselves. We are the ones who are chosen, and we are the ones who must rise to the occasion.

LOVE IS ONLY SOMETHING IF YOU GIVE IT AWAY

EZRA SPLAYER ('15)

The Talmud in Masechet Shabbat tells a story of a non-Jew who comes to the great scholar Shamai and tells him, "I will convert to Judaism on the condition that you teach me the entire Torah while standing on one foot." Shamai refuses to fulfill his demands and sends the man away.


The man decides to give it another shot. He approaches Hillel and tells him the same thing. Hillel replies, "What you dislike, do not do to your friend. This is the entire Torah."

One might ask, "Why does Hillel not use the words found in this week's parsha, "*V'ahavta l'reyacha kamocho*"— "Love your friend like yourself—" when answering this man?"

The word *ahava* comes from the word *hav*— to give. The Tora wants to teach us that living is not just about feeling— loving requires action. In order to have a powerful bond with someone else, it is necessary to give to the other person, not only to receive from them.

Continued page 3





Splaver continued

Once you begin giving to another person, you will begin to care for him more and you may be pleasantly surprised when your kindness is returned.

Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz answers that it is not enough to merely have a feeling of love towards another person. Rather this love must motivate us to do positive things for others and to refrain from any actions or words that could cause others pain or suffering.

FINDING LOVE THROUGH AWE

YISRAEL WEISS ('13)

The two emotions that drive us in our service to Hashem are no secret; be it *ahava*, love, or *yirah*, fear, we each have our reasons as to why either force compels us to perform certain mitzvot. Due to the nature of these two emotions, *yirah* is considered an initial, lower level of motivation; mitzvot performed out of fear imply that they are performed simply because we are obligated, and nothing more. *Ahava*, on the other hand, is regarded as a higher level of service. Love is the preferred drive to do mitzvot as it shows our desire and joy to perform them. Not all, however, agree to this simple understanding. There are many sources that believe there is a form of *yirah* that is not just an instinctive feeling of fear but rather a product of the highest level of *ahava*.

The Netivot Shalom takes this alternate approach to explain a very perplexing pasuk in this week's parsha: "*Et shabtoti tishmoru u'mikdashi tira'u, ani Hashem.*" While this pasuk, "My Shabbat you shall observe and My Sanctuary you shall revere— I am Hashem," simply teaches us to keep Shabbat and regard the Mikdash with awe, it puzzles the Netivot Shalom.

He explains that both Shabbat and the Mikdash are direct products of the tremendous adoration that Hashem feels for us. On Shabbat, Hashem invites us all into His house to indulge in the holiness and sanctity of the day and bask in His radiance. The Mikdash presents another dimension of love Hashem has for us as He dwells in our midst and allows us to be close to Him in the physically pleasing sense to which we can relate. The intense love that so palpably emanates from Shabbat and the Mikdash leaves us baffled as to what the meaning of the pasuk is. Why would the pasuk specifically use the phraseology of "reverence" in describing how we should feel towards the Mikdash? Reverence is a word analogous to awe and fear, and seems to be completely inapt in describing how we feel about the Mikdash, a physical manifestation of our complete devotion to Hashem!

To make matters more complicated, the Sefer Yere'im learns out from this juxtaposition of Shabbat and Mikdash that one should apply the same reverence they feel towards the Mikdash to Shabbat! This insight only makes the question even more complex— why would the pasuk use such a powerful language of reverence for our feelings toward Shabbat and the Mikdash, two fundamentally love-inspired tenants of our faith? The affection with which we perform these mitzvot is so great that it seems irrational to equate our performance of them to nothing more than fear!

The Netivot brings a beautiful insight to explain the reverence that we should feel for Shabbat and the Mikdash. The regard we have for the Mikdash is not just *yirah*, but rather *yirah machmat ahava*— fear as a result of love. This kind of fear is not an antecedent, but rather an outgrowth of *ahava*.

Continued page 4



DON'T MIX IT UP MATTHEW SILKIN ('14)

This week's parsha details more about life in the Mishkan. There is one part, though, that leaves commentators confused. The Torah tells us that there are certain mixtures created, such as the planting of two different seeds in one field, or wearing a garment with two different fabrics, that are forbidden. Rashi explains that these prohibitions are considered *chokim*, laws with meanings that Hashem does not reveal. Which begs the question as to why Hashem would command us something that He then does not explain? What could be the reason behind this commandment?

Ramban explains Rashi's statement to mean that Hashem surely has reasons, without which He would not have given us the commandment, but we do not know them.

However, Ramban gives us his own fascinating reason. Every species on Earth was created with its own special qualities. By mixing these together, we are not only blurring the line between species, but we are going so far as to tamper with Hashem's meticulous handiwork.

This provides a very important lesson for us. We are all where we are for a reason. To try and go against our own identities would be ruining the very fabric of creation. Stay where you are, and Hashem will provide.

Weiss continued

When one obtains a real sense of *ahavat* Hashem, he knows that there is nothing more valuable in the world than that bond; with this approach, a person will be paralyzed at the mere thought of losing his priceless connection with *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, and will perform any and all mitzvot with the upmost care for fear of diminishing his connection.

This protective *yirah*, the fear of losing what we love most and what is dearest to us, is such a powerful emotion that Hashem goes out of His way to tell us that it is the best feeling with which to regard Shabbat and the Mikdash.

As we count our way through sefirah and up to Shavuot, we must all introspect and realize the incredible things that we have. Only once we realize how good we have it, how precious and priceless the gifts that Hashem has granted us are, will we perform mitzvot out of the strongest emotion, *yirah machmat ahava*.

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