



Parshat HaShavuah

אחרי מות

קדושים

ACHAREI-MOT

KEDOSHIM

APRIL 20, 2013

י' אייר תשע"ג

A PUBLICATION OF



Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Candle Lighting

7:28

S"Z Kriat Shema

10:06

Sunset

7:46

Motzei

Shabbat

8:23



Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

RABBI MOSHE SCHOCHET

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DON'T FORGET WHERE YOU COME FROM RABBI MOSHE SCHOCHET

ARIELLA SASLAFSKY ('14)

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"איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתותי—פרשת קדושים—תשמרו" "A man is to fear one's mother and father, and one is to guard (observe) Shabbos" (19:3). This פסוק is one of many in the תורה where the מצוה of שבת and the מצוה of אב ואם כיבוד are juxtaposed.

The obvious question is: what is the fundamental connection between these two מצוות that the תורה feels compelled to link them in so many different places?

A number of answers have been suggested to resolve this question. R' Yaakov Kaminetsky explains that the מצוה of שבת symbolizes and establishes our belief that Hashem created the world. As we all know, שבת was the seventh day of creation, during which Hashem rested. When we observe שבת, we are confirming our belief that the world did not just come into being on its own. Rather, there was a higher supernatural being who served as the Creator of the world that we live in.

R' Kaminetsky זצ"ל continues and relates that if we accept that Hashem created the world, then honoring one's parents becomes the next logical conclusion. After all, if we believe that Hashem created the world and through that creation introduced קדושה and G-dliness into the world, then every generation that is closer to the original creation is that much more holy.

Therefore, if we believe that Hashem created the world, we must honor the preceding generations who are closer to that initial sanctity and holiness. Based on this explanation, we can now understand how strong a bond exists between the מצוה of שבת and כיבוד אב ואם.

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LEVELS

ARIELLA SASLAFSKY ('14)

“You shall observe My decrees and My laws, which man shall perform and by which he shall live” (Vayikra 18:5).

This pasuk describes four different levels of mitzvah observance: “my decrees,” “my laws,” “which man shall perform,” and “by which he shall live.” The first—“my decrees”—is a man who performs mitzvot solely for the reward he will receive. The second—“my laws”—is a man who performs mitzvot because Hashem commanded him, and so he can receive a place in *olam haba*. The third—“which man shall perform”—is a man who truly loves the mitzvot with his entire heart and fully lives his life by them. Examples of this third man are our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. The fourth and final type of individual that is detailed is the man who devotes his entire life to Hashem and completely disregards his physical body as having any importance. Men like this ascend to heaven when it is their time to leave this world instead of dying on earth, an example being Eliyahu HaNavi.

Each of these men’s mitzvot, no matter what his intention was when performing the mitzvah, was valuable not only to Hashem but also to the individual who performed them. This is because each mitzvah, even one done with the wrong intentions, can influence an individual in a good way, and potentially create a scenario where the individual does the mitzvah for the correct reasons. Also, every man from each scenario will go to *olam haba*, whether his motives for performing mitzvot were impure or not.

JEWISH JUDGE

CHAIM BITTERMAN ('13)

“לא-תעשו עול, במשפט--לא-תשא פני-דל, ולא תהדר פני גדול: בצדק, תשפט עמיתך”

“You shall not commit a perversion of justice; you shall not favor the poor and you shall not honor the great; with righteousness shall you judge your fellow” (Vayikra 19:15).

The second part of this verse is seemingly superfluous, as giving examples of the rich and the poor is not needed after instructing us not to pervert justice. Obviously nothing in the Torah is superfluous, so the question arises: why do we need this whole verse?

The Ohr Hachaim states that the beginning of the verse is in plural form as it is warning litigants against lying or misleading the court. In contrast, the second part of the verse is instructing each judge on how he should conduct justice and so it is written in the singular.

Not everyone agrees that there is a shift in this verse from the litigants to the judges. The Netziv maintains the opinion that the whole verse is directed towards the judges. He explains that showing favor to the poor and honoring the rich are both proper modes of conduct and therefore are not usually associated with עול (perversion). However when it comes time to judge, these seemingly correct attitudes can lead to a perversion of justice. Therefore, the Torah gives judges a special warning when it comes to favoring the poor and honoring the rich.





“מזור לדור”

TORAH FROM OUR ALUMNI

STAND OUT

HADASSAH TIRSCHWELL (‘11)

The Haftarah for the joint parshiot of Acharei Mot-Kedoshim originates from Sefer Amos. A very interesting pasuk arises in the selection, and it demands explication: “Are you not likened to the Kushites, to be Mine?” asks Hashem (Amos 9:7). This comparison is very strange. Typically, parallels or comparisons are made in order to clarify a specific issue or to explain a difficult concept in terms which are more easily comprehensible. Bnei Yisrael’s likeness to Kushim, however, which is described in this pasuk, only seems to generate further confusion. How does Bnei Yisrael’s likeness to Kushim serve as a reason for or explanation of Bnei Yisrael’s service of Hashem? An understanding of the nature of the Kushim, combined with the words of our parsha, can lead us to an understanding of the deeper meaning behind Amos’s words.

In order to answer this question, we first must understand a defining characteristic of the Kushi people. The Yalkut Shimoni describes the Kushites as a specific community of people with an extremely distinct skin color. When someone of a different nationality would see a person with this skin color, they would be able to identify the other person as a Kushi immediately. Chizkuni, in his commentary on the story of mechirat Yosef, uses the word Kushi to describe the slaves of the ancient world. From Chazal and the Chizkuni, it becomes clear that the Kushim were clearly recognizable due to their skin tone, which segregated them from the other nations, and they were also known to be servants or slaves.

In the first words of Parshat Kedoshim, Bnei Yisrael are instructed, “kedoshim tihiyu.” The word *kedosh* means separate. Ramban famously explains that Hashem is asking Bnei Yisrael to sanctify themselves in every aspect of day to day life. In this command, Hashem is telling Bnei Yisrael that it is important for Bnei Yisrael to be clearly distinct, even among the other nations. We must be recognizable as Jews, due to the extra *kedusha*, holiness, which permeates our people.

Now we can understand the comparison between the Kushim and Bnei Yisrael in this week’s Haftarah. Just as the Kushim were servants and slaves (in ancient societies), we too will become servants (of Hashem). Furthermore, just like the Kushim were distinct due to their skin color, which identified them as slaves, Bnei Yisrael must be noticeably different and identifiable, due to our acceptance of Torah and our service of Hashem, and as a result we will experience a greater level of *kedusha* in our homes and communities.



THE ROUTINE RALPH BETESH ('13)

Most people call this week's parshiot Acharei Mot-Kedoshim, but I call them "The Routine." Besides all the laws given in these parshiot, there is also a discussion concerning the kohen's job and holiness. Parshat Acharei-Mot starts off with the yearly service of the kohen gadol. Every year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the kohen gadol is instructed in a process to be carried out in the holiest part of the Mishkan. This meticulous procedure is what I have dubbed "The Routine." This routine is not an easy one and the slightest deviation may result in death. Hashem gives the kohen gadol very detailed instructions—from what to wear to what to do in and out of the Mishkan. All of this is of course constrained to a finite time. During this time, Bnei Yisrael come together in a show of unity and pray for the kohen gadol's well-being as well as their own forgiveness.

Another lesson to be learned from this routine is how to become successful. Hashem, providing the kohen with such exact details, is actually helping the kohen succeed at his goal, not making the job harder. This not only makes the kohen do his job vigilantly, it also creates order in his job. Moreover, the seriousness of this job is seen in how the kohen prepares for it. A week before Yom Kippur, the kohen purifies himself and prepares for the many steps he will have to carry out on Yom Kippur.

A perfect example of how preparation leads to success in all aspects of life is the basketball career of Ray Allen, the Miami Heat sixth man and the all time leader in three-point field goals in NBA history. Before every game, University of Connecticut graduate Ray Allen has a detailed schedule, called "The Routine," where he arranges what and when to eat, the time of his shoot-around, and the time of his departure to the arena. This signifies a complete commitment to his game. Similarly, when the kohen follows the routine thoroughly, he displays commitment to Hashem and his people. Hashem does not want us to live in fear of sin, which some mistakenly conclude from the detailed commandments to the kohen gadol. Rather, Hashem wants us to be successful, not only using "The Routine," but through all of the Torah's mitzvot.

Rabbi Schochet continued

In Judaism (as R' Yaakov points out), we do not believe that the new generation is to be respected more than the older generation. We don't subscribe to the notion that every "new" generation is wiser, updated, more advanced, and further evolved. To the contrary, we recognize that while we may be an important link in the chain, it is our predecessors who serve as our role models in preserving our identity. We understand that as Jews, we have a heritage that dates back to the beginning of time, and it is our responsibility to cherish that royal lineage and pass it on to the next generation as well!

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