



Parshat HaShavuah

אחרי מות-קדושים
**ACHREI MOT-
 KEDOSHIM**
 י"ג אייר תשע"ה
MAY 2, 2015

A PUBLICATION OF



Ashreinu

חלקינו מה טוב

Candle Lighting
7:34
 S"Z Kriat Shema
10:00

Sunset
7:53
 Motzei Shabbat
8:30



Enriching and Enhancing Your Study of the Weekly Torah Portion

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INCORPORATING KEDUSHA

RABBI SIMMY SHABTAI

At the very beginning of Parshat Kedoshim, Moshe is instructed to speak to the entire Jewish people and instruct them “קדושים תהיו” – “you shall be holy.”

Rashi interprets this to mean that one should distance himself from forbidden sexual relationships as well as sin.

Ramban, however, offers a different interpretation. He suggests that the command refers to withdrawing oneself from permitted activities. Despite the fact that the Torah permits one to enjoy oneself through drinking wine, eating meat, etc., we are still forbidden from pursuing a hedonistic lifestyle and enjoying these pleasures in an excessive manner. A person who doesn't abide by these guidelines will become a “נבל ברשות התורה” – “a glutton sanctioned by the Torah.”

Rav Yonatan Eibeshitz explains that the entire Jewish nation was gathered before this command was given in order to emphasize that the forms of abstinence that are appropriate are only those that are possible for the entire nation to fulfill on a communal level.

The Netziv offers an entirely different approach to this communal gathering and explains that the gathering is meant to demonstrate that every single person is charged with this responsibility, despite the fact that each individual's ability to achieve abstinence is dependent on his unique personality and situation. Whereas Rav Yonatan Eibeshitz understands that we are commanded about a universal *kedusha* that the community must attain, the Netziv is of the opinion that this is a personal command that needs to be tailored to each individual.

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MAKING THE CONNECTION

Yael Attias ('16)
MONTHLY WRITER

It is quite shocking to see a person buying a box of cigarettes with the words “Smoking Kills” printed right on the box. However, if on that box of cigarettes it said, “Your friend Jimmy died from smoking,” that same person would think twice about buying the cigarettes. This can be applied to any situation because when a message hits close to home, people are significantly more likely to retain it.

This week’s parsha begins with, “And Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons and He said to Moshe: ‘Speak to your brother Aharon, that he should not come at all times into the Holy within the dividing curtain...so that he should not die’” (Vayikra 16:1-2).

It seems unnecessary for Hashem to instruct Moshe to reiterate these instructions to Aharon, since Aharon already knew he was not allowed to enter the Holy of Holies.

The Torah mentions the deaths of Aharon’s sons when Hashem is warning Aharon not to follow in his sons’ ways in order for the warning to make a stronger impact. Furthermore, Hashem repeats this to Aharon because even a tzadik such as Aharon needs to be constantly reminded regarding actions that are forbidden. A smoker knows that smoking kills but he sometimes needs a friendly reminder in order to connect the knowledge in his brain to his heart so he can act upon it.

Esav’s head is buried in the grave of our forefathers because he studied Torah with his father and grandfather. However, he failed to make the connection between his brain (his intellectual study) and his heart and never acted upon anything he learned. This is why only his head merited to be buried near our forefathers.

Nowadays it is very easy to sit in a class, listen to a shiur at home, or even read a book. But it is not enough to be knowledgeable. The difficult part is taking that knowledge and making it real so that you are able to act upon it.

OVERRIDING FACTOR

Lana Rosenthal ('17)
MONTHLY WRITER

Parshat Kedoshim, the second parsha that we read this Shabbat, contains the verse, “Every man: Your mother and father shall you revere and My Shabbatot shall you observe—I am Hashem, your God” (Vayikra 19:3).

In this one verse, the Torah presents two seemingly unrelated concepts: fearing one’s mother and father and observing Shabbat. Rashi famously explains the juxtaposition of these topics by commenting that one is not permitted to violate Shabbat even if his parents tell him to do so. In other words, the word of Hashem trumps the word of a person’s parents.

Continued page 3





Rosenthal Continued

This concept is not only true about Shabbat; it applies to all of the mitzvot. If it is obvious that Hashem's word is always dominant, why does the Torah teach this lesson specifically using the mitzvah of Shabbat as opposed to any other mitzvah?

The gemara states that there are three partners in the creation of a human being: the mother, the father, and Hashem. Therefore, a person may think that he should listen to his parents over Hashem as his parents constitute the majority.

Continued page 4

WHAT ATONES FOR OUR SINS?

ILAN GRITZMAN ('16)

At the opening of Parshat **אחרי מות**, we are introduced to two eye-catching events. One is the tragic deaths of Aharon's sons, **נדב** and **אביהו**, and the other is Yom Kippur. Two questions arise: Why does Hashem punish **נדב** and **אביהו** with such an extreme measure, and what do the deaths of Aharon's sons have to do with the Yom Kippur service?

Rashi suggests that the reason for their harsh punishment was that they entered the **בית המקדש** while intoxicated, giving a terrible representation of what it means to serve Hashem. Ramban believes that their deaths were a consequence of Aaron's participation in **חטא העגל**. The **ילקוט יוסף** explains that both **נדב** and **אביהו** remained unmarried because they felt that nobody had a powerful enough lineage to marry them, so Hashem viewed their intentions as arrogant and made them pay with their lives.

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NEVER OKAY

LEORA KROLL ('17)

This Shabbat we read the double parsha of Acharei Mot-Kedoshim, but I would like to focus only on Parshat Kedoshim. Parshat Kedoshim discusses many commandments, one of which in particular really stands out: "**לֹא תֵלֵךְ רְכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ**", which translates to, "Do not go about your people telling gossip" (Vayikra 19:16).

Why would the Torah write "**בְּעַמֶּיךָ**," "your people"? If we are told to not gossip, doesn't that infer that it should not be told about "your people" either? Rabbi Menachem Raab suggests that this may be because nowadays people are so engulfed in talking about other people, even and especially those they know well.

Many justify their gossip by saying: "it is fine for me to talk about this person because I know him, he is a friend," but this is not in fact a reasonable justification. The Torah teaches us that you should not gossip, even about "your people." You must be careful in your speech, no matter who it is about, and realize that gossip is never okay!



Rabbi Shabtai continued

What emerges then, according to the Netziv, is that we are each responsible for conducting a self assessment in order to determine which areas of our personal lives can be infused with *kedusha* – even if we may have been engaged in doing something that is technically permitted – and then, together, become a holy people.

Rosenthal continued

In addition, the adjoining phrases in our parsha mimic the adjacent laws from the Ten Commandments to honor your father and mother and to keep Shabbat. Therefore, one might conclude that the commandment to honor one's parents and the commandment to honor Hashem are equal, as the commandments are found together once again.

The Alshich explains that in order to prevent these mistaken conclusions, the Torah specifically mentions the mitzvah of Shabbat—the commemoration of Hashem's creation of the world. While a mother and father serve as Hashem's partners in creating a child, these partners were made on the sixth day of creation by Hashem. Shabbat reminds parents that even they are subservient to Hashem and are, therefore, bound by His mitzvot just as their children are. Accordingly, Hashem's word overrides the words of parents.

Gritzman continued

The purpose of the Yom Kippur service is to give us the opportunity to atone for our sins. The משך חכמה suggests that Yom Kippur is an עת רצון, a favorable time for atonement. When you connect this concept with the idea that “the death of the righteous brings atonement” (Talmud Yerushalmi, Yoma 1:1), you can understand the relationship between our parsha's two seemingly disparate events.

When righteous people (like אביהו and נדב, despite their sin) pass away and their souls ascend to heaven, the souls that are already there rejoice at their arrival. This can bring about a spirit of forgiveness and atonement from above to those remaining on earth. Since our goal on Yom Kippur is to achieve atonement, the adjacent placement of אביהו and נדב's deaths is understandable and justifiable.

However, the atonement on Yom Kippur and from the death of the righteous is conditional. It only atones for those who treat it as a holy and significant day, and to those who establish a spiritual dimension. The purpose of Yom Kippur should not simply be a day of passively refraining from the physical, but rather a day of active devotion to the spiritual.

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