

O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHIOT ACHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM · 10 IYAR 5770 · APR. 24, 2010 · VOL. 17 NO. 27

PARSHA INSIGHTS

FACES OF HOLINESS

“Speak to all of the congregation of the Children of Israel and tell them: You must be Holy” (19:2)

We often think of holiness as something that only a few exceptional individuals can aspire to. However, the fact that G-d gave this mitzvah to *Moshe Rabbeinu* in the form of “Speak to all the congregation...” teaches us that not only the exceptional among us is capable of holiness, but every one of us is *commanded* to be Holy. When the Torah was given on Mount Sinai, the Midrash, commenting on the verse “*And all the people saw the voices*”, tells us “*The Voice came out and was divided into many, many different voices, and everyone heard according to his strength*”. In other words, when one person heard “*You shall not murder*”, he understood it to mean “Don’t pick up your ax

and murder!” While another understood “*You shall not murder*” to mean that if a dead body is found close to the outskirts of your town, you will be held responsible for not giving him sufficient protection, food and escort, as though you’d murdered him. To yet another it meant, don’t embarrass someone in public, because when the blood drains from his face and he turns white, it is as though you had murdered him. Each person heard the Voice according to his own strength and unique talents, and similarly every Jew is expected to be holy on his level because he is an individual spark of the holiness of G-d.

• Source: Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin

I-SIGHT

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart.” (19:17)

One of the most difficult emotions to deal with is resentment. Resentment can come from many different sources. It can result from someone genuinely wronging us. Or we may feel wronged by someone even though an objective third party would say that we were being over-sensitive. Resentment can come from plain old jealousy — someone who is brighter than us, or seems to have an easier life, or is more successful. Or resentment can come for no good reason at all. It may result from the way that someone speaks or dresses or expresses himself. As they say in the North of England “It’s the way he hangs his face.”

The spiritual masters teach that this is the worst kind of hatred. In Hebrew it is called *Sinat Chinam*, literally Free Hate. Hate that has come from no injustice real or perceived — just the way someone is.

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart.”

In this week’s Parsha, the Torah categorically prohibits

that gnawing worm called resentment.

Fine.

The Torah says that we mustn’t feel resentment. But isn’t that more easily said than done? How are we supposed to put this into action?

First of all, we cannot work on our feelings until we understand them. This requires objectivity and the help of someone who is impartial to help us objectivize our emotions. Only when we can delineate our feelings will we have a chance of changing them.

If this analysis shows that we have been genuinely wronged, the proper mode of conduct will depend on the circumstances. It may involve a direct confrontation, or a rebuke from a third party, or legal recourse in *Bet Din*. When we act to deal positively with our resentment in one of these ways, the poison of the resentment is very often vitiated or extinguished.

However, there may be circumstances where a genuine

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PARSHA OVERVIEW

ACHAREI MOT

G-d instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan*. On Yom Kippur, the *Kohen Gadol* is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and wearing special clothing. He brings offerings unique to Yom Kippur, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is “for G-d” and is offered in the Temple, while the other is “for Azazel” in the desert. The Torah states the individual’s obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and marital relations. Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman’s monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

KEDOSHIM

The nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught. *Prohibitions:* Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone’s property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one’s parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; tattooing. *Positive:* Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating in Jerusalem the fruits from a tree’s fourth year; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf. Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate gentile behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe *kashrut*, thus maintaining our unique and separate status.

ISRAEL Forever

SECRET OF SURVIVAL

“**W**e are living in a time today when the survival of the Jewish community is being threatened once again in various parts of the world. It is critical that we find the elements that bind us together and give us whatever strengths we can have as a unified community. Nothing is more important in this regard than the study of the Jewish vision and the Jewish religion and the study of the Torah.”

Thus spoke Mortimer Zuckerman, the real estate tycoon and newspaper publisher currently exploring the idea of running for the U.S. Senate this year, in an interview published in the American Jewish Spirit magazine some four

years ago.

Along with his observation about Jewish survival depending on Torah study, Zuckerman told the story of his first visit as a secular Jew to a yeshiva.

“I was absolutely knocked out by it,” he said of his visit to the Lakewood Yeshiva. “It was the single most intellectually active, energetic, fascinating environment I had ever witnessed. It made Harvard Law School, which I happen to have attended, look like a kindergarten.”

A moving testimonial to Torah study as the guarantee of Israel forever.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PLACES

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

KINNERET – A SEA OF MANY NAMES

The heavy rains with which Israel was blessed this past winter caused so many people to ask, “How much has the water level of the Kinneret risen?”



This body of water, which is a major source of water for the entire country, has a number of names in addition to Lake Kinneret – “Sea of Galilee”, “Sea of Tiberias” and “Lake Ginossar”.

PARSHA Q&A ?

ACHAREI MOT

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshat Acharei Mot* was taught after the death of Aharon's sons?
2. How long did the first *Beit Hamikdash* stand?
3. What did the *Kohen Gadol* wear when he entered the Holy of Holies?
4. How many times did the *Kohen Gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
5. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *azazel*. What is *azazel*?
6. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *Kohen Gadol*?
7. What is the penalty of *karet*?
8. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
9. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
10. May a man marry his wife's sister?

KEDOSHIM

1. Why was *Parshat Kedoshim* said in front of all the Jewish People?

2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?
3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbat?
4. The Torah obligates one to leave the "*leket*" for the poor. What is "*leket*"?
5. In *Shemot* 20:13, the Torah commands, "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11 "Do not steal"?
6. In verse 19:13, the Torah commands, "Do not wrong your neighbor." To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
7. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
8. How does one fulfill the command "*v'hadarta p'nei zakein*"?
9. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
10. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which type of death penalty is it referring?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

ACHAREI MOT

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:3 - 410 years.
3. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *kohen*.
4. 16:4 - Five times.
5. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
6. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
7. 17:9 - The person's life is shortened and his offspring die.
8. 17:13 - Non-domestic kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.
9. 18:4 - A "*mishpat*" conforms to the human sense of justice. A "*chok*" is a law whose reason is not given to us and can only be understood as G-d's decree.
10. 18:18 - Not during his wife's lifetime.

KEDOSHIM

1. 19:2 - Because it contains the fundamental teachings of the Torah.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
4. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting.
5. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemot* it prohibits kidnapping.
6. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
7. 19:17 - Causing embarrassment.
8. 19:32 - By not sitting in their seat nor contradicting them.
9. 20:3 - "*Karet*" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
10. 20:10 - "*Chenek*" (strangulation).

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- Preemptive action against burglar
- When abortion is mandated
- Rescuing a potential victim of murder or rape
- If the potential murderer can be stopped by wounding him
- When martyrdom is required to avoid transgression
- Why Esther did not give up her life to avoid violation
- Is the non-Jew obligated in martyrdom to avoid idol worship
- Which sins of sexual immorality are punished with *sereifah*
- Advice to fathers regarding marriage of their daughters
- The sins punished with death by the sword
- What is considered outright murder and what is considered only indirect cause
- Murder performed by more than one person
- When death is not immediately caused by murderer
- When Moshe did not know the punishment for a sin

A THREEFOLD OBLIGATION TO SAVE LIFE

If one sees another being attacked and he is in a position to save his life by wounding or killing his assailant, he is obligated to do so. This obligation is spelled out by the Torah in a number of places.

In *Devarim* 22:2 where the Torah commands us to return to its owner a lost object, it uses the terminology “You shall return it to him” which implies that if his very body is in danger of being lost, you must take action to preserve it for

him.

In *Vayikra* 19:16 there is a prohibition “You shall not stand by idly while another’s blood is shed.” This prohibition obligates one to do more than personally intervene and requires him to even hire help to save the victim’s life.

In *Devarim* 22:26 there is a Torah passage that equates murder with rape. This teaches us that just as one may take the life of a potential rapist to save the honor of his married victim (something we learn from the very next passage), so too may one even take the life of a potential murderer in order to save the victim.

• *Sanhedrin* 73a

What the SAGES Say

“Concerning one who loves his wife like himself and honors her even more than himself, raises his children properly and marries them off at an early age, it is written ‘You will know that there is peace in your home.’” (*Iyov* 5: 24)

• *Beraita - Sanhedrin* 76b

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SING IN THE BLUES

From: Benji

Dear Rabbi,

When things are going well for me, I feel happy and close to G-d. When things aren't going so well, I don't feel as close to G-d and that bothers me. I know that everything, good or bad comes from G-d for our own good. But I'm having trouble internalizing or living up to this ideal. Can you give me some pointers on how to practically incorporate this into my life?

Dear Benji,

The feelings you have are perfectly natural and anyone who thinks about their service of G-d is troubled at one time or another in one way or another with this question. The fact that you are not only aware of, but also bothered by, this problem shows you're on the right spiritual track and that in itself is something to be happy about.

Of course, when all is well, it's easy to be "happy" with G-d. However, although we should certainly be thankful of the good G-d gives, feeling close to G-d at those times is not necessarily because we're actually closer to G-d but because we're closer to our self-centered selves. When this is so, being "happy" is not really serving G-d but rather serving ourselves.

But how can one know if his happiness and joy during the good times is serving G-d rather than self-serving?

One way to know is by how one feels during the bad times.

I don't mean to say that one must be completely happy at those times, because most people can't achieve and maintain that type of clarity. But one must strive to be simultaneously happy with his realization that G-d does all for the best, and often the "bad" times are for our good and in fact bring us

closer to G-d in ways the "good" times can't. One who is able to do this is truly serving G-d in both situations and will reap the rewards in true closeness to G-d.

This idea is hinted at in a teaching I once heard. The verse states "those who plant in tears, in joyous song will reap" (Psalms 126). The obvious meaning of the verse is that those who expend effort and endure hardship for a purpose will eventually reap the fruits of their labor. However, if this was the only intended meaning, the verse should have said simply, "those who plant in tears will reap in song". The particular word order as stated in the verse therefore suggests a parallel reading – namely: "those who plant in tears in joyous song – they will reap". Meaning, those who serve G-d while crying by also singing His praise (*hazorim b'dima b'rina*), they will truly harvest closeness to G-d (*yiktzoru*).

The following analogy that expresses the closeness of G-d even in hard times (or more accurately, especially in hard times) is also worth keeping in mind when you feel things aren't going so well:

A man who suffered significantly in his life came before the Heavenly court after his passing and was given a vision of his life. He found himself overlooking a long sandy beach along the seashore. Along the length of the shore he saw footprints stretching into the distance – at some places there were two sets of prints; at some only one. G-d asked him, "How do you perceive the vision?" The man replied, "Well G-d, it seems quite obvious. The places with two sets of footprints represent the good times in my life when you were walking with me; the places with only one set are the bad times where I went it alone." G-d replied, "True, the two sets are the good times when we walked together. But the one set is when I was carrying you in my arms!"

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LENDING AN EAR

Question: I have a neighbor who is constantly bombarding me with his wild ideas about how to save the world. Listening to him is a waste of time but I am afraid of hurting his feelings by telling him what I think of his plans. What is the right thing to do?

Answer: Just as there is kindness in providing people with their physical needs, there is also *chessed* in providing them

with their emotional ones. When you devote some time to listen to your neighbor you are giving him the attention he desperately craves. It is useless to try to point out the lack of reality in his idea because in his distorted thinking he is convinced that he is right. The best thing to do is to simply state that what you heard is indeed interesting and you need time to think it over. That should hold him over till the next brainstorm.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

REWARD FOR SELFLESSNESS

With the approach of the *yahrzeit* of the great Chassidic leader Rabbi Elimelech on 21 Adar, thousands of Jews throughout the world were making arrangements for travel to his tomb in the European city of Lizhensk. Among them were Jews in the Israeli town of Elad who were participating in a charity raffle whose prizes were airplane tickets to Lizhensk.

When one of them learned that he was the lucky winner of such a ticket, he announced that he was giving the prize

to his brother who was anxious to make the pilgrimage but could not afford to do so. The next week another drawing was held and once again our hero was one of the winners.

As both brothers joyously traveled to pray at the graveside of this great *tzaddik* they could reflect on the fact that the selflessness expressed by the first one was a fulfillment of Rabbi Elimelech's encouragement of such behavior in his famous "Little List" of guidance to be found in his monumental work "Noam Elimelech".

PARSHA INSIGHTS _____

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grievance has no outside recourse, and we may just have to forgive and forget. In this last scenario (and in the others too) we should remember that it is G-d who runs the world and we should analyze why G-d has put us in our present situation.

As far as jealousy is concerned, we should remember that each of us is on our own separate "monorail" in life. The fact that someone else has something that I don't have, be it brains or money or looks, in no way means that they are taking away from me. The root of jealousy is a lack of trust in G-d's Providence. Each of us is born with unique capabilities with which to fulfill our potential in this world. If G-d hasn't given me something, it's because I don't need it to

complete my mission on this earth.

And as far as *Sinat Chinam* is concerned, we should remind ourselves that we are all created in G-d's image. If there is something that I hate about my fellow for no objective reason whatever — just because it's the 'way he hangs his face' — it means that I am despising the image of G-d Himself.

However, if we look carefully with a positive eye at those whom we resent and try to divorce our egos from our emotions, we might begin to see all kinds of positive traits that they possess.

It all depends on our I-sight.