

בעזהשׁי״ת

Parshah Insights

Pertinent Inspirational
Insights on the Parshah

פרשת קדושים

Translated from the outstanding Lev Shomaya Parsha series that contain highlights of the lectures and deroshos given by:

Harav Shmaya Low shlita - London, England

If you have any comments or questions, or if you would like to receive this publication, send your details to:

levshomeyaenglish@gmail.com

The purpose of this publication is to make these wonderful Divrei Torah and chizuk available to the English speaking public. We are very grateful to Harav Low shlita for allowing us to glean selected inspiring thoughts.

פרשת קדושים

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

זו היא כל התורה כולה

This week in Parsahas Kedoshim חוץ לארץ is read. In this parshah we are commanded to love our fellow Jew. The Torah gives us the מצות לא תעשה of (יט ז) you should not harbor hatred for your brother, in your heart. The next possuk presents us with the מצות עשה of (יח) ואהבת לרעך כמוך, and you should love your friend as much as yourself. These mitzvos represent both the mitzvah of אהבת ישראל, loving a fellow Yid, and the prohibition against שנאת חנם, baseless hatred. Not only are these crucial mitzvos, but according to Hillel Hazaken זו היא כל התורה כולה this encapsulates the entirety of Torah!

The Gemara (שבת לא.) tells us a story of a gentile who wished to convert. He came to הלל and asked him to teach him the entire Torah while standing on one foot. This obviously means that he wanted Hillel to summarize the guiding principle of the Torah, or the most important mitzvah, in a short succinct analysis (see מהרש"א on this Gemara). Hillel answered him לחברך לא תעביד, whatever you would not want done unto yourself, do not do to others, זו היא ואידך, פירושה הוא, כל התורה כולה, this is the essence of the entire Torah, and the rest is an explanation of this, now go and learn.

Hillel told the aspiring Ger that the entire Torah is built on the foundation of ואהבת לרעך כמוך. All the other mitzvos are an outgrowth of this all-encompassing mitzvah. After complying with his request,

and telling him the foundational mitzvah of 'love your fellow Yid', he then instructed him that if he truly wishes to convert, he must go and learn all the other mitzvos too.

The Foundation for all other Mitzvos

Rashi, at the beginning of the parshah, quotes Chazal, who say that this Parsha was said בהקהל, when the entire nation was gathered together, because רוב גופי תורה תלויין בה, most of the fundamentals of Torah are dependent on this Parshah. Perhaps it is indeed because of this fundamental mitzvah of אהבת ישראל, which according to the above-mentioned Gemara זו היא כל התורה כולה, this parsha was given בהקהל. Klal Yisroel had to gather together, young and old, men and women, to hear this foundational mitzvah being given.

Every Yid is a child of our loving Father, Hashem Yisborach. When a person despises another Yid, or acts towards him in a non-loving way, he is by default 'degrading' or being 'offensive' to Hashem. For if a person hurts a child, he is showing disregard to the father. The father and child are eternally interwoven, and how one acts towards the child, is telling of his relationship with the father too. Perhaps this is the reason why Hillel placed such great importance on this mitzvah, and why he said that it is the foundation of the entire Torah.

Every Yid is a Child of Hashem

Indeed, the possuk tells us לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך, you should not hate your brother **in your heart**. The Torah does not only caution us against committing acts of hatred, aveiros such as loshon hara or harming others, it warns us not even to dislike another Yid in the deep recesses of our hearts. The mussar seforim refer to such mitzvos as מצוות הלבבות, mitzvos of the heart. This turns this mitzvah into not only a מצוה בין אדם לחברו between one man and another, but also בין אדם למקום between man and his Creator. For if we despise our brother, even secretly in our heart, even if we do not commit any other

sins of hatred, we have still shown disregard to Hashem, who is the loving Father of every single Yid.

Not only is אהבת ישראל a reflection of our אהבת ה', but for the same reason one must also respect every person and even every inanimate object in this world too. Because Hashem created them, and desecrating even an inanimate object, shows disregard for Hashem's creation. If Hashem created the object, there must be a purpose to it, and if we waste it, or treat it with disregard, we are inadvertently demonstrating a lack of regard for its purpose, and by extension for its Creator.

Certainly, the greatest measure of love, must be reserved for a fellow Yid, who is the surely the most beloved to Hashem. But still, honor and respect must also be shown to every other human being, who is also Hashem's creation. And on a lesser level we must also respect even an inanimate object, for it too is the work of Hashem's Hand.

Respecting EVERY Human Being

We see in the Gemara (יבמות עח:) a lesson on how important it is to treat every person with love and respect, even a gentile. The Gemara tells us ויהי רעב בימי דוד שלש שנים שנה אחר שנה in the times of Dovid Hamelech, the Yidden suffered three consecutive years of terrible famine. In the first year Dovid thought that perhaps the hunger came as a result of idol-worship as it says ועבדתם אלהים אחרים and if you will worship other 'Gods' then I will stop the skies and there will not be any rain. However, they did not find anyone who was idol-worshipping. When the famine persisted the next year, Dovid Hamelech thought that perhaps the people were guilty of עריות, however, after investigating he concluded that the nation was not guilty thereof. In the third year, Dovid suspected that perhaps they were being punished for having promised to give tzedokah, and not having fulfilled their promise. This too is a sin which can bring famine onto this world. The Gemara tells us בדקו

ולא מצאו, they searched, but did not find anyone guilty of this transgression either.

After three years, Dovid concluded that it must be that he himself is responsible for the hunger. He asked through the אורים ותומים why the nation is being punished with a famine, and Hashem answered that it is because Shaul was not eulogized, and because Shaul killed the גבעונים. Hashem severely punished the entire nation, both because they did not accord Shaul the respect the halacha commands he be given by being properly eulogized, and because they did not concern themselves with the plight of the Givonim, who were a gentile nation.

Hashem held Klal Yisroel responsible for the plight of the Givonim. The אורים ותומים showed that Shaul had killed them, when in fact they were still alive. However, Shaul had killed the Kohanim of the city of נוב, and the Givonim used to be the water-carriers and wood-choppers for the city of Nov. They derived their entire sustenance from servicing the Kohanim of Nov, and now that Shaul had killed the Kohanim, the Givonim did not have any source of sustenance. They did not have any source of sustenance, therefore the Torah referred to them as 'dead'. And Hashem punished the Yidden with three continuous years of famine, for not ensuring that a gentile nation had adequate sustenance. This demonstrates how much the Torah expects us to care for every human being. How much more so must we concern ourselves with the wellbeing of a beloved fellow Yid.

Honor for the Inanimate

In fact, one must even show ample regard to inanimate objects, for they too are the work of Hashem's Hand. Furthermore a mindset of honor for everything, surely fosters a mindset of far greater honor for a human being, and surely for a beloved brother.

The Torah instructs us (שמות כ כג) לא תעלה במעלות על מזבחי, you should not build steps to ascend to the מזבח, so that the Kohanim should not have to lift and spread their legs apart while ascending,

which would be a desecration of the Mizbeach. Rashi teaches us an important and fascinating lesson based on this possuk. והרי דברים קל וחומר, ומה אבנים הללו שאין בהם דעת להקפיד על בזיונן וכו' these words should be taken as a קל וחומר, that if stones which do not have an understanding to insist on guarding their honor, and still the Torah cautions us to respect them, חבריך שהוא בדמות יוצרך ומקפיד על בזיונו על, how much more so must you preserve the honor of your friend, who was created in the image of your Creator and his honor is important to him. Surely if the Torah instructs us to treat the stones of the Mizbeach with dignity, even though they do not have any feelings, how much more so is it crucial to be extremely cautious with a friend, who has myriad thoughts and emotions and is extremely susceptible to disrespect.

Valuing Hashem's Creations

We see another example in Chazal on how much value the Torah places on even a simple object, and how much we are expected to respect every single one of Hashem's creations. On one occasion, when Dovid was on the run from Shaul Hamelech, he entered a cave together with five hundred of his people. Shaul did not know that Dovid was in that cave, and he too entered. Dovid's people urged him to utilize the opportunity to finally neutralize Shaul. Because Shaul was seeking to kill Dovid, then the halacha of להרגך השכם להרגו, if someone is coming to kill you then you should be first to kill him, was applicable. Dovid strengthened himself and withstood this great nisayon, and did not allow his people to do any harm to Shaul. He warned them that Shaul is משיח ה', anointed by Hashem, and therefore they should not kill him. He did however cut off the edge of Shaul's coat, to prove to Shaul that he had the opportunity to kill him and did not (שמואל-א כד).

Many years later, when Dovid Hamelech was already elderly, he was afflicted with a malady; he was always extremely cold and neither warm clothing nor blankets could help restore his body heat

(מלאכים-א א). Rashi quotes a Chazal (ברכות סב ב) that says that this was a punishment for his earlier act of cutting Shaul's coat. Because he showed contempt to Shaul's clothing, his clothing could not provide him with warmth. Again, this indicates how we must deal with every object in this world, in the way in which it was meant to be dealt with, and not wantonly destroy or disrespect anything in our beautiful world. Even more so, as Rashi says, we must make a קל וחומר, a comparison that if the Torah commands us to treat inanimate objects with respect, how much more so must we value and love all Yidden, who are children of Hashem. As the possuk says (דברים יד א) (שמות ד כב) בני בני, you are children to Hashem and בני בני, my child, my firstborn Yisroel.

The Most Beloved Creations

This Torah mandated mindset of respect for everything and everyone, can shed some clarity on the seeming disparate reasons that Chazal tell us for the Churban Beis Hamikdash. The Gemara (בבא מציעא פה: נדרים פא.) tells us that Eretz Yisroel was destroyed because the Yidden did not say ברכת התורה. Elsewhere the Gemara says that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed due to the sin of שנאת חנם baseless hatred (יומא ט:). The Gemara states that indeed we can learn that שקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עברות, ע"ז, גלוי עריות ושפיכות דמים baseless hatred is equal to the three cardinal sins of idol worship, immorality and murder. This is derived from the fact that Yidden of that time were guilty of transgressing these three sins, however this was not the reason for the destruction. Rather the rampant baseless hatred was the reason thereof. Thus, it is clear that Sinas Chinam is at least equal to the three severest sins combined.

However, according to these two Gemaras, it remains unclear whether Sinas Chinam was the cause of the destruction, or the failure to say Birchas HaTorah brought about the golus?

Perhaps these two sins, not saying Birchas Hatorah, and baseless hatred come from the same source. The Rishonim tell us that the

Yidden did actually learn Torah before the churban, they did not however accord enough value and respect to their Torah learning (see נדרים (רש"י ב"מ, ר"ן נדרים). They did not say Birchas Hatorah, and thank Hashem for giving us the Torah, because they did not value this gift sufficiently. So too, שנאת חנם, comes as a result of insufficient respect for the creations of Hashem. Both sins are an outgrowth of insufficient value placed on Hashem's most treasured creations. Torah and Klal Yisroel are the reason for creation. The Yidden in the generation prior to the churban did not understand this, and did not act in accordance with the beloved status of these two entities. Thus, both the failure to say Birchas HaTorah, as well as the widespread Sinas Chinam were an outgrowth of a tragic failure to show love, respect, and admiration to Hashem's most beloved creations; Torah and Yisroel.

Rebuke as an Outgrowth of Love

In this vein we can better understand the connection between the various parts of the possukim that were quoted earlier. לא תשנא את (ויקרא יט יז) you should not hate your brother in your heart, you should admonish or rebuke your friend and you should not commit a sin unto him. The next possuk is also comprised of a few parts; לא תקם, ולא תטר את בני (ויקרא יט יח) you should not take revenge, you should not harbor and hold onto feelings of resentment in your heart regarding what another has done to you, and you should love your friend to the degree that you love yourself, I am Hashem.

The Meforshim give several explanations why these separate commands are given in the same possuk. They discuss why the mitzvah of not harboring hatred for another Yid, and giving mussar to a friend, are given together. Furthermore, they explain what is the connection of 'you should not sin due to him' to the beginning of the possuk which talks about banishing hatred and giving rebuke. Meforshim also explain the next possuk; they provide clarity on the connection between נטירה ונקמה, and loving one's fellow Yid, as well

as the connection between these commandments and that of the possuk before. In this way we understand how the various components of these two possukim are actually all linked in an essential way.

Many meforshim, (see כלי יקר at length), say the reason the mitzvah of תוכחה rebuking a fellow Yid, is given here, is because rebuke must be an outgrowth of genuine love. The need to rebuke, or admonish, which may be perceived as a negative behavior, is actually given in the same possukim in which we are told to love one another and harbor no hatred or resentment. This is because if you truly love another person unconditionally, then you wish to enlighten him regarding his mistakes so that he will have the opportunity to improve his deeds. לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך, you should not harbor a trace of hatred for your brother, therefore, if you see him sinning, you should be genuinely pained for his sake, and rebuke him in a kind and gentle manner in order to return him to his Loving Father.

If we are conscious of the fact that every yid is a son of our Loving and Benevolent Father, then we cannot watch them doing anything harmful to their souls. Our love for them automatically causes us to rebuke them. But surely, due to the loving source of our mussar, we will also be conscious to do so in a way that will build and not destroy or degrade. And then, when given in this manner, then the rebuke will be perceived as an act of genuine loving kindness.

Indeed, when explaining this possuk, Rashi says that one should give mussar in a way that does not shame the recipient in public. For if you give mussar in a demeaning way, then the recipient might be embarrassed עליו חטא ולא תשא and you will have sinned on his account.

Rebuke Results in Increased Love

The Ramban however maintains that the various components of these possukim are actually individual, separate mitzvos, aside from

the directive הוכח תוכיח and ולא תשא עליו חטא. He explains the connection between these. He says that when witnessing a Yid engaged in wrongdoing, we are obligated to rebuke him, in this way לא תשא עליו חטא we will not have sinned due to him; we will not be held responsible for his sin.

He continues by saying that though the other parts of these possukim are each a different individual mandate, still there is a fundamental connection between these separate entities. He explains that when a person feels he has been wronged by another לא תשנא, he may not harbor hatred for him in his heart. Instead, הוכח תוכיח, he should gently rebuke his friend and explain that he feels hurt by his actions. In this way he will enable the alleged aggressor to either explain himself and provide understanding on how his actions may have been perceived wrongly, or if he was truly wronged then the wrongdoer can express remorse and ask for forgiveness. In this way the person who felt he had been wronged will be pacified and he will not harbor hatred in his heart. So too לא תקום he should not seek revenge, לא תטר he should not let the hatred fester, and ultimately ואהבת לרעך כמוך he will truly restore the love he feels for this friend. In this manner, by addressing one's hurt, and being willing to genuinely rid oneself of hatred, one grants both his friend, and ultimately himself, the ability to reach the most sublime level of אהבת ישראל.

If on the other hand one bears hatred for his friend and holds onto resentment for various perceived or real wrongdoings, and he does not tenderly rebuke his friend for these, then he will never reach the ultimate level at the end of the possuk ואהבת לרעך כמוך love your friend as much as you love yourself. (see also אבן עזרא and אורח חיים הק' and אבן עזרא who give a similar explanation of the possuk).

Strengthening שם ה'

The אור החיים הקדוש makes an observation regarding the last two words of these two possukim; אני ה'. He says that it is very appropriate

that after being given the above commandments which all involve loving another Yid, and banishing all thoughts, feelings and actions of resentment, hatred or revenge, then we are reminded 'אני ה'. This is because through what he refers to as אחדות הלבבות, the bonding of hearts, the wholeness of Hashem's name is strengthened. He explains that all Yidden are branches of Hashem's name, as it says 'כי חלק ה' עמו part of Hashem is His nation. When the connections between these branches are reinforced through שנאת חנם and improving our אהבת ישראל then 'אני ה'; the Name of Hashem also becomes stronger.

An example of True Love

The Chofetz Chaim was once in Vilna in order to disseminate his holy seforim. He was sitting in an inn, when an uncouth individual came in and ordered himself a portion of food. This Yid did not wash his hands prior to eating his bread, and did not say a bracha on his food. He was entirely immersed in the act of eating, and did not display any dignity or regard for the others in the inn. When the innkeeper noticed that the Chofetz Chaim wanted to give this fellow Yid mussar, he cautioned him against it. He explained that he is a child 'cantonist', who was abducted from his home at a young age and forcefully conscripted into the Russian army. His uncouth behavior was a result of his having been at the mercy of the vicious Russian army for many years, and there was no hope for him to change his ways.

Upon hearing this, the Chofetz Chaim turned to the 'cantonist', and with a glowing face, asked him if it is indeed true that he was abducted at the tender age of seven and placed in the care of a gentile family until the age of eighteen. The man confirmed that it is true, and the Chofetz Chaim then asked him if it is also true that he was then inducted into the brutal Czarist army until the age of forty-two. Again, the man replied in the affirmative. The Chofetz Chaim then exclaimed with joy, 'and you still remained a Yid, and you are visiting

a kosher inn, despite the fact that it is more expensive; if so then you are a גודל בישראל a true Torah giant! You will sit in Olam Haba with our holy forefathers, and with the תנאים ואמוראים! And if you will continue to be mekayim the Torah and mitzvos, and you will come even closer to Yiddishkeit, then you will merit to set up a בית נאמן בישראל an authentic Jewish home!

Upon hearing the loving, heartfelt words of the Chofetz Chaim, the stunned soldier simply began crying. In over thirty-three years he had never been spoken to with any love or respect. He consequently became close to the Chofetz Chaim, and strengthened his Yiddishkeit, and indeed he merited to marry a good Jewish woman and to set up an ehrlich Yiddish home, just like the Chofetz Chaim had promised him. This is how one should give mussar to a fellow Yid. It should come from a source of authentic love, and be given with the cognizance that all Yidden are בנים ליה' children of our one Eibishter.

May we all merit to banish any hatred from our hearts and love every single Yid with unbridled love, with the understanding that we are all children of Hashem Yisborach, our loving Father who wishes to finally redeem us and bring us all home to Yerusalayim and the Beis Hamikdash Hashlishi, Amen.

גוט שבת



