



Yesodos m' ha Sedra

LESSONS IN HASHKAFKA & HALACHA FROM THE PARSHA

In memory of R' Shmuel Shmelka ben HaRav Moshe Kizelnik z"l

פרשת אחר-י-קדושים תשפ"ה

ALL FOR THE RIGHT REASONS

The Torah bids us to be "kadosh, because I am Hashem". The rishonim dispute what kedusha refers to. According to Rashi, the Torah is warning us to distance ourselves from forbidden relationships and anything that might lead to it, but many are familiar with the Ramban's understanding that we should "kadeish atzmecha b'mutar lach" - sanctify ourselves by avoiding things which are really permitted. What this means is that a person should not eat excessively even if the kashrus of the food is impeccable and adheres to the highest standards and every chumra that anyone has ever imagined. Gluttonous behavior such as this is labeled by Chazal as a "naval b'reshus ha'Torah" - disgusting behavior which is technically sanctioned by the Torah. The same applies to all other areas of physical and material pleasure; while Hashem wants us to enjoy the world He created, it must be with a sense of purpose and not just for the sake of enjoyment itself.

Perhaps this is why the Torah then ends by telling us: "ani Hashem", to remind us that we should sanctify ourselves by limiting our enjoyments because ultimately, our goal is avodas Hashem. However, Rav Zalman Sorotzkin explains that these words are not so much in support of the directive to sanctify ourselves, but rather to caution those that do. There are many scientific approaches that explain the health benefits of many Jewish eating and other habits and this is certainly true if we are talking about this type of kedusha of not overeating. However, while these explanations may be true in fact, this should not be our motivating factor. If a person says he won't eat that third donut or bowl of ice cream because it isn't healthy, he may be right and on some level fulfilled the mitzvah of guarding his health, but if he avoids it because he recognizes that Hashem wants him to restrain himself, then he has taken his behavior to a whole other level.

The words of the Chazal (Toras Kohanim) oft quoted in the name of the Rambam are well known: A person shouldn't say that he doesn't eat pork because he finds it disgusting and therefore impossible, but rather, one should say that he really could but doesn't because Hashem commanded him not to. Many of us have difficulty with this Rambam because the fact of the matter is that we find certain forbidden foods repulsive. In light of the above, the Rambam makes a lot of sense because despite our own personal preferences, we should be mekadash ourselves and say that the reason why we avoid it is because that is the ratzon Hashem. If we turn our attention to last week's parsha, we find the prohibition to consume blood. This is something that most of us would have found repulsive even had the Torah permitted it, yet Hashem forbade it so that we should fulfill a mitzvah in avoiding it, but it all depends on our kavana.

As Shlomo Hamelech (Mishlei 3) instructs us: "b'kol derachecha da'eihu" we should be cognizant of Hashem in every facet of our lives. Whether we are talking about prohibitions or things which are technically permitted, if we learn to assess what Hashem's true ratzon is, that we can merit tremendous beracha and siyata di'shmaya, as the posuk there ends "hu yiyasher orchosecha" - that Hashem will straighten the path of life on which we travel.

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יהוידק כל תלמיד חכם שאינו נוקם ונוטר כנחש אינו תלמיד חכם והקתיב {ויקרא י"ט:ח} לא תקום ולא תטור והוא במקומו הוא דקתיב. (יומא כב:)

Generally, is not befitting for a talmid chacham to take revenge, even when it is technically permitted such as when it doesn't involve withholding financial favors. Yet, at times, a talmid chacham does have to act to protect the honor of Torah and this might involve what appears to be revenge. However, he should act like a snake who knows that when it bites, it releases its venom and becomes weaker. So too, he should hesitate in acting and ultimately become weaker in his ability to take revenge even if protecting the honor of Torah.



From the desk of
the Rosh Kollel...

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The kollel began the summer z'man of its 16th year with a bang. The energy in the kollel is palpable!

Exciting things are happening in the kollel! - Now well into our 16th year since the kollel was first established, the kollel and its beis medrash continue to be a real asset to the community on so many levels. We have reached the final stages of organizing and cataloging our vast otzar ha'seforim (around 3,000 volumes). This new system will not only improve learning in the kollel, but with benefit the broader community as well.

THE SEFER IS OUT! - In honor of reaching our 16th year, I have published the Shabbos derashos on the haftarah and parsha which were said within the walls of our beis medrash. This is a second volume to the edition published upon our 10th anniversary five years ago. To find out how to get your own copy, email me at: rabbid@torahkollel.com

The current situation worldwide is still frightening. Please increase your commitment to Torah study, tzedaka and chesed, and of course daven for all the captives, soldiers and the general situation.

From the early hours of the morning, until late at night, the beis medrash is and active asset to the community at large. Mosdos Avahas Yehonoson - "Torah Kollel" continues to impact on the community at large in many ways and exists thanks to the benevolence and generosity of its supporters around the world. Consider having a part of this tremendous zechus by sponsoring a sefer, a day, week or month of the Torah Kollel. Contact us at info@torahkollel.com for further information.

- Rabbi David Lewin

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Sugyas ha' Sedra

HOW TO KASHER MEAT

The Torah forbids the consumption of blood. After an animal has been slaughtered and rinsed, there is still blood retained in the fibers of its meat, which according to some rishonim (Rashi and perhaps the Rambam) is a Torah prohibition. Others (Tosfos, Ra'ah, Rashba) understand that the blood contained within the meat ('dam ha'eivarim') is only banned by Rabbinic decree, however practically, the poskim treat it as a Torah prohibition (for example, in cases of doubt).

Although the matter is debated, the poskim accept the opinion of the Rishonim that if the blood is cooked or even heavily salted, the prohibition is only Rabbinic. The poskim debate the status of something which was soaked in blood ('kavush') and also the status of the liver which contains a lot of blood, but they agree that both are prohibited, at least by Rabbinic decree.

Although (except according to the Rambam), one may eat raw meat without concern about the blood contained within its fibers, one may not cook meat without first removing this blood since the cooking process will stir it and pull out the blood. If however the meat is grilled over fire, the blood will come out and render the meat permitted, this is not a practical method for those who would like to make soup or cook their meats. In order to remove the blood before cooking, the meat must be salted in a way by which the blood will be pulled to the surface and either drip down through a grate or run off on an incline. Once this is done properly, the meat may be eaten. The poskim (see Pri Megadim for example) discuss whether salting actually removes all of the blood or just most of it and the remainder is either sealed in by the final cold water rinse, or is otherwise so insignificant that it becomes nullified when cooked thereafter. (The Rambam however does require sealing the blood vessels in boiling water after salting the meat.)

Before salting the meat, it must be washed or soaked (see further) in cold water. The rishonim debate why, and there are many practical differences between them:

SPARKS OF SHABBOS

Shabbos is a day designated for kedusha. It is for this reason that the Torah commands us to abstain from melacha - so that we are free to pursue more spiritual pursuits. In musaf we speak of the Jewish people as "shomrei Shabbos" and also as an "am mekadshai shevii" (a nation which sanctifies the seventh day). "Rav Matisyahu Solomon zt"l explains that the two are very different: While it is true that as Torah observant Jews we are shomer Shabbos, but this is just one level. Ultimately, we should all strive to be "mekadeshei shevii" as well, by sanctifying the day through Torah and avodas Hashem. Unlike other rishonim, Rashi explains that "Hashem sanctified Shabbos" with the mahn (or lack thereof), R Matisyahu explains that the intended is that the fact that the mahn didn't fall on Shabbos allowed people more time to dedicate themselves to limud haTorah which is the greatest why to sanctify Shabbos.

L'maaseh...

A certain baal teshuva who had succeeded in becoming a Torah educator and influencing many others once met Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt"l. In the course of discussion Rav Wolbe asked him what he had studied in university. The man paused for a minute because the last time someone had asked him that and he answered that he had majored in seventeenth century Christian literature, he was told that would take decades to rid himself of the tumah he had 'acquired' through these studies. This time however, when he answered the question the Rav looked at him and asked him more about what he had learned and how he can apply it to life. The rav explained, that every situation Hashem puts us in is not without reason. If this was one of the routes you had to take to get to a life of Torah, then there must be a good reason and therefore something you can learn from it and teach to others.

According to the Ra'ah, the concern is that some dry blood may remain on the surface which, after salting will become moist enough to be reabsorbed into the meat. The Rashba however questions this because it is unlikely that one will leave the salt on long enough for this to happen and if he does, ridding it of surface blood won't help because the exuded blood would also be reabsorbed.

The Ran explains that the rinsing is to soften the meat, which is also the second opinion cited by the Mordechai (Shach's understanding) although there might be a major difference between them. (See Pri Megadim that the Ran is more concerned about the surface of the meat while the Mordechai's second opinion addresses the issue of loosening the blood throughout it.)

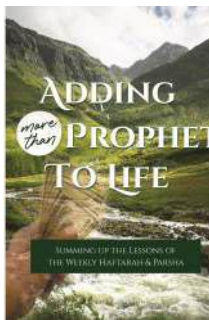
The Mordechai himself however, understands that without first rinsing the meat, the salt would become filled with surface blood and lose its potency.

The Pri Megadim writes that according to the Smak as quoted by the Hagaos Maimoni, the meat must be wash to prevent surface blood (natural, or that which was drawn to it when cut) from being absorbed into the meat through the salt, which then might not be strong enough to draw it back out.

According to the Rosh, the concern is that the strength of the salt may become dulled by the surface blood and although it will begin drawing out the blood from the meat, it won't be able to draw out all of the blood and the little which came out might be reabsorbed permanently into the meat.

There are numerous practical differences in this such as whether or not the meat must be soaked, or a quick rinse is sufficient and if resalting meat which was salted in error before washing it when remedy the situation. After the salting is complete, the meat is washed again, primarily to remove the salt, which is either forbidden because it is itself now saturated with blood, or to prevent it from the exuded blood from being reabsorbed.

Livers however, which either have a more substantial amount of blood, or are considered a complete entity of blood cannot be koshered in this way and must be grilled over an open fire.



DIVREI HA'NAVI - ADDING PROPHET TO LIFE

Our haftarah speaks of churban. It speaks of the destruction of our enemies from outside and from within. Then, the navi promises "ba'yom ha'hu" - on that very day - that Hashem will once again erect the fallen Succah of Dovid Hamelech.

The connection between churban a rebirth is quite intentional. Rav Yehonoson Eibeshitz explains that the Ribono shel Olam set up the world in this way. After an egg is laid and fertilized it develops into a young bird but before it reaches its final stages of development it first decomposes into a rotten state. Likewise, a seed must begin to rot before it sprouts new vegetation and human bodies decompose after burial to prepare them for techiyas ha'meisim. So too, before the bayis shlishi will be rebuilt, there must be churban in order to pave the way for a Beis HaMikdash which will endure.

It is clear from the meforshim that this Succah of Dovid refers to the Beis HaMikdash that he vied to build, but why does the posuk refer to it as a succah which connotes more of a temporary structure?

When we learn meseches Succah it becomes clear that it is termed as such because of its s'chach. R' Yehonoson Eibeshitz notes that there are two main halachos of the s'chach: One of them is that one must be able to see the stars through the s'chach. According to. Many rishonim this is not actually true, but rather one must be able to see little dots of sunlight which appear like stars. We should wonder then why they are referred to as kochavim?

The answer is we must realize that as we live in this world we are affected by the constellations. Yet, Chazal tell us ein Mazal l'Yisroel which means we have the ability to rise above nature. This is alluded by the fact that the schach must provide a lot of shade because ultimately we dwell under Hakadosh Boruch Hu and if we realize this, we can rise above nature.

Parshas Kedoshim begins and ends with kedusha: From the second posuk of Kedoshim tiheyu - Hashem commands to be holy. Then, after several pesukim dealing with arayos and forbidden foods, Hashem tells us once again, "v'hiyisem li Kedoshim" - that we should be holy for Him. The Malbim (Parshas Mishpatim) explains that every mitzva we do increases our level of kedusha and takes us out of the realm of nature, placing us directly under Hakadosh Boruch Hu's Divine and supernatural direction. May we be zocheh to increase our level of kedusha so that we can merit to see the Succah of Dovid Hamelech babies goel bimheira!



Before Hashem redeemed the B'nei Yisroel from Mitzrayim, the Torah tells us that He heard "es naakasm", which Rashi explains as a synonym of "tzaakah" - screaming out in pain. Rav Shimshon Pinkus explains that although this is not a tefilah per se, Hashem created us in a way that when something pains us, we cry out in pain, even though it seems as nobody is there to help. Even people who aren't cognizant that the Ribono shel Olam is there, still cry out. The story is told about R' Boruch Ber Leibowitz who as a child, misbehaved in a severe manner and as was common then, his father smacked him so that he wouldn't do so again. Little Boruch Ber began to cry and then he ran to get a siddur, thinking that if he is crying anyway, he might as well direct his tears in prayer to Hashem. We too, can direct our discomforts and pain as tefilos to Hashem, which can only increase the efficacy of our tzaakah. The same is true when someone hears bad news a friend or family member; regardless of what the source of the other person's pain is, if it makes us stop or if our heart skips a beat, we can convert that type of tzaaka into a potent tefilah!