

# א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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קדשים

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## כלאים of מצווה The Meaning Behind the

By Binyamin Orkaby

One of the many topics discussed within פרשת קדשים, is כלאים. This מצווה is a confusing one which is not at all that simple to understand. In קדשים it is broken up into three parts: the first "בהמתך לא תרביע כלאים" that one cannot cross breed his animals (ויקרא יט: יט). The 2nd one is "תזרע כלאים" that one should not cross breed his crops in his fields (ויקרא יט: יט).

The רמב"ן explains that the reason for these two categories of כלאים is that by crossing breeding animals, or plants, we are telling ה' that He needs help in the creation of the world or, in other words, that He hasn't created everything and we humans can create on our own. However, we also know that we are allowed to eat כלאים. This seems to make no sense, as why would we be able to eat something that we can't even plant. The מפרשים explain that we are allowed to eat כלאים to show us that we aren't the ones creating the new breeds, but rather ה' is the one behind their creation.

The third and most complicated parts of כלאים is that of "ובגד כלאים שעטנז לא יעלה עליך" one may not wear something made out of שעטנז, which is explained by the commentaries to be wool and linen (ויקרא יט: יט).

the אברבנאל explains שעטנז according to the same reason as the first two, that we can't create something new. The רמב"ן, in the name of the רמב"ם, מורה נבוכים חלק ג' says that the reason for שעטנז is part of a general prohibition against wizardry as שעטנז had something to do with the wizardry practices of the time.

A third more popular opinion given by the חזקוני and דעת זקנים is that שעטנז was the garment that the כהנים wore while doing their עבודה, and the פרכת was made out of שעטנז as well. שעטנז is therefore not allowed to be worn because it has a holy status of being exclusive to the בית המקדש.

A fourth opinion is brought by the מדרש תנחומא. The מדרש says that קרבן ש'קין was brought from flax whereas הבל brought a sheep which is צמר, wool; And because קרבן הבל was accepted and ש'קין's was not, the תורה teaches us that we can't mix wool and linen (flax) together because you can't mix an accepted קרבן with one which wasn't. However, there is possibly an alternate interpretation of the midrash's explanation for why we can't have שעטנז. The פסוק prior to the prohibition of שעטנז is "ואהבתה לרעך כמוך" "and you should love your friend like you would love yourself" (ויקרא יט: יח). The תורה didn't want us to wear שעטנז since every time we wore שעטנז we would remember what happened between הבל and קין.

The מצווה of כלאים teaches us to have a greater care for what we grow as well as the things that we eat. Furthermore we can learn the impact our actions have on future generations. May be able to care about even the things which seem so small and in doing so come closer to ה'.

# ואהבתה לרעך כמוך The Meaning of

By Tobie Ostroff

In this week's פרשה, פרשת קדושים, one of the Judaism's most famous ideologies is mentioned: "וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ" (ויקרא י"ט:י"ח) "and you shall love your neighbor as yourself". This quote is considered a fundamental concept in Judaism, but what does this mean to love your neighbor as you love yourself? What חידוש (new idea) is the תורה telling us that we would not otherwise know?

On a basic level, to love your neighbor as yourself means to treat someone the way you want to be treated. On a deeper level, the way to achieve the מצווה of loving your neighbor as yourself, is through empathy. In order to have empathy, one must truly think about the situation at hand, put themselves in place of the other person in the situation and assess if you would be comfortable in their shoes.

רבי עקיבא, in תלמוד ירושלמי פרק ט הלכה ד, explains that the concept of "וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ" is the greatest כלל (a principal or מצווה that has broad implications) in the תורה. This means that this מצווה encompasses all 613 מצוות, and that each מצווה must relate to אהבת ישראל (loving a fellow Jew) and must contribute to אהבת ישראל. From this interpretation, it is more clear as to why this concept is so integrated into everything that we do, because it is a כלל.

In our day to day lives, it is so important to just be kind and understanding to one another. Our relationship with our community, and Judaism as a whole, is extremely important in order to sustain the flame of passion for Judaism. Our first priority has to be how we treat others. This is such a focus of Judaism that we have an idea of תורה לדמה לתורה - דרך ארץ קדמה לתורה - Proper behavior comes before תורה. The only way we can sustain the flame of passion for Judaism, is to first have proper behavior. The better our relationship with our communities, the more we learn, and the more we learn, the more opportunities we have to get closer to ה'.

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