

א ביסל תורה!

The Maimonides School Parsha Newsletter

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אחרי מות-קדושים

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“קדושים תהיו” The Lesson Behind

By Ariel Jeselsohn

בני ישראל to tell משה ה', פרשה the second of this weeks פרשת קדושים in פסוק 2: In the second פסוק, is what is ה' commanding us to do when He says: “קדושים תהיו”?

He was commanding them to distance themselves and abstain from עריות, and all of the עבירות. רש"י says: “היו פרושים מן העריות ומן עבירות”. רש"י was telling בני ישראל: “Abstain from forbidden relationships, and from sins. For wherever you find a fence for forbidden relationships, you find holiness”. רש"י's reasoning behind saying that “קדושים תהיו” is talking about עריות, is that wherever you find the topic of קדושה, you find a phrase forbidding עריות. The אור החיים takes רש"י's words, and takes it even further. The אור החיים says that the phrase “קדושים תהיו” is coming to add a מצוות עשה to the act of refraining from doing an עבירה. As a proof, the אור החיים quotes the גמרא in לט: קידושין, which says: “שכר עבירה נותנים לו שכר”. Someone who sits and does not commit a sin, we give him a reward like someone who does a מצוה. According to the אור החיים, not only is the phrase “קדושים תהיו” coming to tell us to distance ourselves from sins, but it is also coming to tell us that there is a מצוות עשה for whoever does not commit a sin, and whoever fulfills this מצוה is called “קדוש” - “Holy”.

רמב"ן, however, takes a different approach to the question, of what ה' is commanding us when he says “קדושים תהיו”. The רמב"ן quotes רש"י's opinion, but he modifies רש"i's answer a little. The רמב"ן says that instead of “קדושים תהיו” coming to tell us to distance from עריות, it is coming to tell us to distance ourselves from all worldly pleasures; even one's which are perfectly permissible. The תורה warned us of עריות and non-kosher foods, but it did not warn us of worldly pleasures which are completely okay, such as eating meat and drinking wine. Consequently, if one wanted to, he could eat meat, drink wine, and be with his wives all day. Therefore, after the תורה listed all of the איסורים, the תורה then came and told us “קדושים תהיו” to tell us to abstain from this that are even permissible. The רמב"ן quotes the גמרא in ברכות כב: which says: “שלא יהו” - “That תורה scholars should not be found with their wives like chickens (a promiscuous animal)”. The גמרא in ברכות seems to say, that even though it is perfectly fine to be with your wives all the time, and to do other permitted things, it is better not to. The רמב"ן also gives an examples of this from a נזיר: one should sanctify themselves with a little wine (only drink a little wine) and not become טמא למת, just as the תורה calls a נזיר, who abstains from wine and from becoming impure, “קדוש” - “holy”. The way of the תורה is to list specific prohibitions, and then it will include them in a general statement. When the תורה talks about laws regarding business between people, such as not to steal, or do wrong, it then said the phrase: “ועשית הישר והטוב”. This general statement is coming to tell us to go “לפנים משורת הדין” - “Beyond the letter of the law”. So too, the statement “קדושים תהיו” is coming to tell us to go “לפנים משורת הדין”.

In life, we should not only prohibit to ourselves what the תורה prohibited to us. Someone who does this eats meat and drinks wine all day. This is not the correct way to live your life. The people who do this have no purpose in life. They do not contribute to society (therefore making them לעדות), and they live meaningless lives. Rather, we should always go "לפנים משורת הדין" - "Beyond the letter of the law", and follow the commandment of "קדושים תהיו". Only through this will we leave meaningful lives full of תורה and מצוות.

The Power of Two Hands

By Yakir Samuels

This week's פרשיות, אחרי מות-קדשים, talk about how, once a year, on יום כיפור only the כהן גדול himself may enter the קודש קודשים. On יום כופור the כהן גדול would take two goats one goat is offered to ה' and the second one, the "עזאזל", is sent to the wilderness to atone for the sins of the Jews. the תורה says "וסמך אהרן" "Aharon shall lean his two hands upon the head of the living he-goat and confess upon it all the iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their rebellious sins among all their sins." (ט"ז:כא) This פסוק brings up the question of: Why must אהרן place both of his hands on the "עזאזל" while confessing "all the iniquities of בני ישראל"?

Every morning while davening שחרית, and every afternoon while saying מנחה, we say the prayer of תחנון, also known as the confessional prayer. While saying תחנון the custom is to rest your head on your arm, and then say the prayer. In the morning, by שחרית, we use our right arm, and by מנחה we use our left arm. The reason for this may be that in the תורה it is stated that there are commandments that you are commanded to do (תעשה) and there are commandments that you are commanded not to do (לא תעשה), and sometimes we fail to keep these. So when saying תחנון the right arm symbolizes action, doing things we are commanded to do. The left arm is seen as the weak and the less active of the two symbolizing inactivity. During תחנון we bend our heads and confess to ה'. So our right hand symbolizes the תעשה commandments that we were supposed to do but failed to. And with our left arm it symbolizes the לא תעשה the things that we ended up failing by doing something forbidden. So when אהרן sanctified the עזאזל with two hands and confesses all the wrongdoings of בני ישראל to send it off into the wilderness. אהרן places both hands on the goat. The right hand represents the מצוות we should have done but failed to do, and the left hand represents the wrong doings which should have been avoided.

The ספרא says that the placement of the two hands on the head of the goat is to teach us that all juxtapositions, are done with two hands. This can teach us that we should always try to do our best, what we are good at, as well as what we are not. May we be זוכה to be successful in everything that we do from the easy to the difficult.

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