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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON SHMINI - 5762

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[From 5757]

"RAVFRAND" LIST - RABBI FRAND ON PARSHAS SHEMINI

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion: Tape# 93, Melacha Before Havdala. Good Shabbos!

Guarding Against Feeling Too Good About Oneself

In this week's Parsha we have the culmination of the Seven Days of Consecration, used to dedicate the Mishkan. On the eighth day, Moshe called Aharon and told him which offerings to bring to finish off the process of consecration. After they did everything, Moshe said "This is the matter you shall do so that the Glory of G-d will appear upon you." [Vayikra 9:6]

The Yalkut on this pasuk [verse] interprets these words to mean "That Evil Inclination you should remove from your hearts." What specific Evil Inclination (Yetzer Hara) is Moshe referring to over here?

(Several years ago we offered an interpretation from the Netziv on this question. This year we will be giving different insight, found in the Drash V'Iyun, by the Reisher Rav.)

The pasuk in Koheles says, "There is no righteous person in the world who does (only) good, and does no evil" [Koheles 7:20]. The Reisher Rav says that perhaps the pasuk means that even when a person does a mitzvah, there is always the chance that in the mitzvah itself, he will come to do some kind of a sin.

A person can give Tzedakah and feel good about himself, but the Evil Inclination can creep in and he'll feel too good about himself and become haughty. So, the pasuk means that even when a person does a great act, it can be tainted by the wrong emotions or by feelings of gayvah or the like.

It was at this time, says the Drash V'Iyun, that Klal Yisroel were susceptible to such an Evil Inclination. Imagine the feeling. Here they were, a people who just came out of slavery, and now they built this beautiful edifice, with beautiful vessels. There was a very real worry that they would feel too good about themselves. There was the chance that they would succumb to the emotions of "my strength and the power of my hand made all this might" [Devorim 8:17] -- it was our power, it was our money, it was our dedication, etc., etc.

It was at this juncture that Moshe tells them "That famous Yetzer Hara" -- the Evil Inclination of feeling too good about doing a Mitzvah, too smug and too satisfied about oneself -- is what you have to watch out for at this moment of erecting the Mishkan.

The Requirement of Jewish Leadership: A Feeling of Unworthiness

The pasuk continues "And Moshe said to Aharon, Draw near to the Altar and offer your Sin Offering and your Burnt Offering and Atonement for yourself and for the nation..." [9:7]

Rash"i cites an interesting Toras Kohanim. Aharon was

embarrassed at this point about going over and doing the Temple Service. Moshe asked, "Why are you hesitant? This is what you were chosen for!"

Another Toras Kohanim says that Aharon saw the Altar appear to him in the form of an Ox and was afraid to approach. Moshe told him to get up the courage and approach the Altar.

What do Chaza"l mean when they say that the Altar appeared like an Ox? One does not have to be a great Darshan, to suggest that the purpose was to remind Aharon of the Sin of the (Golden) Calf. If that was the case, however, shouldn't the Medrash have said that the Altar appeared to him like a Calf, rather than like an Ox?

I saw a beautiful pshat from Rav Shlomo Breuer. The pasuk in Tehillim [106:19-20] says, "They made a calf in Chorev... and they switched their Allegiance to the form of an Ox." We see that the sin started out as a calf, and somehow developed into an Ox. Rav Shlomo Breuer says in the name of his father-in-law, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, that Klal Yisroel never wanted a real Avodah Zarah. They did not want to switch G-ds. What they wanted was an intermediary. They were afraid that Moshe had died and they wanted someone in his stead.

Aharon went ahead and made something that, in retrospect, we have to say was a mistake. Aharon made a concession and said, "They want an intermediary? I will pick something for them that there is no way they will ever be able to transform it and give it any power. I will pick a weak little calf. How can anybody think that a little calf can become a G-d?"

What happened? The concession snow-balled and grew from being merely a calf and turned into the form of an ox -- something having its own power. This was Aharon's role in the Sin of the Calf -- making the concession of the calf that grew into an ox. That is why the Altar appeared to him now in the form of an ox.

Now we can understand what Chaza"l mean. Aharon was afraid to assume the High Priesthood. He said, "I once had my try at leadership. I once tried to be a leader and I failed. I gave into the people. I made a concession when I should have said a firm 'No.'" As a result of that concession, the calf became an ox. That is why Aharon was hesitant. He felt he wasn't cut out for the job.

Moshe told him, "Why are you hesitant? This is the very reason you were chosen!" One of the requirements of a Jewish Leader is to have this sense of hesitancy, to feel unworthy. A leader who campaigns for the position and says "I am the best man for the job" is not a Jewish leader!

There was once a Jew who had such feelings. He thought that he was the right man for the job. That man's name was Korach. We all know what happened to Korach. Such a person is not worthy to be the leader.

Hesitancy, embarrassment, intimidation, and humility are the very essence of what is needed to be worthy of assuming Jewish leadership.

Personalities & Sources: Yalkut (Shimoni) --Midrashic anthology of Tanach attributed to Rav Shimon HaDarshan of Frankfurt (13th century). Rash"i -- Rav Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105); Torah commentator par excellence; France. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch --(1808-1888) Frankfurt-am-main; leader of modern German-Jewish Orthodoxy. Rav Shlomo Breuer --(1850-1936); Papa, Hungary; Frankfurt-am-main. Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington. Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, Maryland.

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2001/parsha/ryud_shmini.html
[From last year]

RABBI BENJAMIN YUDIN

KASHRUS: MUCH MORE THAN DO'S AND DON'TS

The laws of kashrus and forbidden foods constitute much more than 13 out of 17 mitzvos found in Parshas Shemini. Rashi, in his commentary (Vayikra 11:45) notes that throughout the Torah, the term used to describe the exodus from Egypt is "hotzeticha" f "who brought you out from the land of Egypt." Here, in summarizing the laws of forbidden foods, the Torah uses the language of "hamaaleh" - "For I am Hashem who has elevated you up out of the land of Egypt." Dbei Rabi Yishmael taught, as cited in Bava Metzia (61b), that Hashem said, "Had I not brought the people of Israel up from Egypt except to observe this law of not consuming creeping creatures, 'Dai' - I would have been satisfied." Thus the expression, "brought you up" is most appropriate, as Rashi further comments that it is "ma'alyusa hi gabaihu", an uplifting and elevating phenomenon.

We are all familiar with the teaching of the Rambam (Vayikra 11:13) that the Torah forbids the consumption of those species whose characters and natures are cruel. One absorbs the characteristics of that which they eat, and Hashem wished that his nation be possessed of a kind and sterling character. He ordained that we ingest only non-carnivorous animals, and birds that do not prey on other creatures.

The Rambam in his Egeres (letter - cited in Degel Machene Efraim, Parshas Eikev) to a community that denied the biblical concept of techiyas hamaisim (resurrection of the dead) writes that the effect of the dietary laws of the Torah is that they purify man's thought process. This enables mortal man, entrenched in the physical world, to comprehend and absorb the highest level of spirituality- Hashem's Torah. Commensurate with ones scrupulous attention to the details and laws of kashrus is one's ability to grasp greater and deeper lessons from the Torah. A significant factor contributing to the success of the Ta'naim and Amoraim (the scholars of the Talmud) was the observance of these laws. The converse, continues the Rambam, is that if one disregards the dietary laws of the Torah, you will be faced with a lack of clarity and comprehension of Torah principles. This in no small measure contributed to a community's denial of techiyas hamaysim in Rambam's day.

The phrase "you are what you eat" is then understood as not only regarding one's character, but your intellectual ability to understand Hashem's Torah. This may be further clarified by the classification of the Kuzari (Part 5) of all physical entities into four categories: minimal, plant life, animals, and man. To this he adds the Jew as a fifth phenomenon. Just as there is a marked difference between the highest form of plant life (the cedar tree) and the lowest form of animal life (the ant), similarly there is a distinction between the Jew and the rest of mankind. The soul of the Jew differs qualitatively from that of mankind, as we recite in the blessings after the Torah portion has been read, "who has given us the Torah of truth, and implanted eternal life within us". Kashrus in no small measure helps us attain this eternal life.

Finally it is interesting to note the blessing of Borei Nefashos, which is recited after eating any food for which neither Birchas Hamazon (Grace After Meals) nor the Three Faceted Blessing applies, such as fruits, vegetables, and beverages other than wine. This blessing thanks Hashem for creating Man, and indeed all species, lacking. All living organisms need nourishment. We continue to thank Hashem for providing this life -sustaining nourishment. The blessing concludes, "blessed is He the life of the worlds". The word "worlds" is in the plural because His sustenance provides us with this world, and the realization thereof that He sustains us, and with our kosher diet, provides us with our worthiness of and entry into the next world.

This is Rashi's theme at the end of Parshas Shmini (11:44) "just as I am holy, for I am the Lord your God, make yourselves holy, for I will sanctify you above and in the world to come." There

is much more to kashrus than do's and don'ts!

<http://www.koltorah.org/volume10/shemini2001.htm>

Parshat Shemini Vol.10 No.28

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TUMAH-----|-----KEDUSHA

SHALL THE TWAIN EVER MEET?

BY RABBI ZVI GRUMET

If one were to ask what the opposite of Kedusha (sanctity) was, the response would have to be Chulin (mundane). The absence of Kedusha does not have negative implications, just the lack of positive. While this in itself can be viewed as negative, as every missed opportunity for positive can be seen as negative, nonetheless if one were to construct a scale with Kedusha being on the positive side then the absence of Kedusha would be at point zero rather than be represented by negative numbers.

A similar argument (albeit in the reverse) could be made regarding Tumah (spiritual impurity). The absence of Tumah is not Kedusha, but Tahara (purity). In the Torah, Tumah is clearly presented as negative, and the absence of impurity is not inherently positive, but neutral. Again, if one were to construct a scale with Tumah being on the negative side, the absence of Tumah would be at point zero rather than in the positive numbers. Conceptually, then, Kedusha and Tumah are not on opposite sides of the same scale but exist in two different spheres. They describe profoundly different aspects of religious life that should not interact or overlap. Yet it appears that they do.

The second half of this week's Parsha describes the various animals we are permitted or forbidden to consume. The most frequent word used to describe the forbidden animals is Tamei, the implication being that consuming them would somehow defile us. It is then surprising that in the summary statement at the close of the section the Torah provides us with a rationale for this particular set of instructions, and the overriding reason provided for avoiding Tuma is that we are obliged to become Kadosh, just as Hashem is Himself Kadosh. Five times in two Pesukim (11:44-45) the Torah invokes the word Kadosh in a context in which the operative word was Tamei. How are we to explain this apparent anomaly?

I would like to suggest that the answer lay in briefly defining both Tuma and Kedusha. Let us begin with Tuma. In its broadest sense, Tuma is invoked when we are forced to confront our own mortality. Whether we experience unnatural emissions from our own bodies (which can be a rather frightening experience), come in contact with death (both human and animal, with differences between them), or even experience childbirth (the very need to procreate is a stark reminder of the reality that we are not eternal), we are forced to encounter the reality of the fragility of our lives. And that experience can be rather frightening.

(As an aside, in the Torah, water represents the source and sustenance of life. It is for that reason that the primary vehicle for purification from Tuma is the complete immersion in the life affirming water.) On the other hand, Kedusha involves a search for the sublime, for a higher purpose in the every aspect of the mundane world and our lives in it. To be Kadosh means to separate from the mundane and to seek to elevate oneself, and the surrounding world, through dedication of the mundane to a loftier purpose. This is true when dedicating an animal to the bait Hamikdash, dedicating time for Torah study or Chesed, dedicating resources to help the less fortunate, and so on.

While Kedusha and Tuma are conceptually independent, it appears that the absence of Tuma is a pre-requisite for Kedusha. When one is obsessed with one's own mortality one cannot be searching for the sublime world of Kedusha. There are too many

obstacles, too many intruding thoughts to be able to focus properly on loftier purposes or goals Tuma has no place in the Mikdash and Kedusha has no place where the reality of mortality reigns. (It is a twist of irony that the preparation of a corpse, the ultimate source of Tuma, is called a Tahara).

It is only when our mortality becomes irrelevant that we can truly dream of the greater good. It is only when we are untainted by secondary motivations and hidden agendas, some so hidden that even we are not aware of them, that we can truly strive for sanctity.

<http://www.shamash.org/tanach/tanach/commentary/mj-ravtorah/s hemini.98.ravtorah.98>

[from 4 years ago]

From Josh Rapps jr@sco.com Fri Apr 24, 1998

To: mj-ravtorah@shamash.org

Date: Fri, 24 Apr 1998 00:13 EDT

Subject: SHIUR HARAV SOLOVEICHIK ZT"L ON PARSHAS SHEMINI

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Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZT"L on Parshas Shemini

(Shiur Date: 4/19/77)

"And Moshe said: this is what Hashem has commanded you to do in order that the glory of Hashem may be revealed to you." (Vayikra 9:6). This verse is reminiscent of several verses in Shemos and Bamidbar which describe the Ohel Moed as the place where Hashem would meet with Moshe. (See Shemos 25:22, 40:34-35, Bamidbar 7:89). The Rav noted that the verse in Shemos (29:42-44) says that the Olas Tamid was to be brought at the entrance to Ohel Moed before Hashem, where Hashem will meet with you (Lachem) to speak to you (Aylecha) there. And Hashem will meet there with Bnay Yisrael and it will become sanctified through the glory of Hashem. Why does the Torah say in this verse that the meeting was to be between Hashem and Bnay Yisrael, while in most other places the Torah says that the meeting would take place between Hashem and Moshe?

The Rav explained that Ohel Moed was the place of meeting between Hashem and Bnay Yisrael. However Moshe was the emissary of Bnay Yisrael and he represented them in his meetings with Hashem. The Rav noted that the fact that Moshe was the emissary of Bnay Yisrael is noted in the Gemara (Berachos 32) when explaining the verse Lech Rayd, go down from your greatness. The only reason you, Moshe, were granted leadership was on behalf of Bnay Yisrael. Now that they have sinned there no longer is a need for you to serve as their leader.] Bnay Yisrael, and not Moshe, were the intended audience for the revelation of Hashem all along. Moshe was the medium through which that revelation took place, because the people were not capable of meeting directly with Hashem. The verses in Parshas Tetzaveh (Shemos 29:42-45) state the ultimate purpose of the Kedushas Hamishkan: for Hashem to dwell, Kvayachol, among Bnay Yisrael.

In Parshas Shemini we find that the first revelation of Hashem was to the people. As Moshe said "for today Hashem will appear to you (Bnay Yisrael)". Hashem wants to make this into a place where He meets with Bnay Yisrael, not Moshe personally. Even though subsequent meetings after the dedication of the Mishkan were between Hashem and Moshe, Moshe still acted as the representative of Bnay Yisrael. The revelation discussed in Parshas Shemini is the precedent that indicates that even though subsequent revelations were to Moshe alone, they were virtual revelations to all of Bnay Yisrael, even though Moshe acted as the emissary of Bnay Yisrael.

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[from 5 years ago]

From jr@sco.COM Thu Apr 3 1997 Josh Rapps

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SHIUR HARAV SOLOVEICHIK ZT"L ON PARSHAS SHEMINI

(shiur date: 4/4/78)

And Aharon raised his hands and blessed the people. Rashi interprets this blessing as Birkas Kohanim (Nesias Kapayim) since it says that Aharon raised his hands, which indicates the blessing of Nesias Kapayim. The next verse tells us that Moshe and Aharon entered Ohel Moed and upon their exit they jointly blessed the people. Rashi interprets their blessing as "May the Shechina reside in what you have built for Hashem" and that they said Vehi Noam. Nesias Kapayim and Birkas Kohanim were not included in this blessing. As we have previously mentioned, Moshe had the status of a Kohen Gadol. Why didn't Moshe and Aharon, the 2 Kohanim Gedolim, jointly recite Birkas Kohanim upon exiting from the Ohel Moed?

The Rav explained: we find that the children of Aharon are sometimes referred to as Bnay Aharon Hakohanim and other times as Bnay Aharon Hakohen. Some of the Avodos Hamishkan were given specifically to Aharon. All those who followed him acted as his representative, a virtual Aharon. For example, the Avodos Yom Kippur was given specifically to Aharon. Aharon was permitted to enter the Kodosh Hakodoshim any time he wanted to. It is only his successors that were restricted to entering once a year, on Yom Kippur, and only then as the representative and personification of Aharon. (This concept is portrayed in the Attah Konanta description of the Avodos Yom Kippur, included in Nussach Sefard.) In such cases the children of Aharon are called Bnay Aharon Hakohen. Aharon permits a Kohen Gadol as well as Kohen Hedyot to perform their respective Avodos Hamishkan. The Ramban comments that the Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah was given specifically to Aharon. Even though Kohanim Hedyotim could also light the Menorah, they were permitted to do so only because Aharon did it before them.

Nesias Kapayim was another Mitzvah where Aharon himself was indispensable. Why do Kohanim recite the blessing Asher Kidshanu B'kdushaso Shel Aharon, why not say that they were blessed with Kedushas Kehuna? Because the Mitzva of Nesias Kapayim for all subsequent generations was given specifically to Aharon, and through him, to his descendants who represent him in the performance of the Mitzvah. Since Aharon was given the Mitzvah of Nesias Kapayim (and his children through him) while Moshe was not given this Mitzvah, Moshe could not join Aharon in Birkas Nesias Kapayim. Therefore they offered a different blessing.

Rashi notes that the second blessing, given jointly by Moshe and Aharon, was the Vehi Noam. The Rav asked if this second blessing was given voluntarily or were they somehow required to bless the people at that point?

The Rav explained that it would appear that this was an obligatory blessing on the part of Moshe and Aharon. We find a similar obligatory blessing even today based on Korban Tamid Shel Shachar. In the times of the Mikdash, the Kohanim gathered

early and the appointed leader would tell them to recite one of the years. Birchos Krias Shema (it is a Machlokes as to whether it was Yotzer Or or Ahava Rabbah), Krias Shema and an abbreviated Shemoneh Esray of Retzay and Sim Shalom. A Jew who brings a Korban is required to pray that Hashem accept the sacrifice. For sometimes Hashem might choose to reject a Korban. For example we find that Hashem rejected the Korban of Kayin. We find in the Tochacha (sections of rebuke) that Hashem promised that he would not accept the Korbanos of the people if they sin and do not follow His laws. There is no guarantee that the Korban just brought will be accepted by Hashem. Therefore a Jew must pray and ask that Hashem should accept his Korban. Moshe and Aharon blessed the people with Vehi Noam, and prayed that Hashem should accept their Korbanos, just as the Kohanim prayed in the Mikdash that the Tamid Shel Shachar should be accepted.

The Rav asked: why don't the Kohanim pray that the Korban should be accepted before they actually do the Avoda, instead of reciting their prayer after it? The Rav explained that we learn from Parshas Shemini that there is a requirement to pray after the offering of the Korban. The prayer of Moshe and Aharon was more than a personal prayer. It was the prayer of all Klal Yisrael that the Korbanos that were just brought by Aharon should be accepted. Moshe and Aharon offered the prayer as the representatives of Klal Yisrael.

We find a similar concept with the Anshei Maamad. While one group of Kohanim were present at the daily sacrifice in the Mikdash, there were other groups that were located in the cities of Israel that would fast and pray on Monday and Thursday and prayed that the Korbanos Hatzibbur should be accepted. We learn in Parshas Shemini that Moshe and Aharon were the first of the Anshei Maamad in praying for the acceptance of the Korbanos Hatzibbur.

We find this concept of prayer for the acceptance of our sacrifices in our Shemoneh Esray. The last Beracha of the section where one details his needs (Bakasha) is Shema Koleinu, which is followed by Retzay. On the surface, these two Berachos, Shema Koleinu and Retzay, appear redundant. However, on closer inspection we find that they serve very different purposes. Shema Koleinu is recited after one concludes his requests that Hashem answer his prayers for personal as well as communal needs (concluding with Es Tzemach). Though Hashem is the ultimate hearer of our prayers, He may not always accept them. Hence we pray Shema Koleinu, that the ultimate acceptor of prayer should answer ours favorably.

Tefila is also Avoda Shebelev, it is equated to Korban. We use the term Retzay (which is used in conjunction with the acceptance of Korbanos) and ask that not only should Hashem accept our Tefilos as prayer and supplication, but as a Korban and ultimate Avoda Shebelev. Similarly, we find that as part of the Avodas Yom Kippur the Kohen Gadol would read from the Torah and recite Berachos whose themes were that Hashem should accept the Korbanos of the day that were already brought. At the conclusion of the Pesach Seder we have Nirtzah where we pray that Hashem should accept our Korban Pesach which we have just concluded. The concept of Nirtzah applies where there is a Korban. For example, there is no concept of Nirtzah with Lulav. The concept of asking for Ritzuy Hakorban, that the Korban should be accepted, is based on these verses in Parshas Shemini.

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