

RABBI GOLDBERG'S *Parsha Perspectives* FOR TODAY

Short Divrei Torah on Acharei Mos-Kedoshim for your Shabbos Table

Delivered on Tuesday, 4 Iyar, 5783/April 25, 2023

Listen and read more Parsha Perspectives at rabbieregoldberg.org/parsha

Sponsored by Eli & Sara Malka Neger lilui nishmos Esther Tehila bas R' Gavriel Pinchas & Yitzchok Moshe ben Aaron Yaakov Yehoshua.

DVAR TORAH FOR THE FRIDAY NIGHT MEAL

Sibling Revelry

Parshas Acharei-Mos begins with the command that Aharon, the *kohen gadol*, was not permitted to enter the קודש הקדשים (the inner chamber of the *Beis Ha'mikdash*) whenever he wished. This was permitted only as part of the special Yom Kippur service, when special *korbanos* were brought and their blood was sprinkled in the קודש הקדשים. God instructed Moshe: ואל יבא בכל עת הקודש – “Speak to your brother, Aharon, that he shall not enter the sanctum anytime...” (16:2).

Why did God find it necessary to emphasize to Moshe that Aharon was אחיו, his brother? How was their familial relationship relevant to this command?

Rav Yisroel Meir Druck explains that Moshe might have been reluctant to convey this command – ואל יבא בכל עת הקודש – to Aharon, because Moshe himself was not bound by this restriction. Whereas Aharon was permitted to enter the קודש הקדשים only when performing the Yom Kippur service, Moshe was allowed to enter whenever he wished. Moshe had a different set of rules. He thus feared that he would upset Aharon and make him feel envious by relaying God's command forbidding him from entering the קודש הקדשים. God therefore emphasized to Moshe that Aharon was אחיו, his brother. As his brother, Aharon celebrated Moshe's successes and achievements, rather than resenting them. Aharon and Moshe's relationship was characterized not by sibling rivalry, but by sibling revelry, by rejoicing over each other's good fortune.

Chazal speak about the vitally important quality of נושא בעול חבירו – bearing our fellow's burden. This is

commonly understood as a reference to shouldering our fellow's burden of pain during his time of sorrow or hardship. However, the Alter of Kelm taught that this includes also sharing in our fellow's joy, in celebrating another person's success and good fortune. And this aspect of נושא בעול חבירו, the Alter observed, is more difficult than shouldering our fellow's burden of pain. When we hear of somebody who suffers some kind of crisis, it is relatively easy to empathize and to want to help ease his pain, because we are so grateful that we do not face this challenge. But when we see or hear of our fellow's good fortune, when we see him pull into his driveway with his new luxury car, or hear of his promotion, or read in the shul newsletter that he has yet another child who got engaged or had a baby, we might ask ourselves, “Why him and not me?” We must try to resist this tendency and celebrate our fellow's achievements and good fortune, as if they are our own.

Rav Aryeh Tzvi Frommer of Kozhiglov, in *Eretz Tzvi*, comments that the way we fulfill the command of לא תחמוד (“You shall not covet”), and avoid feelings of envy and jealousy, is by fulfilling the *mitzva* of ואהבת לרעך כמוך, by loving our fellow as ourselves. If we see a fellow Jew as an extension of ourselves, then his achievements and good fortune are our achievements and good fortune. The Gemara in *Maseches Sanhedrin* (105b) observes that a person is naturally inclined to feel jealous of all people, except his child and student. Generally speaking, a parent is not jealous of a child or student whose achievements surpass his, because parents see their children, and teachers see their students, as extensions of themselves. The *mitzva* of ואהבת לרעך

כמוך challenges us to look upon all our fellow Jews in this fashion. And when we do, we will genuinely rejoice over our fellow's good fortune as though it were our own, and thus avoid feelings of jealousy.

We should never feel that we are in competition with other people. Our fellow's financial success does not take away from our financial success. Our fellow's *simcha* does not take away from our *simcha*. Just as we are to empathize with our fellow in distress, so are we to genuinely share in our fellow's joy, because one Jew's good fortune is all *Am Yisrael's* good fortune.

DVAR TORAH FOR THE SHABBOS DAY MEAL

First Look in the Mirror

הוכיח תוכיח את עמיתך (19:17).

The Torah commands us to offer constructive criticism to those who act wrongly in order to influence them to change.

Rav Yisrael Salanter noted the significance of the word *את* in this *pasuk*. We find in numerous contexts that *Chazal* understood the word *את* as alluding to an extension of the law being introduced in that phrase. Thus, for example, the Torah (20:10) commands *את* ה' אלוקיך תירא, that we must have fear of God, and Rabbi Akiva explained the word *את* as indicating that we must also show reverence for *talmidei chachamim* (Pesachim 22b). Similarly, the Torah commands blessing Hashem after eating – ואכלת ושבעת וברכת את ה' אלוקיך – (Devarim 8:10) – and the extra word *את* is understood as alluding to the requirement to bless one's host. The word *את* expands the *halacha* to include something which is not mentioned in the *pasuk*.

Rav Yisrael thus wondered how the word *את* in the command הוכיח תוכיח את עמיתך expands this *mitzva*. Whom could the Torah possibly require a person to reprimand besides the person he sees acting wrongly?

The answer, Rav Yisrael Salanter explained, is that the Torah refers to the הוכיח תוכיח himself. Before criticizing one's fellow for acting improperly, one must first look in the mirror. He needs to first introspect and determine if perhaps he is also deficient in the area about which he finds fault in his fellow. Before we offer criticism, we must honestly ask ourselves, "Am I really in a position to criticize? Am I really that much better than this fellow? Perhaps I need to improve in this regard just like he does? Do I really have the right to tell this person

that he needs to change his conduct?"

הוכיח תוכיח את עמיתך. If we are going to criticize somebody, we must criticize ourselves, first..

DVAR TORAH FOR SHALOSH SEUDOS

Embracing Life's Hardships

כמוך ואהבת לרעך כמוך ("You shall love your fellow as yourself" – 19:18).

Rav Nachman of Breslav (*Likutei Moharan*, 1:165) offers a remarkable interpretation of this *pasuk*, suggesting reading the word רעך to mean "your evil," the רע in a person's life, the hardships and challenges that a person endures. We are to "love," to accept and embrace, not only the countless blessings that we enjoy, but also the רע, the difficulties that we face. This *pasuk* concludes 'אני ה' – "I am Hashem," using the name *Havaya* (יהוה), which connotes God's quality of mercy and compassion. Even the רע in our lives is a manifestation of Hashem's kindness. When we surrender entirely to the divine will, and fully place our trust in God, then we will be able to embrace even רעך, life's hardships and struggles.

Rav Nachman explains the word כמוך to mean that the hardships we endure are for us, precisely what Hashem decided that we need to experience in order to get to where we need to go, to achieve what we are to achieve, and to become the people that we are supposed to become. As difficult as it may be to realize while we are struggling, while we are going through whatever ordeal we are dealing with, the challenges we face help build us and facilitate our growth. ואהבת לרעך כמוך. We are to embrace life's challenges because they are precisely what we need to realize our potential.

Rav Nachman here teaches us to try to "love" even that which is painful in our lives, to recognize the value of life's challenges, and appreciate the important role they play in bringing us to where we need to go. The more we reinforce our faith that 'אני ה', that everything that happens is, ultimately, a manifestation of Hashem's unlimited kindness, the more we will be able to embrace and love even רעך, life's hardships, as we will firmly believe that they, no less than our blessings and good fortune, are a critical part of our lives and of the process of becoming the great people that we are meant to become.