

The Art of Reproof

One day, when the Chofetz Chaim was already in his nineties, he informed his family that he would be journeying by train to the town of Lida, where he had lived for a time in his younger years. Despite the protests of his children that his frail health did not permit such a trip, the Chofetz Chaim was insistent. He said that he would be going there to attend an important meeting at which his presence was absolutely necessary. He drew up a list of some thirty men from Lida whom he wanted present at the meeting.

On the day of the meeting, the Jews of Lida gathered at the town's train station to welcome the tzaddik of the generation. A horse drawn carriage brought the Chofetz Chaim to the community building where the meeting was to take place.

All those who had been invited were in attendance. The Chofetz Chaim wasted no time in explaining the purpose of his visit.

"When a person prepares himself to visit a certain city, it is proper that he inform his friends and neighbours of this, to afford them the opportunity to send packages, messages or merely regards to their acquaintances there. Now shortly I will soon be going on a trip, and this concerns all of you. I am a very old man, and I will soon be heading the way of all men, to the world of truth. In my younger years I lived in this very town, with

your parents and grandparents. Surely, I will meet them in the world to come, and they will expect me to bring regards from you."

"Daniel" the Chofetz Chaim now said turning his attention to one particular man, "what shall I tell your father, who was so dear to me? Can I give him 'good' regards and tell him that his children and grandchildren are faithfully following the path of Torah by which he lived?"

Tell me my dear Daniel, what do you wish me to say?"

Tears welled up in Daniel's eyes. He said nothing.

In this way the Chofetz Chaim addressed each man in the room, recalling his fondness for that particular person's ancestors, and asking what he could relate to those ancestors when he would reach the next world.

By the time the Chofetz Chaim had finished, the face of every man was wet from weeping and his heart was filled with remorse. Each one firmly resolved to mend his ways and live a life that would bring his ancestors joy and pride in the world to come.

By Shlomo Katz

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No. 305

Acharei—Kedoshim 5769 - אהרי מות - קדושים תשס"ט

מס' ש"ה

כי-ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאתיכם לפני ה' תטהרו" - (ויקרא ט"ז, ל"א)

"For on this day he shall atone for you to purify you; from all your sins, before Hashem you will be purified"
(Vayikra 16:30)

The Mishna in Yoma, 85b, cites the interpretation of R' Elazar ben Azarya on this Pasuk, obtained by moving the comma found between "sins" and "before" to between "Hashem" and "you": "For on this day he shall atone for you to purify you; from all your sins before Hashem, you will be purified." Now the Pasuk tells us that "sins before Hashem", between man and Hashem, will be forgiven but sins committed between man and man are not atoned for. Someone must appease the wronged party to atone for these.

On 87b in Yoma the Gemora cites a teaching from R' Yitzchak: "Anyone who upsets his fellow man - even through mere words - must appease him, as it says "My son... you have been trapped by the words of your mouth. Do this therefore, my child, and be rescued... Go humble yourself and placate your fellow (Mishlei 6:1-3)". An obvious question can be asked - what did the Gemora add to the teaching of R' Elazar ben Azarya by citing R' Yitzchak's teaching?

Rav Chaim of Brisk once answered this question in the course of the explanation of a certain incident that occurred to him personally. Once a butcher in Brisk was being sued for the sum of 3,000 roubles by another man of the town. The case was brought to Rav Chaim's Beis Din and despite being encouraged to accept a compromise settlement the butcher refused, believing that the case against him was totally unfounded. In the end though Rav Chaim ruled against the butcher, requiring him to pay the whole sum. The enraged butcher began shouting at Rav Chaim insults such as "thief" and

"murderer" and continued to do so, despite Rav Chaim patiently explaining to him how according to Torah law he had no choice but to rule accordingly. Eventually Rav Chaim finally lost patience and told the butcher "insolent one! Leave this court at once!"

Two months later, on the eve of Yom Kippur, Rav Chaim told his three sons (R' Yisrael Gershon, R' Moshe and R' Yitzchak Zev) to come with him as he went to apologise to the butcher for calling him "insolent one". However, after finding the man and apologising in the presence of his three sons, the butcher replied "I will not forgive you unless tomorrow, right after the fast, you pay me back the three thousand roubles!" Rav Chaim replied "I will ask your forgiveness again, and then a third time, in the presence of these three men, as the halacha requires. After this I am not required to pursue the matter any further! But I want you to know that the reason I am apologising is not because I think that I have committed any sin - either of Biblical or rabbinical origin - with respect to you. For the Midrash teaches that it is permitted for a person to insult someone if he was insulted by him first. However, on the eve of Yom Kippur there is an obligation to seek forgiveness from one's fellow for any insult he might have given him - even if that insult was fully permitted and deserved."

Rav Chaim later revealed to his sons that the passage cited above, in the name of R' Yitzchak, is the source of this law. R' Yitzchak teaches us that when one loses his self-composure, thereby exhibiting a certain weakness of character, he must seek to rectify this flaw in his personality by asking the aggrieved party for forgiveness, even if the person committed no sin at all.

By Yehoshua Lefkowitz

Times for Shabbos - זמני שבת

In: 8:04

Out: 9:09

The Responsibility of Holiness

דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם (י"ט:ב')

Speak to the entire congregation of the Jewish People and say to them, "You shall be holy, because I, your G-d, am holy." (Vayikrah 19:12)

Rashi teaches us that the method of delivering this message was unique in that at other times Moshe's teachings were given to the elders to transmit and pass on to the entire population. However, this time Moshe gathered all the Jewish people to hear the words directly from him. Although the Midrash does say that the voice of Hashem spoke through Moshe, it is clear that this message was of such enormous importance that every Jewish man, woman and child, had to receive it firsthand. Rashi goes on to explain that the majority of the substance of the Torah is contained in this message.

"You shall be Holy קדושים תהיו" has a twofold meaning: 1) as an imperative – "You shall be holy," and 2) as a statement of fact, "You will be holy". At Har Sinai, Hashem said, "You shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." In Devarim, Moshe says, Hashem has selected you from among the people to be a special nation to him". The Jewish people were not given an option. They were commissioned by Hashem to be a unique nation and historically, we have paid a heavy price for being the Chosen people.

R'Elimelech of Lezhensk explains the reason for all our historic persecution with a parable. A king wished to build a palace, with all the luxuries appropriate for the royal home, including a crown for the royal head. Various labourers and craftsmen were engaged to accomplish the task. One peasant whose job it was to complete the excavation for the laying of the foundations of the palace was angry that he had been conscripted, and in defiance, intentionally dug the excavation several meters off the designated course. When the error was discovered he was given several lashes, and forced to fill the hole with dirt and excavate according to the architects plan. The jeweller whose assignment it was to cut the diamond that was to

be the centre piece of the crown was not defiant, just a bit careless. When the huge, rare gem was entrusted to him, he negligently deviated less than half a millimetre and ruined the beauty of the jewel. When this was discovered, he was given a harsh prison sentence for his negligence.

R'Elimelech points out that quantitatively the act of the peasant could be seen as far worse, since it was as intentional act of defiance, and the deviation of several meters was thousands of times greater than the tiny deviation of the jeweller. Yet the peasant received a relatively mild punishment, whereas the latter was dealt with harshly.

R'Elimelech explains that this is not unfair because the craftsman who was to fashion the centrepiece of the crown had a much more sensitive assignment, something most important to the royal image, therefore he was held to a much more exacting standard of performance than the peasant who dug the excavation. In the same manner the double standard applies to the Jewish people and the nations. Our selection is as much a privilege as it is a responsibility. No other nation was commissioned to be holy, to bring G-dliness to the world and to be a kingdom of priests.

In addition to being an imperative קדושים תהיו is a statement of fact: "You will be holy". The Jew is composed of a unique neshama which partakes of the kedushah of Hashem. "You will be holy because I, your G-d, am holy". The unity of the Jewish People with Hashem endows each Jew with a potential of holiness. We have to fully realise our potential and adequately adjust our lives.

(Adapted from Living each week)
By Asher Weisz

Orlah

In this week's parasha, Kedoshim, we are told about the laws of **Orlah and Neta Revai**. Orlah is fruit which has grown in the first three years after a tree was planted and is forbidden to have benefit from. Neta Revai is the fruit in the fourth year which must be either eaten in Yerushalayim or redeemed like Ma'aser Sheini. The meforashim give several reasons for this prohibition.

The Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim says that it is because the idol worshippers would especially try to make their trees grow more fruit faster, so that they would sacrifice the fruit of the first three years to their gods.

The Ramban gives a different reason. He says that the fruit from the first three years of a tree are too moist and dangerous to eat and therefore forbidden. He goes on to explain the rationale for Neta Revai is similar to that of Bikkurim. We should show that we are not the masters of our own food and livelihood, it all comes from Hashem.

Many problems are raised on the Ramban's position. The Halachah is that if one is unsure whether a piece of fruit is Orlah or not, it is forbidden to eat it, if it grew in Eretz Yisroel, but it is permitted if it grew in Chutz La'aretz. If the reason for the Mitzvah is health reasons then why is there this discrepancy? Also, the Mishnah tells us that when the Jews went into

the land with Yehoshua and found established trees they could eat the fruit from these trees even though they were less than three years old. Surely the same health concerns should apply in that case as well?

One must conclude that when the Ramban says that the fruit is unhealthy he is clearly speaking about not only physical health but also of spiritual well being.

The Kli Yakar gives a "drush" understanding as to the reason for these Mitzvos. He says that until the third day of creation all the fruit on the trees were unripe. On the fourth day the sun and the moon were created and they caused the fruit to ripen. Then on the fifth day the birds, fish and insects came and were able to eat from the fruit. These Mitzvos are a parallel of this. For the first three years we can't have any benefit because the fruit is unripe. The fourth year is holy because that is when they first reach their potential to ripen and due to this holiness they must be eaten in Yerushalayim. From the fifth year and on they are permitted for everybody to come and take what they wish.

By Aharon Goldwater

Riddle of the Week

Which word is mentioned 3 times in a row in the nach?
(Answer in next week's Living Torah)

Prizes have been sponsored by various local Jewish shops to be raffled off monthly to those who successfully answer the weekly general knowledge question!!! Everyone is welcome to submit an answer by emailing us at:
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