Points to Ponder

Achrei Mos/Kedoshim 5780

**דַּבֵּר֘ אֶל־אַֽהֲרֹ֣ן אָחִ֒יךָ֒ וְאַל־יָבֹ֤א בְכָל־עֵת֙ אֶל־הַקֹּ֔דֶשׁ Speak to Aharon your brother (16:2) - Rashi** notes that Hashem was telling Moshe to warn Aharon so that he not do as did his sons and be spared death. But why would AHARON need that warning? **Rav Amital ztl**. explained that sometimes in order to gain spiritual things we think it is ok to push off the “smaller” things. Hashem was warning Aharon not to make that choice.

**עַל־שְׁנֵ֥י הַשְּׂעִירִ֖ם גֹּֽרָל֑וֹת  A lot for Hashem and a lot for Azazel (16:8)** - Why the need for the double lottery? **Rav Schachter shlita** would note that the intent here is to demonstrate the fragility of life to us. We are showing Hashem that our lives are so simple that any influence can set the course for our lives in one direction or the other. In a moment a Tzaddik can be turned but at the same time, a Rasha can be influenced positively.

**כְּמַֽעֲשֵׂ֧ה אֶֽרֶץ־מִצְרַ֛יִם אֲשֶׁ֥ר יְשַׁבְתֶּם־בָּ֖הּ לֹ֣א תַֽעֲשׂ֑וּ LIKE the actions of Mitzrayim where we dwelled (18:3)** - What do we mean when we state that we cannot do “as” the people of Egypt where we dwelled? **Rav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht ztl** explained that a Tzaddik has the power to be an influence on the people around him. This is because wherever we are, inevitably we stand out. We are to live our lives with the understanding and practice of being different if we are to be successful. This is the Torah’s message to us here.

**אִ֣ישׁ אִמּ֤וֹ וְאָבִיו֙ תִּירָ֔אוּ A man should fear his mother and father (19:3) - Rashi** explains that a person honors his mother more than the father and reveres the father more than the mother so the order of who comes first for each is reversed. **Rav Wolbe ztl.** notes that by nature we tend to be drawn to Mitzvos that match our personalities. The Torah is telling us that we need to work harder at fulfilling all of Hashem’s mitzvos -- even the harder ones for each of us.

**וְלֹֽא־תִשָּׂ֥א עָלָ֖יו חֵֽטְא Reproof your neighbor and do not bear his sin on him (19:17) - Rav Gedaliah Schorr ztl** noted that we have a responsibility not to place the burden of the sin on him but rather are to place his burden on the sin. In other words, one should make it clear that the sin is not “like him to do.”

**וְאָֽהַבְתָּ֥ לְרֵֽעֲךָ֖ כָּמ֑וֹךָ Love your neighbor as yourself (19:18)** - The Gemara (Yevamos 62b) notes that 12,000 pairs of Rabbi Akiva’s students died during this time period. Why do we not call them 24,000. Why 12,000 pairs? And how could they not have learned from his statement that v’Ahavta is the biggest rule of the Torah? **Chasam Sofer** explains that we need to be united in Torah study. If we are not, the Torah we study alone is not as strong. The stress on the idea of pairs is a message about how we can respect the torah by respecting the paired aspect of learning together. **Rav Mordechai Willig Shlita** once suggested that this might explain why we do not marry during this time. We need to make sure we know how to properly partner in order to fulfill v’ahavta.

**חֶ֣סֶד ה֔וּא It is a Chessed (20:17) - Rav Dessler ztl** explains that Chessed is an incredible middah but that it can be misused in the wrong circumstance. This is why Hashem tells Avraham that He will shield him. The Shield is a protection from the misuse and overuse of Chessed.

**Haftara:** **בַּיּ֣וֹם הַה֔וּא אָקִ֛ים אֶת־סֻכַּ֥ת דָּוִ֖יד הַנֹּפֶ֑לֶת On that day I will raise the Sukkah of Dovid that has fallen (Amos (9:11)** - Why is the Beis Hamikdash referred to as Dovid’s Sukkah and not that of Shlomo? **Rav Yisroel Reisman Shlita** answered that while Shlomo built the physical structure, the spirit of the place is purely Dovid’s. He had the desire for it and it is his spirit that will return. This is also perhaps why it is referred to as a Sukkah as opposed to a Bayit. Sukkos can be put up, taken down and rebuilt again.