Points to Ponder

Kedoshim 5779

**קְדשִׁ֣ים תִּֽהְי֑וּ (19:2)** - What is the intent of this command? Zohar HaKadosh comments that this is not a command but rather a statement -- that Hashem promises us that we will be holy. What does this mean? **Rav Yaakov HaChalban Shlita** explains that as extensions of Hashem himself who is Kadosh forever, we too, are Kadosh and destined to be so forever. Any failure in the Kedusha department is to be seen as temporary (and we, not to give up on it) for in the end, Hashem’s people will be like him -- Kadosh.

**אִ֣ישׁ אִמּ֤וֹ וְאָבִיו֙ תִּירָ֔אוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַ֖י תִּשְׁמֹ֑רוּ A person shall fear his parents and observe my Shabbos (19:3)** - What is the connection between these 2 Mitzvos? **Rav Yaakov Kamenetzky ztl.** explained that these 2 Mitzvos highlight our beliefs in the Divine origin of the world. It is well known that Rav Yaakov ztl. explained to a well-known evolutionist that the difference between them is that the evolutionist’s grandchildren see him as generations removed from monkey while we revere our elders as being closer to Matan Torah and Adam Harishon perfection. In the same way that our reverence of parents is due to our belief in their closeness to Hashem, our observance of Shabbos is also a declaration in the belief of His creating the world.

**וְכִ֧י תִזְבְּח֛וּ זֶ֥בַח שְׁלָמִ֖ים When you sacrifice a shelamim offering to Hashem, sacrifice it so that it may be pleasing on your behalf (leretzonchem)(Vayikra 19:5)** -Improper intention regarding the sacrifice itself is prohibited. Why did the Torah choose to emphasize improper intentions regarding only time and place of eating, and only with regard to the Shelamim? **Rav Moshe Stav Shlita** explained that when idolaters offer sacrifices, they do not change the goal or the nature of their lives. They continue to aspire to lives of this world. For them, the height of perfection is to act justly and appropriately so that this world can function properly. They have no connection to the idea of the revelation of the Shechina, which entails seeing the guidance of Hashem in this world and living with the goal of revealing Hashem’s presence in the universe. Thus, when non-Jews bring sacrifices, they are capable of giving over from themselves or their property to Hashem, but the idea of eating for higher purposes is not relevant to them. Yisrael, in contrast, are specifically commanded to bring the Shechina into this world, and this is accomplished by eating – this worldly pleasure – performed Leshem Shamayim. However, all of this is possible when man does not allow the inclinations of his heart to lead him. Care regarding the laws of the korban – in particular the place and time – assure that one’s intentions will remain pure.

**לֹֽא־תָלִ֞ין פְּעֻלַּ֥ת שָׂכִ֛יר אִתְּךָ֖ עַד־בֹּֽקֶר: Do not withold the wages of a day laborer (19:13)** - This rule only applies to day laborers as opposed to merchandise. Rabbeinu Tam comments that one must pay these workers in cash. This is because the day laborer places his life for the job and deserves full pay quickly and easily.  **Rav Schachter Shlita** noted a Machlokes within the Rishonim as to whether the deal is a Hischayvus Min Hatorah or is it my obligation. Most Rishonim assume that it is not the goodness of the boss that requires him to pay -- it is the obligation of the Torah -- so much so, that wherever the Boss thought he was getting a good deal, it is the going rate that makes a difference insofar as the idea of hiring workers is a Miilveh HaKesuvah BaTorah.

**לֹ֥א תַֽעֲמֹ֖ד עַל־דַּ֣ם רֵעֶ֑ךָ  Do not stand on the blood of your neighbor (19:16) - Rashi** notes that this means that one should not idly stand by and see his friend’s death -- like when he is drowning or being attacked. What is the intention here? Does the Torah specifically refer to physical saving or does it also include Davening for someone in trouble to be saved? The **Chazon Ish** explained that one who davens for someone else in need does more good than the one who actually saves him -- for the Tefillah is to Hashem who actually does the saving. But does that mean that when someone is spotted drowning that we simply stand by and call a Tehillim rally? The Chazon Ish says certainly NOT! The Torah is warning us of both sides of the responsibility -- to do whatever is in our power to do -- and at the same time to never forget that the ultimate savior is Hashem.

**וְהָֽדַרְתָּ֖ פְּנֵ֣י זָקֵ֑ן And you should honor the elder (19:32)** - The Gemara (Makos 22b) identifies one who rises for the Sefer Torah and not the Talmid Chacham as a fool**. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach ztl.** asked why the person is a “fool” and not a “Rasha” for violating the Mitzva of v’Hadarta? Rav Shlomo Zalman answers that we are obviously speaking of people who rise for Talmidei Chachamim but without the same warmth that they rise for the Sefer Torah. One is obligatory...the other with obligation but also with connection to reverence. One who does so is a fool because we attach ourselves more to Hashem via the Talmid Chacham.

**הִבְדַּלְתֶּ֞ם בֵּֽין־הַבְּהֵמָ֤ה הַטְּהֹרָה֙ לַטְּמֵאָ֔ה וּבֵֽין־הָע֥וֹף הַטָּמֵ֖א לַטָּהֹ֑ר And you shall separate between the animal that is Tahor and that which is Tamai (20:25) - Rashi** notes that we do not speak about distinguishing between species -- for that is obvious. Rather, we speak about the differentiation between an animal Shechted properly and the one that is not shechted properly -- often a difference of a hairsbreadth (difference of half versus Rov). Rav Moshe asks why the difference between species does not need to be mentioned? It too, is forbidden? **Rav Moshe Feinstein ztl.** answers that the prohibition of kosher and non-kosher species is based on prohibitions written in the Torah. The one about the difference between Rov and Chatzee is Torah She’Baal Peh which needs more protection.

**Haftara: הִנֵּ֨ה יָמִ֚ים בָּאִים֙ נְאֻם־יְהֹוָ֔ה וְנִגַּ֚שׁ חוֹרֵשׁ֙ בַּקֹּצֵ֔ר Behold days are coming when the plowman shall meet the reaper (Amos 9:13) - Rav Yehuda Michenberg ztl.** Pointed out that Amos is teaching us that in the future, the celebrations of the different agricultural seasons that mark our changing relationships with Hashem shall all cease to be unique insofar as our closeness to Hashem will allow us to relate to Him on more than one level at a time.