

Kol Mevasser

PARASHAT KEDOSHIM

28 Nissan 5768

May 3, 2008

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Showing Respect: Parashat Kedoshim

By Rabbi Ralph Tawil

A basic value in Judaism is that of relating with respect to our parents and to the elderly. This value is so important that it is mentioned in the Ten Commandments. It is also repeated in the second perasha that we read this week, Qedoshim. While this is a very well known value, it is worthwhile to explore.

Text

Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the entire community of the Children of Israel, and say to them: Holy are you to be, for holy am I, Hashem your God.

Each-man—his mother and his father you are to hold in awe, and my Sabbaths you are to keep: I am Hashem your God.

*...In front of the aged, you are to rise, you are to honor the face of the elderly, thus holding your God in awe, I am Hashem. **Vayiqra 19:1-3; 32***

Analysis

The holiness that God commands includes many different behaviors, including the way we relate to others and to God. The words “I am Hashem” repeat throughout this section, reminding us of the commander of these laws. The first idea mentioned is to revere your parents. Holiness begins with having the proper reverence and respect for your parents. This verse is coupled with idea of keeping the Shabbat. One might see these two ideas as exemplifying proper behavior to human beings along with proper behavior towards Hashem’s

commandments. Later in the chapter, Hashem commands us to rise and show honor to the aged. This is also an act of holiness.

Discussion

Where else does the idea of respecting parents occur? In the Ten Commandments, known in Hebrew as Asseret Hadiberot. The Torah states, “kaved et abikha ve`et immekha” or “honor your father and mother.”

Why did Hashem begin to talk about holiness by talking about showing respect to parents? Well, the way we treat our parents will carry over into the way we treat God. Like God, our parents have done so much good for us that we take for granted. They provided for us and nurtured us for many years before we could even thank them. Recognizing this is the first step to recognizing the goodness of God, which we might taken for granted as well. Recognizing God’s goodness and beneficence to us creates the sense of gratitude and of desiring to emulate God in His holiness.

Why is Shabbat mentioned in the same verse as revering parents? In addition to the idea mentioned above one might discuss an idea mentioned in the Sifra quoted by Rashi—*The Torah placed Shabbat next to revering parents in order to teach us that even though I have warned you about revering your parents, if your parent should tell you to violate the Shabbat, don’t listen to him. This applies to other commandments as well. I AM HASHEM YOUR GOD—you and your parent are obligated to revere Me, therefore do not obey him if he tells you to go against my word.*

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*Congratulations
Michael Kamara
on your Bar Mitzvah*

*Mazal Tov
to your parents, Ourite & Abe Kamara
your sisters, Daniella & Gabriella
and your grandparents
Manachi Kemareh
Claire & Naji Assia*

*Shabbat Kiddush
is sponsored by
Ourite and Abe Kamara
in honor of
the Bar Mitzvah of their son
Michael Manachi Kamara*

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Does reverence include obedience? From the above Midrash, one might say that unless the parent is asking his child to violate the Torah, reverence includes obedience. Yet, according to the Talmud reverence and respect do not include obedience. The Talmud defines these two ideas in very practical terms: *What is reverence? Do not stand in his place, do not sit in his place, do not openly contradict him, do not prove him wrong. Respect—give him to eat and drink, dress, cover and help him get in and out. Qiddushin 31b*

The idea of obedience is not included here. The reverence and respect demanded by the Talmud's understanding of these verses is not an emotion, but certain actions that show respect and reverence. One must show respect and reverence for parents, even if one does not feel respect and reverence towards them.

There is no limit to how much one must do to show respect for parents. The Talmud relates many stories about people who excelled in respecting their parents. Of course, the best way to teach this value is by modeling it by the way we treat our parents and elderly acquaintances.

TORAH READINGS

Parashat Kedoshim p. 497
Haftara p. 511

Refuah Shlemah

Please include these people in your prayers for health.

Meir ben Esther • Yaheskel ben Regina
Khayah Noa bat Sara • Matilda Louisa
Victor ben Pauline • Haim ben Mordechai
Shaul Chai Gavriel ben Sara • Pnina bat Esther
Shamuel Eliyahu ben Hannah

In Memoriam

These anniversaries occur from Shabbat, the Shabbat, the 28th of Nissan (May 3, 2008) to Shabbat, the 5th of Iyar (May 10, 2008). It is customary to light a memorial candle in the evening and donate tzedakah. Family members are encouraged to attend services in honor of loved ones. *Entries with an asterisk lack contact names, to add information please call 310-474-0559.*

Monday / 30 Nissan

Yehezkel ben Avraham Hayim Yaacov

Tuesday / 1 Iyar

Mordechai Haim ben Moshe Hai
Eliahou ben Meir*

Wednesday / 2 Iyar

Mounie bat Miriam

Thursday / 3 Iyar

Hanina bat Chala
Sasson ben Binyamin Gemal

Friday / 4 Iyar

Joshua ben Yehezikel

Shabbat / 5 Iyar

Shimon ben Faraj
Aziza bat Nouna