



Parshas Acharei Mos & Kedoshim 2020, power of influence

This week's Parsha Perspective is in honor of the Refuah Shlema of HaRav Amitai Ben Shoshanna, Leah Mintche Bas Gittel and Shaul Ben Berta.

Our Parshas begin immediately following the death of Aaron's two sons, Nadav and Avihu. G-d commands Moshe to tell Aaron and his 2 remaining sons not to go into the Holy of Holies at will, for they will share the same consequences as Nadav and Avihu.

Only Aaron can enter the Holy of Holies on the year's holiest day, Yom Kippur. The Torah also details the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. This includes the incense offering in the Holy of Holies and casting lots for the fate of two goats, one for G-d and for Azazel.

The next portion begins with the statement: **"You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your G-d, am holy."** This declaration is followed by many Mitzvahs, including charity, Shabbos, morality, honesty in business, honor and awe of one's parents, and the sacredness of life.

However, a question comes to mind: The third Pasuk of Parshas Kedoshim states (19:3), *"Every man must fear his mother and father, and you shall guard My shabbos, I am the Lord, your G-d."* As there are no coincidences in the Torah, what is the connection between fearing one's parents and keeping Shabbos? Why are these specific mitzvahs put together?

Rashi explains the reason they are placed together is the same as to why they are stated side by side in the Ten Commandments.

For it teaches us if a person is told by their parents to violate the laws of Shabbos or defy any mitzvah in the Torah, they are not to follow through. Since there is a higher authority above all that we obey and listen to, the Pasuk ends off, **“I am the Lord, your G-d.”**

However, the Lubavitcher Rebbe gives a deeper and more powerful explanation. He explains that they are placed right after each other to teach us how to fulfill the first mitzvah of the Parsha, **to be holy**. The word Kadosh in Hebrew is usually translated as holiness; however, the actual translation is separation and distinctiveness.

G-d tells the Jewish people that although we are a part of this physical world, we must differentiate ourselves. This applies not only to our spiritual life but also to our physical lives.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe continues, the way to achieve this unique identity is to start at the beginning, at home. For it is the parents who have the power and ability to instill in their children the feeling of distinctiveness and a sense of Jewish pride.

When they grow older, the belief in G-d that their parents have imparted to them gives them the capability to realize the true master of the universe. This, in turn, will help us to keep the commandments that we only perform because G-d told us so, like the Mitzvah of Shabbos.

In our daily life and especially during these crazy times, it is imperative that we be aware of how we can affect and influence others. For what we say, do, or even think can have an immense impact on others and particularly on our youth. Therefore, we must think before we speak and twice before we act because it can never be taken back.

“Everyone influences others, whether it is for the good or the opposite, is only up to you.”

Have a meaningful Shabbos! Rabbi Sholom Yemini