

Vayakhel 2016

1.

Always remember the Rabbi

“all the Jews left in front of Moshe.” (35, 20)

The question arises, what is the explanation of “the Jews left in front of Moshe?” We already know they were in front of Moshe as the pasuk previously stated!

Rabbi Yaakov Neiman (Darchei Mussar pages 137-139) quotes the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh who explains that a talmid (student) who leaves his Rebbe should walk backwards away from his Rebbe in order that his back will not be facing his Rebbe.

Another answer is that Moshe became wealthy after the Luchos were given. They thought that Moshe would donate everything to the Mishkan, thereby disenabling them to personally donate. Everyone therefore quickly left Moshe in order to donate to the Mishkan.

The alter Mi’Kelm answers that even after the Jews left Moshe, it’s still recognizable that they learned from Moshe Rabbeinu. It was noticeable that they were Moshe’s talmidim (students) where ever they went. That’s why the pasuk says “in front of Moshe” because wherever they went it was recognizable that they were Moshe’s talmidim of.

The same applies to us; when others see us it needs to be obvious that we learn. We need to act properly and make a kiddush Hashem (sanctification of God’s name). The Ramban writes (Igeres Haramban) that when you get up from your learning you should think about what you learned and if there is anything you can fulfill. We must think about how we can apply what we learnt to our lives. This is the purpose of learning. The Gemara says the Torah is so great because learning brings to action (Megilah 27a, Kiddushin 40). Through our actions people will see the truth of the Torah.

The Lekach Tov (266-267) quotes Rashi who comments on the first pasuk in Bechukosai that one should toil in learning. He relates a story of men who were eating at a table and the whole time a difference amongst them was unrecognizable until they got up to leave. All of them got up to leave except one person who was handicapped. Only then was it recognizable that he was handicapped. The son of the Alter Mi’Kelm explains **when everyone is learning in the Yeshiva, it is difficult to distinguish between them. Everyone is pretty much going through the same motions. However, the difference between people can be determined when they leave the Beis Medrash. How are they acting then? Are they strong enough to endure the outside environment with its unfortunate emphasis on the physical, secular and material?** We need to have the courage and ‘legs’ to do what is right no matter where we are or whom we are with. We need to do what is right, no matter what. This is what Yaakov told Esav אדם לבן גרתי Esav. Meaning, Yaakov was saying I was spiritually successful because I keep the Torah and mitzvos. (See writings on parshas Vayishlach) If we stay connected to our Rebbe no matter where we go, we will succeed and make a Kiddush Hashem.

The Gemara in Sotah (36b) says Yosef saw the image of his father and then ran outside. A great tactic that could prevent us from sinning is remembering our Rebbe.

2.

No anger or arguments on Shabbos

Nachalas Tzvi page 247

“You shall not kindle fire in any of your dwellings on Shabbos.” (35, 3)

"לא תבערו אש בכל משמתיכם ביום השבת."

The pesukim instruct us that we need to keep Shabbos. There is one Halacha of Shabbos that is isolated and singled out; making a fire. Why is this prohibition as opposed to all other prohibitions specifically selected and mentioned? **During the week we are typically rushed, preoccupied and burdened. Since we are so busy, the yeitzer hara doesn't really have the ability to entice us and subsequently cause us to sin. Conversely, on Shabbos when we aren't working and therefore have more time, our thoughts are freer. We therefore need to worry about the yeitzer hara which is like a fire inside of us. This is why the pasuk specifically informs us of the prohibition of kindling a fire.**

Similarly, the Kotzker Rebbe told his Chasidim ‘I don't expect you to refrain from sinning because you have no interest in it. Rather, I expect you to be too busy to sin.’ (Artscroll Pirkei Avos (page 63)) Similarly, the Elya Raba (siman 170) says a person must be careful not to violate three lo taases (negative commandments) of stuffing himself even on Shabbas!

One could suggest an additional answer. **Shabbos is a time when the entire family gathers. It could be that machlokes (arguments), anger and lashon hara (gossip) would surface. The pasuk is telling us to get all of this fire out of our system.** One of the reasons we cover the challah on Shabbos is not to embarrass the challah (since hamotzi precedes hagafen). Someone who comes home and embarrasses his wife is totally missing the point! Meaning, if the previous great Rabbi's established that the challah, which is food, should be covered in order to save it from potential embarrassment, then kal v'chomer (surely) actually embarrassing (as opposed to a potential embarrassment) an actual person is a grave sin. The Gemara in Sotah (17a) says Rebbi Akiva expounded that if a man and woman are worthy the Shechina (divine presence) will be amongst them. If they are not worthy a fire will consume them. (דריש ר"ע איש ואשה זכו שכינה ביניהן, לא זכו אש אוכלתן.) Rashi explains that איש and אשה has a י and a ה respectively. If they are worthy, the Shechina aka the יה (Hashem) will dwell amongst them. If they are not worthy these letters will leave and אש (fire) will remain. The Gemara in Berachos (7b) says shalom bayis issues are worse than the war of Gog umagog.

Rav Shimshon Pincus (Tiferes Shimshon page 407) quotes the Zohar who says the Torah is hinting to get rid of the fire of anger. There is an additional problem of getting angry on Shabbos. The Gemara in Shabbos (104b) says anyone who gets angry is considered as if he worshiped avoda zara (idolatry). Whenever a person is angry it can destroy him completely.

However, sometimes a person should get angry. For example, in order to discipline a child in the right path the parent needs to get slightly angry. However, it needs to be an external anger. Meaning, the anger must only be expressed on the outside but in the inside we must remain calm. This is similar to someone who kindles a fire in order to warm his house, the fire must be small. If there is too much fire the house will burn. So too, if someone is acting inappropriately we need to only get a little angry.

See Korach 2016.

Thank you Yair Moshe Ausabel for typing this up.