

Dvar Torah for Parshat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim

Based on *Likutey Halakhot, Ribit 5:1-3*

“Do not act on the basis of omens; do not act on the basis of auspicious times.”

Leviticus 19:26

How are angels and animals alike? Neither has free will. For angels and animals things are always constant. The former are so exposed to God’s presence that they must obey His will. The latter are so bound to earthiness that they cannot help but feed their every physical desire.

We have free will because we are a bit of both. However, if we could freeze time there would be no free will. At any given moment there is no change. Whichever force is in power at that moment rules. The competition between the two—our struggle to choose between angel and animal—takes place over time.

Things change incessantly throughout the day and throughout life. In every experience we have to keep our eye on the prize—Hashem’s (God’s) presence. This requires a realization that despite the incessant changes—some more pleasant and some decidedly less so—one constant underlies them all: Hashem’s goodness determines them. If one could but relate every experience to Hashem, with the understanding that Hashem is inviting him for an embrace, one would successfully nullify the evil energies that pollute and ravage our world.

Everyone knows that no two people are alike. Hashem created each of us to have different outlooks and opinions, which are formed by one’s physical make-up, soul-root and experiences. Rather than being jealous and competitive of one another, Hashem wants us to love one another and be united, despite our different opinions. He wants us to observe the Torah **TOGETHER**. If each individual could relate his every experience to Hashem the resultant harmony would be so great that it would lead to Tikun HaOlam, as Rebbe Akiva said, “‘Love your fellow man as [you love] yourself’ (*Leviticus 19:18*)—this is a major tenet of the Torah” (*Torat Kohanim*).

There’s an Americanism that goes, “If somebody tells you, ‘It’s not the money, it’s the principle’—it’s the money.” Most disagreements are about money. Reb Noson writes that with the exception of the poorest of the poor, most people have enough to eat for today. People obsess about money only because they worry about the future: how will I pay for the bar mitzvah/wedding/tuition/my old age? What will I do when the money runs out?

Someone who gives charity, or lends money interest free, delivers a dual knockout punch to evil. He is creating peace and love between himself and the recipient of his gift/ loan (with money, the great divider of family and friends). He is also demonstrating his embrace with Hashem—he is not afraid of the future, because God Who provides for him now, at this moment, is the same God Who will provide for him in the future. Such a person has no need to act on the basis of omens or auspicious times.

agutn Shabbos! Shabbat Shalom!

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