

This Week's Parshah - Parshas Emor

Kindly take a moment to study MISHNAS CHAYIM in the merit of

Regina *bas* George a''h

a fellow Jew who passed away with no relatives to arrange Torah study on behalf of her *neshamah*

The Parent-Shabbos Connection – The Answers

Previously, we discussed the seeming incongruity contained in the verse in last week's *parshah*: “A man must fear his mother and father, and you must keep My Sabbaths” (*Vayikra 19:3*). What is the connection between the apparently disparate entities of Shabbos and awe for parents?

The Chasam Sofer advances some innovative approaches. He explains that the second half of the verse aims to forestall an erroneous conclusion one may have formed based on the first half. In varied ways (which we shall soon briefly restate), he demonstrates that the directive to fear one's parents may have actually left an impression that one *should not* keep Shabbos. To set the record straight, then, when the verse instructs us to revere parents, it must immediately point out that, nevertheless, one *should* indeed keep Shabbos.

What was left unexplained (as of yet) were the reasons for the “reversal.” The Chasam Sofer presents some solid basis for assuming that fearing parents does in fact preclude Shabbos observance. The Torah emphasizes at the verse's end that the notions are mistaken – but why, exactly? We set out here, with the help of Hashem, to reexamine those stated “misimpressions” and present the fuller version of the Chasam Sofer's intriguing clarification as to why, indeed, Shabbos emerges supreme.

“Enough!”

In his first approach, the Chasam Sofer focuses on the issue of “precedence.” The regard that we accord our parents stems in no small part from their role as “life-givers”: they partnered with the Creator to bring the child into existence. But their contribution to this endeavor is essentially restricted to the inception of life. “For my father and mother have left me; but Hashem takes me in” (*Tehillim 27:10*). Physical growth and development from the earliest fetal stage throughout the individual's life is directed solely from on High. As such, the mitzvah to revere parents for their part seems to emphasize the importance of the beginning.

As we find throughout the Torah, Shabbos is a testimony to Hashem's creation of the universe. As we find stated yet again in this week's *parshah*, its observance is relegated to the end of the week: “For six days, work shall be done; on the seventh day... you shall not do any work, for it is Hashem's Shabbos” (*Vayikra 23:3*). Now, this is a commemoration of Creation's *completion*, reflecting that “Hashem blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, for therein He rested from all of His Creation-work” (*Bereishis 2:3*). Had we followed the “Fear your parents” model, we may have commemorated Sunday or Monday, celebrating the *beginning* of Creation. To “correct” this notion, following the commandment to fear one's parents (emphasizing the beginning), the Torah assures us that – when it comes to Shabbos – we look toward the *completion*.

Why, in fact, the change? Why wasn't Shabbos established to underscore the *commencement* of the world, just as we emphasize the beginning of the child's existence?

The Chasam Sofer explains that there is, indeed, a great difference between the creation abilities of parents and those of the Almighty. For parents, who are mere flesh and blood, the fact that they can “create” at all is a

wonder; as such, we in fact lay emphasis on their having brought a new life into existence in the first place.

But it is an entirely different matter for the Creator Himself. Truth be told, it is no great “*kuntz*” (“trick” in the vernacular) for Hashem to “create” – after all, His power and abilities are boundless. The real noteworthy aspect of Hashem’s fashioning of the physical world is the fact that it is *finite*; that is, it contains boundaries, extending up to a certain point. One of Hashem’s appellations is “Shakai” (the “k” is employed only for everyday usage; when the pronunciation of this Name is authorized, the “k” is replaced with “d,” thus ending in “**dai**”). According to the Gemara, this moniker refers to Hashem’s act of Creation, wherein He literally reigned in the ever-expanding world He had set in motion. “Shakai... Who said to His world: ‘**Dai** (Enough; halt your expansion)!’” (*Chagigah 12a*). As such, we are instructed to commemorate the more “remarkable” aspect of Creation from the standpoint of the Creator – that is, that it was “restricted” and actually came to completion.

The Parent-Shabbos-Mikdash Connection

The other approach likewise needs some clarification. In terms of practical implementation, “fear of parents” entails such acts of deference as refraining from sitting in their designated seats. This was also a cause to reconsider Shabbos observance. By keeping Shabbos, one simulates, as it were, the deeds of the Creator, by resting on the seventh day. By so doing, the Sabbath observer, in effect, occupies the “place” of the Almighty. The reverence due Him thus may dictate that one specifically *not* observe the Sabbath. The verse has to remind us that indeed we can, and must, observe Shabbos. But how to account for the chutzpah inherent in occupying His “place”? (Gentiles, in fact, are proscribed from keeping Shabbos for this very reason!)

There is yet another precept connected to Shabbos that sheds light on the issue: “You shall keep my Sabbaths and revere my Sanctuary” (*Vayikra 19:30*). Here again we see two seemingly unrelated precepts merged into one verse. The Chasam Sofer explains the connection: the verse’s intent is actually to clarify the aforementioned issue, as we shall soon see.

What is meant by “fearing the Sanctuary”? The Mishnah (*Middos 2:2*) provides some insight:

כָּל הַנִּכְנָסִין לְהַר הַבַּיִת נִכְנָסִין דֶּרֶךְ יְמִין וּמִקִּיפִין... חוּץ מִמֵּי שְׂאֲרֵעוֹ דָּבָר, שֶׁהוּא מִקִּיף לְשִׁמְאֵל. מֶה לָּהּ מִקִּיף לְשִׁמְאֵל, שְׂאֲנֵי אֲבֵל, הַשּׁוֹכֵן בְּבֵית הַזֶּה יִתְחַמֵּד.

“All who enter the Temple Mount enter and traverse through the right... except for a mourner, who proceeds leftward. (This deviation will prompt observers to ask:) ‘Why do you proceed toward the left?’ ‘Because,’ (he will answer), ‘I am in mourning.’ (They will respond in turn:) ‘*The One Who dwells in this house* should provide you with comfort.’”

The Mishnah underscores that the awe mandated for this sacred location is not, of course, for the physical building but for *The One Who dwells therein*.

This is why the precept is linked to Shabbos. As stated, Shabbos observance may seem, at some level, to contradict the fear one must feel toward the Almighty. As we see in the case of parental regard, reverence dictates that one refrain from occupying their place. So how can a Jew keep Shabbos, whereby he simulates the deeds of the Almighty? To ensure that one’s awe for Hashem is not mitigated through Shabbos observance, the Torah immediately reinforces its importance. “Keep My Sabbaths”; but at the same time, retain reverence for He Who dwells in the Sanctuary.