IN THE SANCTUARY

by Shlomo Katz

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Today's Learning:
Tamid 5:6 -6:1
O.C. 15:2-4
Daf Yomi (Bavli): Avodah Zarah 44
Daf Yomi (Yerushalmi): Yoma 4

Much of this week's parashah is devoted to describing the sacrificial service that the Kohen Gadol was required to perform whenever he entered the Kodesh Ha'kodashim/The Holy of Holies. The Torah says (Vayikra 16:2), "He shall not come at all times into the Sanctuary . . ." Why not?

Rashi explains: "Because My Shechinah is revealed there, Aharon should be careful not to enter regularly." R' Chaim Shmuelevitz z"l (1902-1979; Mirrer Rosh Yeshiva in Shanghai and Yerushalayim) elaborates, saying: "Habit is the greatest enemy of one who wishes to feel holy and uplifted. When one stands opposite that which is sublime and exalted, and in his soul burn sparks of a holy fire, habit sneaks in and douses the embers one by one until the entire fire is extinguished."

R' Shmuelevitz continues: The prophet Yechezkel writes (46:9), "When the populace comes before Hashem on the appointed days, whoever comes in by way of the northern gate [of the Temple] to prostrate himself shall go out by way of the southern gate, and whoever comes in by way of the

southern gate shall go out by way of the northern gate. He shall not return by way of the gate through which he came in; rather, he shall go out opposite it." R' Yosef Yaavetz z"l (died 1507) explains that Hashem does not want a person to see one of the gates twice lest he equate it in his mind with the gate of his own house. Likewise, one should not see the same wall of the Bet Hamikdash twice lest he equate it with the walls of his own house. In fact, writes R' Yaavetz, this is what caused the sin of the Golden Calf, for they took the Ohel Mo'ed/Tent of Meeting for granted and began to despise it. Therefore, after the sin, we read (Shemot 33:7) that Moshe dismantled the Tent and rebuilt it outside of the camp. (Sichot Mussar 5731, No. 16)

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"B'zot / Thus shall Aharon enter the Holy . . ." (16:3)

The gematria of the word "b'zot" is 410, alluding to the 410 years that the first Temple stood. The second Temple is not alluded to here because the Holy of Holies in the second Temple did not contain the aron (which had been hidden away), and was less holy than in the first Temple.

(Rav Yisrael Isserlin z"l, author of Terumat Hadeshen)

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"You shall safeguard My charge . . ." (18:30)

The gemara (Yevamot 21a) interprets this verse to mean that the Sages should enact decrees to "protect" the laws of the Torah and to distance people from sin. Thus, the Sages decreed, for example, that the nighttime Shema should be recited before midnight, even though the Torah permits Shema to be recited all night. Other examples of rabbinic decrees based on this verse include those Shabbat prohibitions which are of rabbinic origin and whose purpose is to lessen the chance that one will violate a Torah prohibition.

We read in Bereishit (3:3) that Chava said, "Of the fruit of the tree which is in the center of the garden G-d has said, 'You shall neither eat of it nor touch it, lest you die'." In fact, Hashem had never said that. He did say that if Adam and Chava ate of the Tree of Knowledge they would die, but He never said that they would die if they touched the Tree!

Why did Chava "misquote" G-d? The midrash Avot De'Rabbi Natan (Chapter 1) teaches that Adam made the type of decree to which this verse refers. Adam was trying to distance Chava from sinning by extending the prohibition farther than the Torah required. Unfortunately, the plan backfired when the snake pushed Chava against the tree and said, "You see? You did not die! Similarly, you will not die if you eat from the tree." [Apparently, Chava did not know what Hashem had really said. If she did, the snake's ploy would not have worked. (See Binyan Yehoshua to Avot De'Rabbi Natan, Ch. 1.)]

R' Yisrael Yaakov Lubchansky z"l (mashgiach ruchani of the Ohel Torah Yeshiva in Baranovitch,

Poland) asks: Why is making decrees that extend the Torah's prohibitions good for us if it was bad for our ancestor Chava? He explains:

In Parashat Naso, the laws of Sotah and the laws of Nazir are adjacent to each other. Why? This teaches, the gemara explains, that one who sees the humiliation of a Sotah should be inspired to recognize the danger of excessive drinking and should take the vow of a Nazir. On the other hand, we are taught that one who takes the vow of a Nazir without having such a reason is considered to be a sinner. In general, one should not refrain from enjoying the good things that Hashem created unless one has a good reason for doing so.

Adam and Chava were made by G-d's Hands and had no yetzer hara. They had no reason to make decrees in addition to the Torah's prohibition. About Adam's decree, one can say (in the words of the Sages), "Whoever adds, detracts." But for us, who are under constant attack from the yetzer hara, additional decrees are good and are necessary.

(Quoted in Haggadah Shel Peach Baranovitch p. 3)

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Pirkei Avot
"Make a fence for the Torah." (1:1)

R' Chaim of Volozhin z"l (died 1821) writes: The fence for the Torah is Yirat Shamayim/Fear of Heaven. However, just as there is no need for a fence around an empty field, so Yirah without Torah knowledge is worthless. In the Sages' words (Shabbat 31b), "It's a pity when one builds a door for an apartment, but has no apartment."

(Ruach Chaim)

R' Yaakov Chaim z"l of Baghdad (1854-1920; son of R' Yosef Chaim, the "Ben Ish Chai") offers several interpretations for the injunction: "Make a fence for the Torah."

(1) Although the previous phrase in the Mishnah says, "Develop many disciples," nevertheless, make a fence and do not accept a student who clearly is morally unfit ("talmid sh'aino hagun").

(2) Make a fence to hold your words in, i.e., sometimes you should keep your words to yourself. The Sages have taught, "Just as it is a mitzvah to give reproof that will be listened to, so it is a mitzvah not to give reproof that will not be listened to."

(3) Make a fence to keep what you have learned from escaping from you, i.e., use mnemonic devices to remember what you have learned.

(4) Make a fence that will separate your learning into sections to fulfill the instruction if the Sages (Kiddushin 30a), "One should always divide his learning in thirds: one-third Bible, one-third Mishnah,

and one-third Gemara."

(5) Make a fence to ensure that you teach your students on a level that is appropriate to them.

(6) Protect your Torah study by dividing your time between study and work, as we are taught (Avot 2:2), "All Torah study that is not joined with work will cease in the end and leads to sin."

(Zechut Avot)

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"Avtalyon said: `Wise men - be careful with your words, lest you be subjected to a decree of exile . . .' " (Chapter 1)

Why would wise men be subjected to exile if they are not careful with their words? Rav Chaim Sanzer of Brody z"l explains as follows:

Chazal enacted various rabbinic decrees to distance us from the possibility of transgressing Torah prohibitions. Some people might say, "I do not have to observe the rabbinic decrees, because I can be trusted not to transgress the related Torah prohibitions." Even if this is so, says Avtalyon, be careful with your words [i.e., the rabbinic laws], lest someone else learn from you. If another person transgresses a serious Torah law because he learned from you to be lax in the rabbinic ordinances, you will be a manslaughterer in the eyes of G-d (and a mansluaghterer's punishment is exile to a city of refuge).

(Peirush Rav Chaim Sanzer Mi'Brody)

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R' Shalom Mashash z"l
Two weeks ago, on Shabbat Hagadol, Yerushalayim's Sefardic Chief Rabbi and Av Bet Din (head) of the city's Rabbinical Courts, R' Shalom Mashash, passed away at the age of 90. R' Mashash served as Yerushalayim's Chief Rabbi for 25 years. Born in Morocco, he was a considered a Torah prodigy and was a leading student of Morocco's Chief Rabbi, R' Yehoshua Berdugo. R' Mashash was appointed Chief Rabbi of Casablanca in the year 1949, and later served as Chief Rabbi of Morocco.

R' Mashash wrote many books, edited many others, and left many others in manuscript form. He wrote his first significant scholarly work, Mizrach Shemesh at age 17, and his last work, a Torah commentary, V'Cham Ha'shemesh, was published a few days before his death.

In 1978, then-Israeli Chief Rabbi R' Ovadiah Yosef asked R' Mashash to come to Yerushalayim and become its chief Sefardic rabbinic authority. When he departed for Israel, R' Mashash was escorted to the airport by Morocco's King Hassan, who requested that the rabbi bless him one last time before his departure, and that it be his last act on Moroccan soil.

R' Mashash's son, R' David Mashash, is currently the Chief Rabbi of Paris.

R' Mashash was active right up to his last moments. A close student, R' Eliyahu Aberjil, said, "I was with him on Thursday night [before his passing] discussing with him a serious matter of Jewish Law that had come up; he studied it until late in the night and agreed to sign the ruling that I had issued. He was very exact in preserving Sefardic customs. He would work full days and nights to try to find a halachic solution for an agunah or a psul-chitun [people who are halachically forbidden from marrying], saying that he would do this for his sister, so why not for someone else?" (Based on the report of Arutz Sheva, April 13, 2003)

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The editors hope these brief 'snippets' will engender further study and discussion of Torah topics ("lehagdil Torah u'leha'adirah"), and your letters are appreciated. Web archives at Project Genesis start with 5758 (1997) and may be retrieved from the Hamaayan page. Text archives from 1990 through the present may be retrieved from http://www.acoast.com/~sehc/hamaayan/. Donations to HaMaayan are tax-deductible.
