
פרשת נשא

פרק ה פסוקים י-יב

י ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו איש אשר יתן לפהו לו יהיה: יא וינדבר יהוה אל משה לאמר: יב דבר אל בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם איש איש כיתשטה אשתו ומעלה בו מעל:

רש"י

איש איש כי תשטה אשתו. מה כתוב למעלה מן הענין, "ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו", אם אתה מעכב מתנות הפהו, חייב שתצטרך לבא אצלו להביא לו את הסוטה:

מושג

אם אתה מעכב מתנות הפהו, חייב שתצטרך לבא אצלו להביא לו את הסוטה.

Translation:

If one withholds the gifts due to the Kohen, you will most definitely need to come to him to bring (your wife) the Sotah.

Explanation:

If a man did not give the necessary gifts to the Kohanim, because he felt he did not require their services, he will be punished ¹מדה כנגד מדה. Not wishing to give to the Kohen displays his lack of appreciation for the role the Kohen plays, through his service in the המקדש, in repairing the 'marriage' between Hashem and his people. Hashem will thus bring about the circumstances that result in one being required to bring his unfaithful wife to the Kohen to undergo the process of repairing *his* marriage. This will help the husband understand how necessary the Kohen is to כלל ישראל.

Looking in the Pasuk:

This Musag is learned from the fact that the Torah placed the laws of the Sotah immediately following the laws of giving gifts to the Kohen². The סמיכות, close proximity of the two, teaches us that there is a connection, in this case a cause and effect, between them. Additionally, the fact that the Parsha of Sotah opens with the word איש - when it would seem more appropriate to begin with the word אשה for she is the focus of the laws, not he - teaches us that indeed his actions led to the unfolding of the Sotah episode.

Musag Learning Outcomes:

Know: Having to bring his wife to the Kohen to clarify her status, will help one fully appreciate the important role the Kohen plays in connecting us to Hashem.

Understand: Withholding gifts from the Kohen displays a lack of appreciation for his role of repairing our relationship with Hashem. Hashem will punish such a man by showing him how necessary the Kohen's role is, when he himself will require the Kohen's help to repair his own marriage.

Think: Not only must one look at the context of individual Pesukim, or even groups of Pesukim within a Parsha, but also at the proximity of one Parsha to another.

1 See note #2

2 See note #1

NOTES

1. Rashi's source is the Gemoroh in (סג.) ברכות which teaches:

למה נסמכה פרשת סוטה לפרשת תרומות ומעשרות? לומר לך כל שיש לו תרומות ומעשרות ואינו גותנן לכהן סוף נצרך לכהן על ידי אשתו, שנאמר ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו וסמיך ליה איש איש כי תשטה אשתו, וכתוב והביא האיש את אשתו וגו'. ולא עוד אלא סוף שנצרך להן, שנאמר ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו.

The Gemoroh comes to explain why the laws of Sotah immediately follow the laws of Maasros. The Gemoroh answers that the Torah is coming to inform us that there is a direct linkage between the two, for if one does not give the necessary tithes to the Kohen (קדושו לַו יהיו), meaning he has decided to keep for himself that which should have been given to the Kohen) this will result in his needing to bring his allegedly unfaithful wife to the Kohen to clarify her status.

Commentators of Rashi wonder why Rashi quoted this Gemoroh. After all, it is well known that Rashi usually does not bring סמוכות, lessons taught through the Torah's placing one Parsha near another. The ר"א³ answers that the reason Rashi does not quote these is that they are, by in large, not consistent with פשוטו של מקרא⁴, for having one Parsha follow another does not warrant a connection between the two. The only exceptions would occur when a Parsha seems out of place, where even פשוטו של מקרא forces us to search for a connection⁵. Here too, argues the ר"א, there does not seem to be any logical reason to have the פרשה of מעשרות followed by the פרשה of סוטה. Therefore, Rashi brought the explanation of סמיכות. The גור אריה disagrees and claims that Rashi here is actually not using the דרשה of the Gemoroh at all! He proves this by the fact that Rashi did not mention the words "למה נסמכה" as he does in every other instance in which he uses a סמיכות. Rather, Rashi is bothered by the fact that the Parsha of סוטה is introduced with the words איש, while it would seem more appropriate to begin with the words אשה, as the entire episode is focused on her actions, not on his! To this Rashi answers that his actions, not giving the appropriate מעשרות, have led to the story of the סוטה to unfold.

2. It is difficult to understand the cause and effect the Torah is referring to. Why should the sin of not giving מעשרות or any מתנות כהונה result in his wife becoming a Sotah?

One possible connection is that withholding מעשרות results in poverty (see Rashi on פסוק י' who comments: ומקדש אגדה "ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו". מי שמעכב מעשרותיו ואינו נותנו, "לו יהיו" המעשרות, סוף שאין ומקדש אגדה). Perhaps his wife will begin 'looking elsewhere' if she feels her husband is not providing for her family, or, as the כלי יקר explains, she will see his descent into poverty as a punishment for his infidelity and thereby justify her own infidelity.

The גור אריה provides a beautiful explanation. He explains that one who does not wish to bring gifts to the Kohen does so because he feels that the Kohen serves no beneficial role. "Why", the hard working farmer asks himself, "should I give the Kohen any part of my crops?" "What does he do for me?" Hashem

3 See שפתי חכמים

4 See Rashi in דברים כט:יב, where Rashi writes explicitly that סמוכות are not פשוטו של מקרא:

למען הקים אותך היום לו לעם. פל פך הוא גכנס לטרומ למען קים אותך לפניו לעם. ... עד כאן פרשתי לפי פשוטו של פרשה. ומקדש אגדה, למה נסמכה פרשת "אתם נצבים" לקללות, לפי ששמעו ישראל מאה קללות חסר שתיים...

5 A perfect illustration of the above can be found in the following: The Gemoroh in (כח.) mentions two מועד קטן (כח.) which teach identical lessons:

אמר רבי אמי: למה נסמכה מיתת מרים לפרשת פרה אדומה? לומר לך: מה פרה אדומה מכפרת אף מיתתן של צדיקים מכפרת. אמר רבי אלעזר: למה נסמכה מיתת אהרן לבגדי כהונה? מה בגדי כהונה מכפרין אף מיתתן של צדיקים מכפרת.

Rashi, by the פטירה of Miriam in כ' במדבר פרק כ', mentions the above Gemoroh, however he does not mention the Gemoroh regarding the פטירה of Aharon! Why only quote the Gemoroh in one place and not the other? The answer is that by the death of Aharon the סמיכות dealt with the Torah telling us that Moshe took the כהונה off of Aharon before his death, and placed them on his son, Elazar. According to פשוטו של מקרא this is logical and warrants no further explanation. Rashi, therefore, does not mention the Gemoroh. However, there seems to be no logical sequencing which would explain the placing of the Parsha of פרה אדומה near the death of Miriam. Therefore, Rashi quotes the Gemoroh which connects the two.

answers that you do need the Kohen. To this end, Hashem punishes him in that in the end he will need to bring his wife, the Sotah, to the Kohen to allow them so that they might remain married⁶. This explains why the Gemoroh uses the words לְסוֹף נִצְרָךְ לְכַהֵן, in the end he indeed *needs* the Kohen.

The גור אריה explains further that the connection between his sin and the Sotah is actually deeper. The purpose of a Kohen is to create peace between Hashem and His people. Through the service they provide in the בית המקדש and the עבודת הקרבנות they bring the people closer to Hashem. (In fact one could infer this from the name of the tribe, לוי, which comes from the shoresh ל.ו.ה, which means to connect⁷.) The relationship between the Jewish people and Hashem, concludes the גור אריה, is frequently compared to a marriage, the Kohanim thus constantly repairing the marriage of Hashem to כלל ישראל. Therefore, it is completely appropriate, מדה כנגד מדה, to punish one who sees no purpose for the Kohanim and does not appreciate the peace they bring between a frequently unfaithful כלל ישראל and Hashem, to have to come to the Kohen to save his own marriage and repair his relationship with his allegedly unfaithful wife.

3. Questions for further thought:

- a. Do you think the lack of הכרת הטוב by the one who withholds the מתנות כהונה may have contributed to his wife's actions?
- b. We have shown there to be a parallel between our relationship with Hashem and the relationship between man and wife. In what other ways might the two be related?

6 I do not believe that the intent of the Gemoroh is that Hashem will cause his wife to become unfaithful to teach him a lesson. Rather, that Hashem will bring about the circumstances that will obligate him to go to the Kohen in order to remain married. For example, one may see his wife talking to other men and not see it as a threat to his marriage. Such a man will not warn his wife against speaking to other men (קינוי) and even if she ends up being alone with this man (סתירה) it will not cause her to be forbidden to her husband and she will not need to come to the Kohen. However, if Hashem were to place feelings of jealousy in his heart (ועבר עליו רוח קנאה - אין אדם מקנא לאשתו) and he would warn her, this would set the laws of Sotah in motion and necessitate her coming to the Kohen. This רוח קנאה is what Hashem will punish him with in order to teach him that he truly does need the Kohen. (Of course if she is actually unfaithful, then in any case Hashem will create the circumstances necessary to punish her.)

7 The reason הפעם ילנה אישי אלי פיילדתי לו שלשה בנים על-כן קרא-שמו לוי is לאה. Interestingly, we find even then that לוי, who would in the future connect בני ישראל to הקב"ה, was the one who Leah hoped would connect her to her husband. And further, we find another context in which it was the לויים who created a connection between man and wife, when מרים, from שבט לוי, was the one who convinced her father to remarry. The wording of the Pesukim there is very telling: וילך איש מבית לוי ויקח את בת לוי.