



Parshat Va'etchanan

No 1079:

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STARTING POINT

Different Texts of the Ten Commandments Rabbi Amnon Bazak

One of the differences between the Ten Commandments in this week's Torah portion and the earlier text in the portion of Yitro is in the last of the commandments. In both cases, the prohibition is noted twice. In Yitro, it is written, "Do not covet your colleague's house, do not covet your colleague's wife, nor his slave, his maidservant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that your colleague has" [Shemot 20:14]. In this week's portion, the text is, "Do not covet your colleague's wife, and do not desire your colleague's house, his field, his slave, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or anything your colleague has" [Devarim 5:18]. There are two differences between the verses. First, while in the earlier version the prohibition is described twice by the words "Do not covet" – lo tachmod – in this week's portion, one time the prohibition is modified to "Do not desire" – lo tit'aveh. In addition, the sequence of the commandment is different in the two portions. In Yitro, the first item is the house, followed by the wife, while in this week's portion the first item is the wife, and the house follows this. What is the reason for these differences?

It seems that the two differences noted above are connected to each other. In Yitro, what is emphasized is a general prohibition, not to want something that belongs to somebody else. For this reason, the commandment begins with a general rule: "Do not covet your colleague's house." This is followed by specific details of what the "house" contains – his "wife, his slave, his maidservant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that your colleague has." In this week's portion, on the other hand, there are in essence two separate prohibitions. "Do not covet your colleague's wife" is a specific command, with the emphasis not on harming the colleague but rather on the harmful sexual relationship. The rest of the commandment is concerned with a desire for property that belongs to another person: "do not desire your colleague's house, his field, his slave, his maidservant, his ox, his donkey, or anything your colleague has." In this week's portion, the wife is not considered part of the "house" but is an independent entity.

שבת

תשס"ה

It may well be that the variations in this last command also have an effect on the way the Ten Commandments are categorized. There is a well-known disagreement among the sages and the commentators if the first phrase, "I am your G-d," should be considered a separate commandment or not. The Rambam lists this as a single commandment (Sefer Hamitzvot, Mitzva 1), while Rav Bahai Gaon does not count this as a commandment but rather as the basis for all the mitzvot. This difference of opinion may be related to the different approaches in the Torah portions. In Yitro, where the command "Do not covet" is a single prohibition, the two phrases "I am your G-d" and "Do not have other gods" can be counted as two separate commandments. In this week's portion, where it is implied that "Do not covet" and "Do not desire" may be separate commands, it might be necessary to combine the first two phrases into one commandment.

In the past we have noted that there is also a difference in the way Shabbat is treated in the two Torah portions. In Yitro, Shabbat is treated as relevant to the relationship between man and G-d ("For in six days G-d made the heaven and the earth" [Shemot 20:11]), but in Va'etchanan the emphasis is on the aspect of one man and another ("... so that your slave and maidservant will rest, as you do" [Devarim 5:14]). Thus, while in Yitro there are an equal number of mitzvot between man and man and between man and G-d (five each), in this week's portion, taking into account the different approach to Shabbat and dividing "Do not covet" into two prohibitions, there are less mitzvot related directly to G-d, with a majority in the category between man and man. Before the nation enters Eretz Yisrael, Moshe presents a picture of the Ten Commandments that puts a great emphasis on the contact between one man and another.

This issue of Shabbat B'Shabbato is dedicated:

In memory of Morris Novetsky ע"ה upon the completion of the שלושים

& In honor of the wedding of his granddaughter Adina Novetsky to David Farbman of Lawrence, NY

SERMON BY A GUEST

"And I Prayed to G-d at That Time" - by Mrs. Sarah Meshoreir

Moshe prayed 515 prayers (the numerical value of the word "va'etchanan") in an attempt to cancel the decree against him and to be able to enter Eretz Yisrael. According to the Sifri, he was very upset that Bnei Yisrael did not join him to pray on his behalf. "At the time of the Golden Calf I stood up and prayed for them, and you listened to my prayer and forgave them. I would have thought that they would join me in prayer, but they did not pray for me. But by logical inference it is clear that this would have helped – if the prayer of an individual about a group is answered, so much more so would a prayer by a group about an individual be answered."

But in spite of his disappointment, Moshe continues to give preference to the good of the nation over his own good, and he guards them from any harm. According to the Midrash, in response to his prayer, "Let me cross over and see the good land" [Devarim 3:25], the Almighty replied: "I made two decrees, one about the nation, 'Let me be and I will destroy them' [9:14], and the other about you, 'You will not cross this Jordan' [3:27]. You asked me to cancel the decree about the nation, and I answered, 'I have forgiven them, as you requested' [Bamidbar 14:20]. Do you want to hold the rope by both ends? If you want the request 'Let me cross over,' cancel the request 'Forgive them' [14:19], and I will destroy the nation. But if you want to maintain the request 'Forgive them' cancel the demand, 'Let me cross over.' When Moshe heard this, he said, Master of the Universe, let Moshe and a hundred others like him die, but do not harm the fingernail of a single person in Yisrael."

Why did Moshe make such a great effort to enter the land? "Rabbi Simlai taught: Why did Moshe have such a strong desire to enter Eretz Yisrael, did he need to eat from its fruit or enjoy its bounty? This is what Moshe said: I commanded Bnei Yisrael to do many mitzvot that can only be observed in the land, let me enter so that I can observe all the mitzvot. The Almighty asked him, is what you want to receive the credit for doing the mitzvot? I give you credit as if you had performed them all." Moshe asks to leave the world not only complete in his personal traits but having performed all possible mitzvot as well.

The Yalkut gives another reason why Moshe made such a great effort to enter the land. Moshe knew that he would not be allowed to enter, but he continued praying in order to show the people how important and precious the land was to him. He believed that only in this way would the

people learn to love the land and understand how valuable it is, so that they would not sin and lose the rights to the land, G-d forbid.

We must keep in mind that the key to maintaining our possession of the land is the performance of the mitzvot. In our generation, as in that of Moshe, we must teach and demonstrate to our people the value and the importance of the holy land, the land of our forefathers, for which we waited and prayed for two thousand years. Let us all pray that we will soon be privileged to have full possession of the land in the near future, and that the Almighty will return His Shechina as in the beginning. As we say in our prayers three times every day, "Let our eyes see your return to Zion, with mercy."

TORAH, SOCIETY, AND GOVERNMENT

Do What is Righteous and Good - by Rabbi Uri Dasberg

A man brings a claim in court against somebody else. Evidently, he is sure that he is right (otherwise, he would not go to the expense and trouble of going to court). But then the judges suggest and even insist on trying to make a compromise. And he begins to wonder, is this, the reason that I went to court? I could have made a compromise without any outside help, or at the very most with the aid of a friend. What benefit did I get from turning to the judges?

The judges, from their point of view, were simply observing the mitzva to make a compromise, as is written, "Judge in your gates with truth, justice, and peace" [Zecharia 8:16] (see Sanhedrin 6b, Shulchan Aruch Chosen Mishpat 12). One may well ask why the Torah recommended and even insisted to do something, which is the complete opposite of the original intention of the man who went to court. In addition, a compromise cannot really be considered "the truth," how can Zecharia describe it as truth in the above verse?

Some rabbis feel that when the judges propose a compromise they are not acting as a court. For this reason, a single judge can arbitrate a compromise, and this can even involve matters, which are beyond the scope of courts of today, such as robbery and causing physical harm. In this case, the court is fulfilling the same role as a friend of both sides who offers to help them reach a compromise, while the two sides act in the capacity of judges in their own case ("a man can render a judgment for himself" [Bava Kama 27b]). The court supervises from the sidelines, acting in the same way as an appeals court, to make sure that the compromise that is reached is based on principles of justice and peace.

Another possible approach is that real "truth" is not necessarily what a person believes he should achieve but rather whatever he can obtain through proper and just methods. This can be compared to evaluating the worth of an object. A person may feel that he has an object that is priceless, but its true value is its market price, that is, whatever others are willing to pay for it. When a person comes to court he is convinced that he has a perfect case, but he may well be influenced by his own desires. Only a court can make a true estimate of how much a person can really obtain, and the best way to achieve this goal is often through a compromise.

One other point can be made: Truth is not necessarily what a person himself feels. While the money involved belongs entirely to you (or you think it does), the rest of the world also has a stake in the matter (the entire world can be viewed as a "commune"). And if the judgment does not result in both sides being at peace with each other, the "world" still has a claim against both sides, and this leads to the need for a compromise. In this way, the outside world is also involved in the case before the court.

Reference: Rabbi Dr. A. Warhaftig, Rabbi D. Miller, "Techumin," volume 5

A LESSON FOR THE CHILDREN

Praying in a Ruin - by Rabbi Yikhat Rozen, Merkaz Neria, Kiryat Malachi

Rabbi Yossi was a prominent and wise man that lived a few years after the Temple was destroyed.

One day Rabbi Yossi found it necessary to go on a journey. He saw that the time for prayer had arrived, and he did not want to be disturbed. He knew that if he would stand at the side of the road passersby might disturb him, so he looked for a quiet place near the road. He found an old ruin that was close by. The walls looked old and black, the ceiling looked like it might fall, the door was torn off its hinges, and the inside had a frightening dim appearance.

But all of this did not stop Rabbi Yossi. He went into the ruin and spent a long time praying to the Almighty. When he finished, he wanted to leave and continue on his way, but at the entrance he was startled to see somebody waiting for him. Rabbi Yossi took a good look and immediately realized that this could only be the Prophet Eliyahu.

"My greetings to you, Rabbi," Eliyahu began. And Rabbi Yossi replied with trembling in his voice, "My greetings to

you, my rabbi and my teacher." Eliyahu said to him, "I have been standing here and guarding you for a long time, Rabbi Yossi. Why did you come into this ruined building?" Rabbi Yossi replied, "I wanted to pray in quiet." But Eliyahu told him, "That is not good. It is dangerous to enter this type of ruin. However, if you did enter and stay for a while anyway, please tell me if you heard any noise in the ruin."

"Indeed I did hear a sound, my teacher. When I entered I began to hear a quiet and mysterious voice, deep and quiet, a voice from heaven that pierced straight into my heart. I understood that I was hearing the sound of the Divine Shechina, G-d's voice, hiding as it were in this ruin. The voice became stronger and stronger, all the while weeping and full of yearning. This is what it said: 'Woe to the children who caused their father to be angry. Woe to the children who have been sent to exile, away from their father's table. Woe to Yisrael, who made me angry due to their sins and caused me to vent my anger on them. Woe to Yisrael, for their holy Temple has been destroyed, and whose land was consumed, and who were exiled from their land. Woe to the father who was forced to do all of this. Woe to the father who destroyed His own house and expelled His sons and drove them from their land.'"

"You heard very well," Eliyahu told the rabbi. "You should know that this voice which you were privileged to hear has been echoing through the world for many years. And it was not heard once, or for just one hour, one day, or one week. Ever since the Temple was destroyed, every day and every hour, the Shechina weeps about its children, who are missing, and the Almighty is sorry for the destruction and the loss, and yearns for redemption. From the time that Bnei Yisrael went into exile they did not go alone, for G-d went into exile with them. Every time Yisrael praise G-d in their prayers and show G-d that they have not lost hope, G-d nods his head in agreement, and says, 'Why did I destroy my house and my land? Why did I send my people into exile? How good it will be when everything returns to the way it was, when mankind will improve their ways, and when Yisrael will return in full to their land and to the Temple.'"

When Eliyahu finished what he had to say, he left.

We also hope and pray that the end will come to the suffering of the Shechina and Bnei Yisrael. We wait with hope, and we know that during every one of our troubles G-d is with us, and we are certain that the end of our suffering will come. Even though it is delayed, we will wait for it every day, anticipating its arrival.

(Source: Talmud, Berachot 3a)

THE WAYS OF THE FATHERS (Pirkei Avot)

Chapter 4 - by Rabbi Yehuda Shaviv

In Mishnayot 2 and 3, Ben Azzai teaches us his approach with respect to the mitzvot, mankind, and everything else. In every case, the theme of his words is that there is a unique trait of every mitzva, every person, and every object in the world. However, the practical conclusions are worded differently in each case. With respect to mitzvot, in Mishna 2, the statement is a positive one: "You should run towards a simple mitzva, just like a serious one." However, the conclusions in Mishna 3 are given in a negative way: "Do not disparage any man and do not stay away from any object." (Perhaps because of this difference, the words of Ben Azzai were separated into two Mishnayot.)

What can cause a person to disparage somebody else? The answer is that he may see people as being different from each other, which implies that every person is at a specific level, so that some people are at a relatively high degree while others are at a low degree. Those who are at a high level might put those at a low level to shame. Ben Azzai therefore teaches us that this entire structure of levels is temporary and has no permanent basis. This follows from the fact that every single person has a unique time that belongs exclusively to him, when he can demonstrate his unique traits and there is nobody else who is in control at that time. However, while it is true that everybody is different from everybody else, all the people are alike in one thing, specifically in the fact that each and every one has a certain hour when he will be able to shine out. Thus, this statement also implies something about the uniqueness of every time – not all times are the same.

With respect to physical objects, Ben Azzai does not discuss disparagement but rather an attempt to keep a distance. Evidently it is only human beings that can be subjected to shame but not ideas or physical objects. It is most likely that objects cannot be seen as unique, since everything appears to be standard and similar. This implies that one might stay away from an object if it is felt to be superfluous. If there are too many similar objects, perhaps some of them can be discarded. Therefore, Ben Azzai teaches us, "There is no object that does not have its proper place."

In summary, we have a unique status in terms of a human being, time, and place. This corresponds to what Rabbi Tzadok Hakohen wrote: "Everything is different in terms of the world, the annual cycle, and the soul ('olam, shana, nefesh'), as is well known from the Sefer Yetzirah. With respect to souls, it is an accepted fact that no individual

soul is identical to any other, as is written; nobody's approach is the same as that of anybody else (Berachot 58a). It can be assumed that this is true of the world, no place is exactly the same as any other... Similarly, during the year, no single moment is the same as any other... At any moment, a unique event takes place in the world, and every person takes advantage of it as he wishes..." [Ressissei Laila 39].

LAND OF MY BIRTH

The First to Come: Rabbi Gershon from Kotov - by Zev Wallack

What is usually called the "First Aliyah" is a movement that began in 5642 (1882) and continued until 5663 (1903). This was indeed the first time that tens of thousands of immigrants arrived, and they established twenty-three settlements, brought a new spirit into the cities, rejuvenated the Hebrew language, and laid the foundation of the redemption of Bnei Yisrael in the land.

However, if we want to be accurate from the chronological point of view, the people who really arrived in the land first were disciples of the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chassidic movement. They began to come to the land slowly, bit by bit, 140 years earlier. The first one to come was Rabbi Gershon from Kotov, a man of outstanding capabilities in Torah, halacha, and Kaballa. The two most prominent rabbis of the time, Rabbi Yechezkel Landau and Rabbi Yehonatan Eibshitz, had respect for Rabbi Gershon. He was the brother-in-law of the Baal Shem Tov (his sister was married to the Baal Shem Tov) and he was very close to him. Rabbi Gershon moved to Eretz Yisrael, landing in the port of Acco in the summer of 5507 (1747). The first thing he did was to pray in the synagogue within the walls of the city, but since halachically the site was outside the boundaries of Eretz Yisrael he took the trouble to pray in a second synagogue outside the walls. This second area was within the boundaries of the land.

When he arrived in Jerusalem, he expected to find the city, which was in mourning for its children, completely destroyed and desolate. But instead he saw the mosques on the Temple Mount and outside the Mount in all their glory, in addition to churches and monasteries. He wrote the following to the Baal Shem Tov:

"When I arrived in the holy city of Jerusalem and saw how built up it is, I fell on my face and wept. I said, Jerusalem, you have been compared to a widow, how could you dress in such splendid clothing while you are a widow? Would that I had seen you at the time of your desolation... And I continued weeping and said: This is

what is written, 'When I see every city built up on its foundations' – this refers to the Jerusalem below – 'and the city of G-d put to the lowest possible shame' – this is the Jerusalem up above (from the Selichot of Ne'ila).

Perhaps this explains why Rabbi Gershon preferred to live in Chevron, even though this city had only a small Sephardic community. He was welcomed into the community, for he had already become famous. But living in Chevron was not easy for him. He felt loneliness, missing his oldest sons, who had stayed behind in the exile, and also missing his own community. He wrote as follows:

"I sit here alone, trapped in my Beit Midrash... with my small son. And nobody comes or goes. I have not found a companion, in spite of the fact that the wise men... love me very much and treat me with great respect... Even so, our customs are different and our language is not the same... And I am upset about my sons, whom I have left as sheep without a shepherd."

In the meanwhile, the Ashkenazic community in Jerusalem begged him to come live in the holy city, in order to serve as their rabbi and leader. He refused their offer out of his feeling of modesty.

"I do not want these honors, why should I show pride in Jerusalem... All my life, I have run away from honors, there can be no doubt that this offer is an influence of the evil inclination, who wants to capture me in the traps of pride within Jerusalem."

The people of the city, both Ashkenzi and Sephardi, continued to press Rabbi Gershon and to make offers, until he agreed to lead them. But when he was about to write the letter accepting their terms, he found that he was not capable of writing it. In the end, he remained in Chevron in spite of all the difficulties he had. He felt that this was due to a Divine influence, since in this way he was saved from the terrible plague in Jerusalem.

"I saw the great miracle that the Almighty did for me... Within the city (Jerusalem) more than two hundred souls passed away within a period of two months... But here (in Chevron) there was no sickness. Not even a single fingernail was harmed."

Rabbi Gershon remained in Chevron for six years, and then he finally did move to Jerusalem, where he lived another eight years. After the Six Day War, Mr. S. Gefner found a grave on the Mount of Olives that was identified as that of Rabbi Gershon.

The arrival of Rabbi Gershon of Kotov was the start of a chain of Olim from among the Chassidic sector, and they were followed by the Perushim, who were opposed to the

Chassidim. Only later on did the "First Aliyah" start. This movement in fact brought a greater number and had a greater effect than the Chassidim.

(Source: Chaya Steiman-Katz, "The Beginning of the Aliya of the Chassidim," and others)

THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

Dedication for the Community of Yisrael - by the Department of Education, World Mizrahi

The religious Zionist center, "Kelal Yisrael," was established in Pardes Channa as an initiative by Rabbi Tzemach Mori, for the benefit of the nation of Yisrael. The institution is a source of enrichment to the Torah life in the town.

About 14 years ago the center began with a "Friday Kollel" where local rabbis lead weekly study in the Torah portion and in halacha. There are about 30 regular participants of various ages. For the last five years, the center has also operated a daily afternoon program for children, providing help in preparing homework, in addition to projects on the subjects of the holidays and the mitzvot. This activity is led by a Sheirut Leumi volunteer with the help of volunteers from the nearby Yeshivat Bnei Akiva in Kefar Haroeh. The center also sponsors an "Oneg Shabbat" gathering for children from religious and traditional homes.

The center also organizes Torah lessons in Pardes Channa for people and families who are interested in learning more about Judaism. This activity has resulted in the opening of a yeshiva for people who have returned to Judaism, which has been in operation for about two years. This is a unique and diverse institution that benefits the Beit Midrash and the entire neighborhood. The students, all local inhabitants, are between the ages of 20 and 40. About fifty people study presently in the yeshiva while at the same time continuing their other outside pursuits with a renewed spirit.

More details are available by phone: Rabbi Tzemach Mori, 052-5665706, or Asher, 050-7385527.

THE CHAIN OF HALACHA

Kiddush at the Place Where One Eats - by Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Rimon, Rabbi of Southern Alon Shevut and a teacher in Yeshivat Har Etzion

According to the Talmud, Kiddush can be recited in the synagogue only for guests who eat there, since the Kiddush should be said at the place of the meal (Pesachim 100b-101a). Why must the Kiddush be recited at the place where one eats? The Rashbam explains, "The

place where you declare that it is Shabbat is where you should have the joy." That is, the significance of the Kiddush is linked to the joy of the meal. Thus, if somebody says the Kiddush for other people, each one must eat something at his place. Anybody who eats has fulfilled the obligation of Kiddush, but those who do not eat have not fulfilled the obligation. (Pri Megadim 273":1).

What is the "Place of the Meal?"

The Talmud defines the "place of the meal" (Pesachim 101a), but the commentators do not agree on the exact text. The Shulchan Aruch rules that it is permitted to move between Kiddush and the meal from one corner of a room to another (273:1). The Magen Avraham writes that it is best to take into account the stringent rulings and to eat in exactly the same place where Kiddush was recited. The Mishna Berura agrees with this: "It is best not to move away from the place of the Kiddush, since there are some who are stringent about moving even from one corner of a room to another" [273:3]. In summary, one should try to eat exactly where he recited the Kiddush, but after the fact it is permissible to move from one side of a room to another. This approach is especially relevant when a festive meal is being held. When Kiddush is recited in a large hall, people often hear it recited in one place and then move somewhere else in the hall for the meal. In line with the above discussion, it is best to at least eat some cake at the place where one heard Kiddush and only then move on.

We should note that there are some possible reasons for being lenient if one wants to hear Kiddush in one place and eat somewhere else:

One who can see the place of Kiddush: According to the Tur, quoting Rav Sar Shalom, it is possible to eat at any place where the site that Kiddush was recited is visible. "Rav Sar Shalom wrote, as long as the place can be seen it is permitted, even looking from a house into a courtyard. But otherwise, it is prohibited." The Shulchan Aruch quotes this opinion under the heading, "others say," and the Mishna Berura writes that this opinion can be followed if there is some pressing problem.

Making a condition in advance: The ROSH writes that if one declares in advance that he will move he can even go from one room to another (Pesachim 100b). The RAN and the Rashba disagree, and they feel that a prior condition does not help. However, the Shulchan Aruch agrees with the ROSH. In Be'eir Halacha, it is written that it is best not to accept this approach, but that this reasoning can be used together with another argument to be lenient (for example, one who makes a prior condition and can also see the place of Kiddush from his table).

Leaving and then returning to the same place: The Be'eir Halacha quotes a disagreement with respect to a person who recites Kiddush, goes away, and then returns to the same place. He rules that in such a case the person is not required to recite Kiddush again. The Aruch Hashulchan adds that everybody agrees that leaving for a short time is permitted, even to another room or to the street outside.

SUMMARY: There are four cases when it is best to be stringent, but if two of these circumstances occur together one can be lenient: Moving from one corner to another in the same room; when the place of Kiddush can be seen; making a prior condition; and returning to the same place after moving away.

Note that this entire discussion is relevant only for a person who recited Kiddush but did not begin to eat anything. One who has eaten at least a "kazayit" after Kiddush can move wherever he wants (see Shulchan Aruch 178 with respect to the need for a new blessing because of the change of place).



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