

Parshas Acharei

This week's parsha begins "after the death of the sons of Ahron". The first Rashi explains through a parable why the specific words were chosen by Hashem. Which is that if a doctor prescribes a prohibitive eating and sleeping regimen, then the patient goes to a second doctor who proscribes the same, except adds, because so and so died not listening. The second doctor's orders are far more impactful to the patient. So too Rashi explains that adding the result of Nadav and Avihu (Ahron's sons) it is a far more impactful message.

But Rashi- as the Rebbe always explains, is answering a question. In this case, I would venture (because I am specifically not quoting a specific Sichah here) that Rashi is answering the question as to why the death of the sons is repeated here (at the end of the first posuk). The posuk already says "Acharei Mos" after death, then the posuk concludes..." when they died" ...

Furthermore, Ohr Hachaim on the death of the sons, was that they were completely righteous, and they got a "kiss of death", and were consumed by G-dliness. So, Rashi's explanation can also be understood as a deeper explanation into the actions of Nadav and Avihu, which may not be replicable behavior. Their holiness was theirs, but our actions may not be aspirational to that, rather it must be practical, that is following the specific adages and laws of the Rabbonim (as the Mishna says "al tikre halichos elah halachos", and specifically to serve Hashem, must be bound by the 13 principals of Rabbi Yishmael, in how to interpret Halacha etc.)

Posuk 3 begins with "bizos", which is numerically valued at 410- as Rashi explains- a reference to the time span of the existence of the first Beis Hamikdash. Bizos is also used (as referenced in Tehillim 27 "Bizos Ani Boteach" see Rashi there) that Hashem is the stronghold of our lives. Bizos references actual practical examples of whatever is being pointed out.

The Haftora for Acharei (on a regular Shabbos, not when it is Shabbos Hagadol, Rosh Chodesh, tied to the next week posuk- Kedoshim) is read from Amos. Although Rama in Halacha is adamant about reading Amos for Acharei as the correct Haftora (even when they are joined it seems, and it is an exception to the rule, because in joined parshas we tend to read the Haftora of the second parsha).

Amos from the 12 prophets thematically spoke about the disparity in the Jews based on the stark differences between the wealthy and the poor. When Amos references "that day" he is talking about redemption. In the Haftora from our parsha- Amos references (at the beginning of Chapter 9 which we don't read) a vision against the Beis Hamikdash. We begin reading from posuk 7-15, where Amos states that although Hashem brought the Jews from Egypt- they slowly distanced themselves from Hashem and became like foreigners. But- Amos concludes- not to despair that the future will be bountiful (in the time of Mashiach). It would seem redundant for Amos to talk about prosperity when historically- during his time bountifulness caused the Jews to distance themselves from each other and Hashem- for which he prophesied.

The connection to the parsha is perhaps- after reading about the “klois nefesh” of Nadav and Avihu- we conclude that we cannot connect to Hashem on a high plane. But we cannot despair. We need to know that just as all the prophecies historically took place then it is a sure thing that the prophecies of mashiach are real. And Amos’ specific reference to the bountiful wine is a counteraction to the fact that we may despair that just as wine brought on the fate of Nadav and Avihu, perhaps we must abstain- and this is not the case, rather we must use the tools given to us properly and serve Hashem in our capacity- using Halacha etc.

Also, because the word Bizos according to how Rashi explains- references the Beis Hamikdash, and the remainder of the Parsha talks about the Korbanos, which we don’t have today- we must not despair, for Hashem will bring it back. The prophecies are true, and real- as historically everything prophesied about took place (save for the coming of Mashiach). If they’re real, then bringing Mashiach and Mashiach coming is an attainable goal. This makes us the holiest generation since creation. As we are the generation that can and will welcome Mashiach. This means we strive to do what’s right even when we are tired. It’s the sum of the little things we do day to day. It’s not what we haven’t done which makes us down for thinking it’s never good enough. Rather it is the potential of what we can and will do. Some days more some days less. With this- Mashiach will come.

Good Shabboss