

Parshas Emor

This week's Parsha, Emor, the narrative seems to continue what we learned in Kedoshim. In Kedoshim, the theme was how all Jews have a path to holiness and what we need to do to stay on the path, which continues as the theme for Emor and the Kohanim.

The first Rashi on the Parsha on the words "emor and v'amarta" (i.e., Rashi answering the question of why there are two phrases of "telling." Rashi explains that this is to teach us about the importance of educating our children. The Rebbe's additional point on the words of Rashi is that a teacher is illuminated by their student.

The Rebbe's teachings always point out that not everything is what it seems on a spiritual level. For example, optically, a teacher is "greater than" their student, as they are the "Mashpia-giver," and the student is the "mekabel -receiver." The relationship between a giver and recipient is that the giver has something the receiver needs and is, therefore, in the "higher" position. But truthfully, the greatest teacher is only as great as the students they teach. Therefore, the students become the catalyst for realizing the teacher's greatness and bringing the teacher "up," so to speak and realize their full potential. The relationship between a giver and receiver, therefore, is cyclical. At one moment, the greatness of the teacher is revealed, but on the other hand, the greatness of the student is revealed by the teacher who unlocked the student's potential.

With all the warnings and words on what not to do, we can view ourselves as on the

'lower' end of the cycle of our relationship between us and Hashem. But the Torah is very caring to immediately mention the laws and recounting of our calendar, which is speckled with holy days. The obvious connection is to note that not all sacrifices brought are for sins, or otherwise, there is a reminder that there are happy offerings for the holidays.

The fact that nearly every month has some reconnection with Hashem is the beacon of hope that we can utilize to recharge our faith on a perpetual basis. The holy days are in the calendar throughout the year like the wells of our forefathers were for the Jews on their exodus from Egypt, as beacons of hope.

The holidays remind us that Hashem is always close, and Hashem loves us and derives great pleasure from our celebrating the holidays. The second days, especially days like Simchas Torah and Shemini Atzeres, are a reminder that Hashem doesn't want to let us go; he wants us to have one more moment to connect with him. The teacher-student metaphor from above is the same as our relationship with Hashem. We are the receivers, but as recipients, we bring out the full potential of Hashem's glory on this earth; as we know in Chassidus, the Rabbeim have told us, "Ein Melech B'Lo Am" (there is no king without a nation). We are the key to realizing Hashem's glory in this world for that glory to realize its full potential. This is the cycle of our relationship with Hashem and reflects how each of us truly matters on a cosmic level.

Just as the Parsha begins with the lessons of the importance of education as a method to make the teacher shine, so to our Parsha,

the general theme of all the Parsheos in Vayikra, is the method by which we make Hashem shine through our Avoda. Remember last week, as it says, Kedoshim Tihyu (you should be holy) because I am holy. The common denominator is the holiness that is inherent in both Hashem and us Jews. So to our connection to Hashem to be the mekabel, we have the power to reveal the light of Hashem-the Mashpia, just as Rashi says the teacher will shine on the student's work.

Good Shabbos.