

“THE GUILT WE SHARE”

There are very few stories in Sefer VaYikra, but our parasha, Emor, has one of them.

We read, (24:10) “The son of an Israelite woman went out---and he was the son of an Egyptian man—among the Children of Israel; they fought in the camp, the son of the Israeli woman and an Israelite man The son of the Israelite woman pronounced the Name and blasphemed—so they brought him to Moshe; the name of his mother was Shelomit, daughter of Divri,.

Not much of a story, but a story it is. The classical meforashim on Torah deal primarily with the juxtaposition of the story with the Torah contents either preceding or following the story. The Midrash gives a historical reason for the connection of this incident to the previous passage. R’Hirsch, among others offers a philosophical reason for the connection. The long series of laws dealing with the Mishkan and Korbanot, was preceded by parashat Mishpatim, which deals with relationships among people. So, too, after the passage of the Lechem HaPanim, the Show-Bread, VaYikra deals mainly with such relationships. The narrative of the blasphemer-the bridge between the Mikdash laws and the social laws- symbolizes this need for purity.

I would like to delve into the essence of the story and its contents and how it relates to us, today. Rabbi Kenneth Brander touched upon this in one of his drashot. What do we know about this young man, the blasphemer, other than the fact the he was Jewish, he had a Jewish mother, name Shelomit. His father on the other hand was not Jewish, he was an Egyptian. How did his parents get together?; was it by force or was it mutual consent? We don’t know! What we do know is that he was brought up in a Jewish environment and neighborhood and quite understandably, he had a difficult childhood experience. Mothers would say to their children, “Don’t play with him, don’t go to his house, and don’t bring him to our house, for he is different than you, he is not one of “us”, his father is not Jewish.

This young boy, would then roam the streets and wander from place to place,. He was without a friend, without any social interaction, without anyone showing any compassion to his sorrowful life. The boy is depressed, his cries of anguish go unheard, unto deaf ears. Out of sheer desperation, he curses Gd, feeling there is nothing else he can do. The end of story we know.

Perhaps, we are all guilty to the tragic outcome of this boy or boys like him. In last weeks’ parasha we read “Lo Ta’amod Al Dam Rei’acha, Ani HaSshem” (19:16)-“Do not stand aside while your fellows blood is shed- I am HaShem”. Meaning, I know who could have helped this unfortunate person and who decided to ignore his pleas . I know who was silent during the Holocaust and who did raise a voice of protest and I know who at this time is not mobilizing and saying Tehillim for our families in S’derot and the south while they are being hit with missiles

from Gaza and must live in shelters every day- I know, for- Ani HaShem. AND THE GUILTY ONES ARE ALSO IN VIOLATION OF "LIFNEI IVEIR LO TITEIN MICHSHAL". THEY CAUSED THE YOUNG BOY TO CURSE. JUST AS A PARENT WHO STRIKES HIS TEEN-AGED SON, AND THE SON STRIKES BACK AT THE FATHER- THE YOUNG BOY IS GUILTY OF "STRIKING A PARENT", BUT THE PARENT IS IN VIOLATION OF, LIFNEI IVEIR, FOR HE CAUSED THE CHILD TO STRIKE..

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM YERUSHALAYIM, RABBI AHARON ZIEGLER

QUESTIONS ON PARASHAT EMOR:

- 1-In the first passuk we find the expression- "EMOR EL HAKOHANIM" and then "V'amarta Aleihem" Say to the Kohanim" and then "tell them". What is the message of this redundancy?
- 2- A Kohen cannot marry certain Jewish women. Which women is he forbidden to marry?
- 3- After an animal is born, how long must we wait until it is ready to be brought as a Korban?
- 4- What is the law of "Oto V'et B'no"?
- 5-What holiday is referred to on the 14th day of Nissan (23;5)?
- 6- How do our Sages interpret the Passuk, (23:15) You shall count for yourselves-from the day after Shabbat—seven weeks..."?
- 7-How do our Sages interpret to Passuk (23:32) "You shall afflict yourselves on the 9th of the month {Tishrei] in the evening"- Isn't Yom Kippur on the 10th of the month?
- 8-How do our Sages interpret the passuk [23:40] –"You shall take for yourselves on the first day, the fruit of a citron tree (Pri Etz Hadar

CONFERENCE CALL ON TUESDAY & THURSDAY'S, 8AM IN USA, 3PM IN ISRAEL

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