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Ki Sisa

DELVING DEEPER

Just One Shabbos?

...However, observe My Sabbaths, for it is a sign between Me and your descendants... Observe the Sabbath, for it is sacred to you; those who defile it must be put to death... (31:13-14)

IF YOU TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THESE TWO VERSES, with an eye for grammar, you'll notice an inconsistency in each. The first is obvious, even in translation: "Sabbaths" is plural, while "it is a sign" is singular. The second is similar, but it requires some knowledge of Hebrew: *M'chal'eha*, "those who defile it," is plural; the next two words, *mös yumas*, are in the singular—"he must be put to death." What are we to make of this—of these?

Ramban addresses the first verse, almost in passing, by explaining that there are many Sabbaths in a year. Perhaps he means that "it" refers to the observance of *every* Shabbos, and there are many. Ramban also offers a kabbalistic explanation; to quote Abarbanel, "I didn't merit to understand it."

ALTER RAUBVOGEL



Abarbanel offers his own resolution:

Shabbos, the seventh day of the week, reminds us of Hashem's rest after the Six Days of Creation. However, the "Sabbath of Creation," which comes after six days of material production, is a metaphor for another Shabbos: the World to Come, which our Sages referred to as "The Great Sabbath"—a time when the soul will become forever free, after a lifetime of physical toil (and, one hopes, religious growth).

When we keep the weekly Sabbath, we also demonstrate our belief in the ultimate, eternal Day of Rest; as the Torah puts it, we "observe Hashem's Sabbaths" (plural)—that is, we remind ourselves of both the six-day Creation and the Afterlife—by safeguarding the weekly day of rest as *a sign* (singular) of our faith.

But we still need to explain the inconsistency we found in the second verse. For that we'll turn to *HaK'sav v'haKabbalah*, who answers our questions about both verses

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TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On **16 Adar II, 5660 (1900)**, the Republican and Democratic parties of Cincinnati convened to nominate their choices to run for Mayor, and both parties nominated Jews. The Democrats selected Alfred M. Cohen, already an Ohio State Senator, while the Republicans chose Col. Julius Fleischmann—a son of Charles Fleischmann, who had, together with his brother Max and James Gaff, started Gaff, Fleischmann & Co., the famous yeast company. This marked the first time two Jews would run against each other to hold an elected office. Fleischmann would win and become Cincinnati's first Jewish mayor. To date, eight Jews have held the office of Mayor of Cincinnati, more than in any other city in the nation. New York City, even with its large Jewish population, would not have a Jewish mayor until 33 years later. A 1904 survey lists fifty Jews serving in some form of public office in Cincinnati, including the County Clerk, a State Senator, and the Police Commissioner.

THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER
FROM *ME'AH SHE'ARIM*
BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

Reuven was at odds with Shimon.. He decided to incite Shimon by sending him a beautiful *mishlo'ach manos*, placing a toy gun inside, and writing very sharp words on it. Reuven sent his daughter to deliver the *mishlo'ach manos*. On the way, she saw the gun inside and took it for herself, and delivered the now-innocent package.

An astonished Shimon told his family that, apparently, Reuven wanted to make up and restore the peace. Shimon in turn sent Reuven an even more fabulous *mishlo'ach manos*, and (thanks to this stroke of Divine Providence) the two of them were conciliated. Reuven was surprised by the beautiful *mishlo'ach manos* he received from Shimon, until he found out what his daughter had done.

Q Now Reuven wonders: Did he fulfill the mitzvah by sending *mishlo'ach manos* to Shimon—or perhaps not, since his intent was to anger him?

A There are two reasons for giving *mishlo'ach manos*:

- So everyone will have enough food for the Purim meal. (*Trumas haDeshen* 111)
- To increase peace and friendship. (*Manos haLevi*, Esther 9:19)

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A PARASHA Q & U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

What day is like Purim, and where is it found in our Torah portion?

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer! 

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

CONTINUED

Clearly, if the *mishlo'ach manos* would have reached Shimon with the gun inside, Reuven wouldn't have fulfilled any of these goals. Shimon would not have enjoyed the food, since the gun had been sent with it, and there would have been no increase in friendship or peace.

Mishp'ei Yesharim (*Shu"t* 120) questions what the law would be if Avraham were to send *mishlo'ach manos* to Yitzchak via an agent, and the messenger were to eat it. If, when Avraham found out about it, he were to completely forgive the messenger, would Avraham have fulfilled the mitzvah by giving the messenger food?

But *Gilyonei haShas* (Megillah 7a) asks how it would be possible to fulfill the mitzvah that way. The messenger is a thief—he stole the portion that was meant for Yitzchok!

We can infer that if there had been no theft, *Gilyonei haShas* would agree that Avraham's obligation would have been fulfilled, even though the package hadn't been delivered as intended. In our case, too, Reuven's *mishlo'ach manos* reached Shimon in a "kosher" way (i.e. through no wrongdoing), and we will posit that his obligation is fulfilled.

Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky, *shlit'a* quotes a similar story from the Talmud Yerushalmi (Eiruvin 7:8). Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says that the enactment of *eruvei chatzeiros* (a process by which people can connect courtyards and then carry things between them on Shabbos) was done to promote peace. A woman, who had animosity for a neighbor in an adjoining courtyard, once had her son return their portion of their *eruv* to this neighbor. When the neighbor saw the boy, she hugged and kissed him. The child returned to his mother and related what had happened. She, in turn, proclaimed: "How she loves me—and I hadn't known!" They ended up reconciling, in fulfillment of the verse (Proverbs 3:17), "[The Torah's] ways are ways of pleasantness, and all its paths are peace."

Perhaps we may argue that here, too, the *mishlo'ach manos* generated Divine help and peace, which is its ultimate purpose. 

Just One Shabbos? CONTINUED

with an insight into the very definition of the Sabbath.

The Hebrew word *Shabbos*, he writes, implies two kinds of rest. It means refraining from creative labor, of course, which is how the word is used, in this week's reading, in connection with the Sixth Day of Creation, (31:17): "And on the seventh day, [Hashem] rested (*shavas*) and was refreshed." But *Shabbos* is also related to *shev*, which means "sit" or "dwell." That's because the Sabbath is an opportunity for us to meditate on deeper, meaningful things—on matters of the spirit.

Fully observing the Sabbath, then, has two components: physical rest, and time out for the soul. They are interconnected; refraining from labor gives us a chance to focus on the meaning of life, to work on our relationship with Hashem. But abiding by the first, and taking a break from the daily grind, is no guarantee that this down time will be spent the right way. Thus the Torah warns us to observe Hashem's *Sabbaths*, in the plural. Then it describes the fusion of these two observances as *a sign*, in the singular, of the eternal bond between Hashem and His people.

By the same token, someone who breaks the laws of Shabbos violates both facets of

Rabbi Yosef Viener answers questions from the Night seder chabura



GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

Benny was on his way back to yeshiva, to start a new *z'man* (term). He was running late for his flight, but all he could think about was the length of his flight across the country, and how hungry he would be. He decided that he *must* stop on the way to the airport, and pick up a sandwich from a local eatery. Despite his parents' protests, he insisted, and they stopped for the sandwich.

And he missed his flight.

the Day of Rest. He disturbs the physical respite of the Sabbath, and he actively removes himself from developing a religious connection with Hashem. The Torah alludes to this when it says "those who violate it," in the plural—any desecration of the Sabbath is actually twofold, even if that act is committed by (and may result in the execution of) only one person.

HaK'sav v'hakabbalah suggests that this duality also explains a famous gemara:

If only Israel were to observe two Sabbaths as they should, they would immediately be redeemed. (Talmud, Shabbos 111b)

"Two Sabbaths" doesn't mean two Saturdays. It means the Sabbath in its two manifestations, as a day of both physical rest and spiritual development.

The week of Purim may have been frenetic, but it has also given us opportunities to refresh and develop our relationships with Hashem and with each other. This Shabbos will be an excellent time to slow down and get some rest. Let's make sure we also use it to think about what we've learned—and how we've grown!—over the holiday.

Shabbat shalom! 