

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	KETUVIM
Emor	18 May, 2019	13 Iyyar 5779	Lev. 21:1-24:23	Ezek. 44:15-31	Matt 26:59-66

Last week's parashat Kedoshim ended with the death penalty to the medium and spiritists. This week's parashat Emor begins with the priests not to be defiled by the dead body. What is the connection? R' Yose said that in previous parashat, Hashem admonished the Yisraelites who defiled themselves in every manner. And now, Hashem admonishes the priest to sanctify themselves from the dead body and how to stay pure.

The Zohar<sup>1</sup> explains that when a person is on a deathbed, three angels/messengers comes to him, "and he sees there what one cannot see while in this world." This is a day of supernal judgment, when the King seeks His deposit. Happy is the person who returns his deposit to the King just as it was placed within him! If that deposit is soiled by bodily filth, what will he say to the owner of the deposit?<sup>2</sup>

Who are the three angels? For the righteous person, one angel says, "Come with peace." Second angel says, "He who walks his straight path." And the third angel says, "He will come with peace; they will rest upon their resting place." For the wicked person, three angels of destructions come: one says, "There is no peace, says Hashem for the wicked." Second angel says, "He will lie down in sorrow." And the third says, "Descend and be laid with those of blocked heart."<sup>3</sup>

The English word "wicked" in Hebrew is "*ra.sha*" (רָשָׁע). The wicked is defined as a person who promotes lawlessness and disregards Torah. (Psalms 1:1) As we studied previously, the wicked applies to an individual who made a conscious choice not to obey the Torah. In Matthew, it says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Master, Master,' shall enter into the reign of the heavens, but he who is doing the desire of My Father in the heavens. Many shall say to Me in that day, 'Master, Master, have we not prophesied in Your Name, and cast out demons in Your Name, and done many mighty works in Your Name?' And then I shall declare to them, 'I never knew you, depart from Me, you who work lawlessness!'" (Matt. 7:21-23)

Continuing with the Zohar, a person on deathbed attains a unique vision to see the angels upon him. The wicked person who is on the deathbed, opens his eyes and see the Angel of Death with his sword drawn – a quaestor with chains binding that person. There is nothing at all as hard for the soul as its separation from the body. A "quaestor" is a Latin word for a Roman official or prosecutor. The person does not die until he sees Shekhinah (Glory), and out of great desire for Shekhinah the soul departs to meet her. After the soul leaves, it cleaves to Her. In regards to Shekhinah, it is said, "For no man does see Me and live." (Exo. 33:20) Meaning, in our lifetime, we do not see Shekhinah, but in deathbed we do.

After the soul leaves the body, impure spirits come upon the dead body to defile it. For this reason, we are not allowed for the body to remain overnight as the impure spirits prevails at night and spreads throughout the earth to find a body without a soul to defile it, even more. Another reason is that the soul cannot stand for supernal judgment or reincarnated if the body is not buried immediately. In some instances, Hashem will put the soul to another body immediately without the judgment. But, the soul cannot go to another body without burying the first body. Thus, if the body is not buried immediately, we are blocking Hashem's plan. It is said, "Let his body not remain overnight on the tree... so that you do not defile the land which YHWH your Elohim is giving you as an inheritance." (Deut. 21:23)

<sup>1</sup> Zohar, 88a

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> BT, Kesubos 104a

Where do these impure spirits come from? The Tanhuma says, “It is not written here [He ceased from all His work] that [Elohim] had created and made, but rather [that Elohim had created], לַעֲשׂוֹת (*la'-'a:sot*) to make (Gen. 2:3), for the Shabbat came first and their work [i.e., all His work of Creation] was not completed. R' Benaya said, “This refers to the demons, for He created their souls, and as He was creating their bodies, the Shabbat day was hallowed. He left them, and they remained soul without body.”<sup>4</sup>

This week's portion Emor also give further instructions to the priests in regard to offerings and marriages. It also discusses about Shabbat, and all the feasts (ch. 23). Emor is also read partially during Pesach and Sukkot. Rashi said that the Sanctification of the New Moon should be listed first instead of Shabbat. He explains that without it, we cannot set time for feasts. Because it uses moon calendar (approx. 29 ½ days) to calculate when to observe the feasts. For this reason, Hashem gave Moshe a moon calendar (Exo. 12:2).

There is a story of angels who came to Hashem and said, “Master of the Universe, when do we celebrate Sukkot?” Hashem says, “Why ask me? Ask Moshe!” We know how to observe feasts, but we do not know when to observe them without the understanding of moon cycle. The sages taught that two people are needed as a witness to sanctify the New Moon. They would observe a sliver of moon and reported to the Sanhedrin who in turn questions the witness thoroughly. Once the head Sanhedrin is satisfied, he would declare a new month and send out signals to notify the people.

Shabbat or Sabbath is the seventh day of the week and it is the only day that was given a name. All other days were given as the first day, second day, and so forth. The names we have now comes from Babylonia or Greek deities (Sunday, Monday, etc). In Hebrew, it is simply known as Yom Rishon, Yom Sheni, etc.

The sages teach that during the week we lose three things: physical power, creativity, and spirituality. We lose physical strength running to and from work, errands, and so forth. We lose creativity because we are focused on job descriptions, or following set of rules. We lose spirituality because we are focused on work or errands. Shabbat is the day to regain what we lost and gain extra *ruach* (soul). During the Shabbat, we are forbidden to perform 39 activities, i.e. carrying, burning, extinguishing, cooking, washing, etc. We are given 25 hours to rejuvenate what we lost during the week. So that we can be reconnected to Hashem. We perform Havdalah (separation) in the evening of Shabbat. We smell *b'samin* (spices) three times deeply to remind us of Gan Eden.

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<sup>4</sup> Zohar, 88a