

## פרשת כי תשא

ושמרתם את השבת כי קדש הוא לכם מחלליה מות יומת כי כל העשה בה מלאכה ונכרתה הנפש  
ההיא מקרב עמיה. (פרק לא' יד)

*You shall observe the Shabbos, for it is holy to you; its desecrators shall be put to death, for whoever does work on it, that soul shall be cut off from among its people.*

The second half of our pasuk appears to be offering an explanation for the first half i.e. **Why** מחלליה מות יומת? **Because** כל העשה בה מלאכה ונכרתה הנפש ההיא מקרב עמיה. Rav Meir Simcha finds it strange that the pasuk is implying that the more stringent Shabbos punishment, סקילה, meted out when Shabbos is violated intentionally with witnesses providing a warning, could be derived from the less severe כרת punishment?! In his masterful way he offers an extremely incisive answer based on the משנה in שבת 102: which tells us that if someone knew it was Shabbos and inadvertently performed many מלאכות on many different Shabbosos, he becomes liable for each and every מלאכה he performed (א.קרבן חטאת). Later, on דף ע. ע. the גמרא asks, "From where do we know the concept of the separation of מלאכות into distinct categories of liability?" Shmuel replies: (Our) pasuk says מות יומת-the Torah included many 'deaths' for a single desecration." Rashi explains that the repetitive מות יומת refers to one who performs various מלאכות on the same Shabbos and is liable for each one. The גמרא raises an objection: This verse is written about one who acts deliberately? Nothing can be derived from there to a case where someone violates the Shabbos inadvertently? It answers: If this verse has no application to one who acts deliberately, for later, in ב' פרק לה' it writes, כל העושה בו מלאכה יומת/whoever does work on (Shabbos) shall be put to death, assign (our pasuk) to one who acts inadvertently. What does מות יומת (then) mean? It means he shall "die" monetarily. Since we already know that a Shabbos violator is liable to capital punishment, our verse cannot be referring to deliberate desecration. Rather, it refers to inadvertence, with the "death" meaning loss of money-as Rashi explains that the sinner must bring many costly sacrifices for atonement. What prompted Shmuel to explicate our pasuk in such a radical manner? According to the Meshech Chochma, it was precisely what was bothering him above that may have led Shmuel to his conclusion; for by expounding the beginning of our pasuk as referring to the more lenient שוגג transgression, we can interpret our pasuk in a more logical fashion, i.e. the Torah is in fact deriving the less stringent שוגג from the more severe כרת and in addition, our pasuk is reinforcing the well known rule that any עבירה, if transgressed במזיד results in a כרת punishment, then if transgressed בשוגג is atoned through a קרבן חטאת.

Although Rav Meir Simcha feels that his explanation is correct (as he puts it, "זוהו ברור"), he adds that אפשטא דקרא נראה דאמר דלא יהיה לפלא a more "simple" reading (of the pasuk) can be given which will not be so unusual. He begins by pointing out that although we know that the observance of Shabbos is one of the most important tenets in all of Judaism, and carries with it the severe סקילה punishment, it is "easily" pushed aside when one's life is at stake. Not only that, but even a ספק פיקוח נפש can be שוגג Shabbos! The reason for this, he believes, is because without כלל ישראל there would be no Shabbos as we know it. It is we who give

Shabbos its קדושה. By observing Shabbos we are testifying that Hashem created the entire world and upon its completion, He “rested” on Shabbos. And it is precisely because of this, that one who transgresses Shabbos intentionally receives such a severe punishment, stoning; by negating Shabbos he is refuting HKBH’s existence and is severing his ties with the rest of כלל ישראל and Hashem. With this approach, the Meshech Chochma interprets our pasuk as follows: observe Shabbos for it has been given to you exclusively and it is you who make it a sanctified day. And therefore, if there is any question of פיקוח נפש, Shabbos should be “transgressed”. However, מות יומת מחלליה-intentional desecration of this day results in a severe death, עמיה מקרב הנפש היא-because the sinner has cut himself off from Hashem and His people. A refreshingly new interpretation of an otherwise cumbersome pasuk!

In the next piece, he tells us that if we properly observe Shabbos, **it will infuse into us** an added level of קדושה with wonderful consequences. He basis this on Mechilta that notices a discrepancy between the language of the next pasuk, **ועשה מלאכה** *for six days work may be done* and a nearly similar verse in פרשת ויקהל, **תעשה מלאכה**, but contrasts this with the pasuk in the עשרת הדברות, פרשת יתרו, which writes, **ששת ימים תעבד ועשית כל** *Six days shall you work and accomplish all your work*. Mechilta explains that when we are observing the words of Hashem, our activities of daily living will be performed by others- **יעשה מלאכה** i.e. **ששת ימים יעשה**, as in, “cause to be done.” If unfortunately we are not diligent in following the Torah, then **ששת ימים תעבד ועשית**, your six day work will be done by yourselves. What did Mechilta “see” to explain the difference this way? According to the Meshech Chochma, it was the fact that in our parsha, as well as in פרשת ויקהל, the Torah adds the words **קדש הוא לכם** and **קודש יהיה לכם** respectively, not included in the pasuk in פרשת יתרו. Observing the Shabbos appropriately, with all its stringencies, adds sanctity to our rest-of-the-week lives and can result in the amazing added bonus of **על ידי אחרים**!

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