

Acharei Mot - Kedoshim

- Mordecai Zeitz.

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Repetition is usually the sign of importance and even urgency. When we repeat something it's a sign that we really mean business. Even when etched in stone, some things warrant and receive a second and even third pronouncement.

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'...you shall revere your mother and your father and you shall observe Shabbat, I am Hashem, your G-d.' A quick analysis tells us--

We have the fifth Commandment-honouring of the parents;

We have the fourth Commandment-observing Shabbat

We have the first Commandment-I am the Lord, your G-d.

Three of the Ten Commandments repeated and grouped together. G-d certainly wanted to emphasize something. While each Mitzvah separately is basic to Judaism, connected as they are in this verse, there is even more to it. There are many traditional explanations offered but allow me to suggest something a bit less traditional, but something obvious and practical.

We are reminded to use the leisure and quiet time created through Shabbat to really pay honour and tribute to our parents and extended family. It is special time built into our hectic schedules to take the time and express appreciation to a family structure we normally take for granted. In the hustle and bustle of daily affairs, we forget the persons who make it all possible; who keep it all together for us to enjoy.

Equally, there is an important lesson that parents can pass on to their children through the institution we call Shabbat. It calls for the message of Shabbat to be delivered not only on Shabbat but on Tuesday or Wednesday as well. Comes Shabbat, we stop the world and no longer are we 'what we do' but 'what we truly are'. We become mothers and fathers, husbands and wives; siblings and grandparents, each playing a unique and special role in the destiny of the next generation. The ability to say enough time in the office; enough energy chasing the material dreams; enough time spent climbing the endless corporate ladder. Shabbat becomes more than a day. Its message reverberates every day telling us to make every day 'a bissel Shabbissdik'-by

just learning to say 'no' to some of our professional pursuits and becoming more of a parent every day of the week.

Why do all that? Because 'Ani Hashem-I am the Lord', the third Commandment in the verse. I really didn't need that reminder. I could have figured that out by myself that everything in the Torah is G-d driven. Why the special G-d commercial?

The following story might shed some light. It could possibly have taken place right here in our own hometown.

A man sat in the park and saw two men jump out of a truck, shovels in hand together with a bunch of gardening tools. One worker started digging feverishly as the other just looked on. After an hour he smiled as he proudly admired the deep hole he had just dug.

The two workers looked at each other, waited, looked around, shrugged and now the second worker grabbed his shovel and proceeded to fill in the hole. The first worker looked on as his colleague filled in the hole. Upon completion they smiled and began to return to the truck. The passerby was astounded and confronted them -asking why they had just dug and filled in the same hole?

Without batting an eyelash, they said; 'We normally have a third guy who plants the tree. I dig, he plants and my partner here fills in the remaining hole. Our tree planter called in sick today but that's not going to stop us from doing our job'

Yes, doing our job. But we don't want to come up empty. We want to see the seeds and saplings of our efforts flourish. And so 'ANI HASHEM'

-know that not only will you enhance the quality of your family life through a Shabbat experience; not only will you succeed in your professional pursuits everyday learning to focus better at the tasks at hand having learned that everything has limits; but know that Hashem is right alongside of you -assisting you and giving you a special Bracha for being able to put it all together.

One small verse, repeating, for our benefit, the qualities that make for a successful life. The Torah having made its point awaits our response.

Shabbat Shalom Umvorach..A Gut Shabbos....filled with unbelievable blessing for a whole week...