Jewish Tribune – Achrei Mos Kedoshim

**The Times are A-changing**

Our parsha begins with HKBH telling Moshe to exhort Aharon not to visit the Mishkan whenever he wants:

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר אֶל אַהֲרֹן אָחִיךָ, וְאַל יָבֹא בְכָל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ

And Hashem said to Moshe: “Speak to your brother Aharon, that he should not come at all times into the Holy.” (Vayikra 16,2)

My dear brother-in-law, Rabbi Jeremy Finn, in his sefer on Chumash “The Heart of the Parashah”, cites a wonderful interpretation on this possuk.

He writes that the possuk is to be read literally and that it is instruction for all generations.

The קֹּדֶשׁ referred to, is not just the Mishkan. Halocha is kodesh, the Torah is kodesh, Yiddishkeit is kodesh. All principles by which a Jew lives his life is kodesh.

The possuk is saying that we should not enter the kodesh בְכָל עֵת, with the spirit and attitudes of the times we live in. The Torah is eternal and is the benchmark to measure the times. Not the other way round.

אַל יָבֹא בְכָל עֵת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ means – do not approach that which is kodesh with the fads and fashions of the times in which we live.

The question is not “Does Torah keep up with the times?” but do the lifestyles and attitudes of our society keep up with everything that is kodesh.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch echoes this idea. The Gemora (Shabbos 31a) says that when we stand before the Heavenly Court after 120 years, one of the questions we will be asked is “קבעת עיתים לתורה?”

The standard explanation of the question is whether we allotted a fixed time for Torah study. Was our relationship with limmud haTorah haphazard, or were we dedicated enough to engage in Torah learning on a consistent and fixed basis?

Rav Hirsch explains that the question can also be interpreted to mean whether we showed that the Torah is alive, vibrant and relevant to the times we lived.

“קבעת עיתים” - Did you fix the times in which you lived, “לתורה” - to show how everything the Torah stands for is relevant and applicable?

A wise mechanech once gave me some good advice. He told me that whenever he gives a shiur, he tries to use the word “relevant” in the first 30 seconds of the shiur. His idea was to show that Torah is indeed relevant to our lives and people in the audience would be more attentive and receptive if they know it has a practical bearing on their lives.

More importantly, we must not fall into the trap of adjusting the Torah to meet the demands of the time. We must adapt the requirements, fads, fashions and behaviours of the time to align with the Torah.

That does not mean that we must reject modern methods or technological tools.

The Gemoro in Menachos (28a) says that all the **כלים** (vessels) of the Mishkan were made **לדורות** (for all generations), except for the **חצוצרות** (the silver trumpets used to communicate to Klal Yisroel) which had to be made anew for each generation.

Why the difference? Why could the menorah, the shulchan, the mizbeach and all the other **כלים** be used for all generations and not the **חצוצרות**? What was special about these trumpets?

I once heard a magnificent idea from Rabbi Malcolm Herman in the name of Dayan Abramsky ztl.

The function of the **חצוצרות** was to communicate to Klal Yisroel. It was the PA system used in the midbar. The lesson is that the message of Torah is eternal, but the method of transmission has to change to fit each generation. **חצוצרות** used for one generation would not be suitable for another generation.

Chalk on blackboards may have worked two generations ago and whiteboard markers for the previous generation, but interactive whiteboards and chrome books are the new norm. We may be teaching the same parsha in Chumash or the same Bava Metzia but the method of communicating our eternal truth needs updating in each generation.

Dayan Abramsky’s answer is as important as it is timely and timeless.

While the method of transmitting our mesorah may change, the very fact that the mesorah that we are privileged to transmit, remains constant, is a comforting anchor in a volatile world.

So, two critical “take-homes”. We must not adjust the Torah to meet the demands of the time. We must adapt the requirements, fads, fashions and behaviours of the time to align with the Torah. And the message of Torah is eternal and perfect, but the method of transmission must change to fit each generation.

**Rabbi Golker is the Menahel of Hasmonean High School. To listen to his shiurim, go to TorahAnytime.com or JewishPodcasts.Org**