

In פרשת קדושים, the phrase אני ד' אלקיכם appears 10 times. The phrase is associated with a disparate set of commandments. For example, we find it by the prohibition of idolatry, forbidden relationships and in reference to the bestial activities that led to the Canaanites exile from the land. We also find it in conjunction with the commandment to use accurate measures so as not to cheat customers. Why was it necessary to reiterate the same point repeatedly?

Implicit in these laws, the Torah warns us take note of the psychology of the sinner. The sinner often categorizes his sin as minor or major. A minor sin, to his mind, is one that has a minor impact as per his observation and evaluation. He will rationalize his action, convincing himself that, in the grand scheme of things, his action can be overlooked. When it comes to a major sin, he grasps the magnitude of, what to his mind is, a major violation. He understands that what he considers a major sin is among the transgressions Gd is likely to find abominable.

Chazal tell us that one must be as careful in fulfilling a simple commandment as in fulfilling a major commandment, for we do not know the reward and punishment associated with each commandment, הוי זהיר במצוה קלה כבחמורה שאין אתה יודע מתן שכרה של מצוות (אבות ב:א). It is possible that a commandment that we consider minor is considered major by Gd and the reward and punishment for its observance or transgression is very great. Associating Gd with commandments of various types reinforces the idea that one should not rationalize the value or impact of a commandment or action.

Another reason for associating Gd with these commandments is that the Torah is teaching us to observe all the commandments, major or minor, as they are all given to us by the same source: Gd. To treat one commandment with respect while ignoring another reflects on how we honor or revere Gd Himself. For if one was truly fearful of Gd and loved Him, he would treat all his commands with the same trepidation and feeling. He would not rationalize his actions by saying that Gd does not consider a particular commandment to be that important. The phrase אני ד' אלקיכם repeatedly tells us to look at the source of the commandment, not the actual commandment itself. If we truly fear and love Gd, we would observe the commandment of accurate measures just as stringently as the prohibition against idolatry, for their source is one and the same. Both refer to אני ד' אלקיכם.

This provides us insight to the statement we make in וידידי יום הכפורים על חטא שחטאנו לפניך בזלזול הורים ומורים. Often parents ask their children to act in a certain way or do something for them and the child dismisses the request. Other times, where the child has a strong interest or perceives a benefit for himself, he will

comply with the request. Both requests come from the same source. Diminishing the importance and respect we have for the source of the command or request, parent or teachers, is an inherent act of sin because it devalues the source of the request in our eyes. A similar attitude applied to Gd's commandments violates the requirement of קדושים תהיו, as we cannot be a holy people if we ignore and trivialize, מחלל or render mundane, any of Gd's commandments, no matter how we may appraise them.

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