

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1416 APR 24TH '21 י"ב אייר תשפ"א

פרשת אחרי מות - קדשים

PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM

PIRKEI AVOT 3

ב"ה
40^{Over}
Years
טו ישראל



**OU ISRAEL
KASHRUT COLUMN**

Rabbi Ezra Friedman

Director, The Gustave
& Carol Jacobs Center
for Kashrut Education

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**Kavanah in
Shemoneh Esrei**

**Rebbetzin Zemira
Ozarowski**

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla
Women's Initiative

page 58

חכמי הנולד
באורנינג טו ישראל
מקום בלב

ואהבת לרעך כמוך

ויקרא פרק י"ט, פסוק י"ח

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT KEDOSHIM

Candles 6:38PM • Earliest 5:51 • Havdala 7:53PM • Rabbeinu Tam 8:32PM

This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photo By: **OU Israel Makom Balev Youth Centers**

Place: **Bar Mitzvah Tiyul to Yerushalayim**

Meaning: **ירושלים הבנויה כעיר שחוברת לה יחדיו**

Connecting Yerushalayim and the OU Makom Balev Bar Mitzvah participants as they conclude the program with a tiyul to Yerushalayim

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HELPFUL REMINDERS FOR THIS COMING WEEK:

Pesach Sheni is observed on the 14th of Iyar.

Lag Ba'omer is celebrated on the 18th Iyar.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

**RANGES 11 DAYS / WED - SHAB
APRIL 21 - MAY 1 / 9-19 IYAR**

Earliest Talit and Tefilin 5:11 - 4:59am
Sunrise 6:04 - 5:53am
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema 9:21 - 9:15am
(Magen Avraham: 8:42 - 8:35am)
Sof Z'man T'fila 10:26 - 10:22am
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)
Chatzot (Halachic noon) 12:38 - 12:36am
Mincha Gedola 1:10pm
(Earliest Mincha)
Plag Mincha 5:49 - 5:55pm
Sunset (counting elevation) 7:16 - 7:24pm

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email: office@ouisrael.org
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Torah Tidbits and many of the projects of OU Israel are assisted by grants from **THE JERUSALEM MUNICIPALITY**



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CANDLES	EARLIEST	ACHAREI MOT/KEDOSHIM	HAVDALA	EMOR		
				Candles	Earliest	Havdala
6:38	5:51	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:53	6:43	5:55	7:59
6:55	5:53	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	7:55	7:00	5:57	8:00
6:56	5:52	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:54	7:01	5:56	7:59
6:53	5:51	Gush Etzion	7:53	6:58	5:55	7:59
6:55	5:53	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	7:55	7:00	5:57	8:01
6:54	5:52	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:54	6:59	5:56	8:00
6:55	5:53	Netanya	7:55	7:00	5:57	8:01
6:54	5:52	Be'er Sheva	7:54	6:59	5:56	7:59
6:55	5:53	Rehovot	7:55	7:00	5:57	8:00
6:38	5:53	Petach Tikva	7:55	6:43	5:57	8:01
6:54	5:52	Ginot Shomron	7:54	6:59	5:56	8:00
6:46	5:53	Haifa / Zichron	7:56	6:51	5:57	8:02
6:53	5:51	Gush Shiloh	7:53	6:58	5:55	7:59
6:55	5:53	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	7:55	7:00	5:57	8:01
6:53	5:51	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:53	6:58	5:55	7:59
6:53	5:51	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:53	6:58	5:55	7:58
6:56	5:54	Ashkelon	7:55	7:01	5:57	8:01
6:55	5:53	Yad Binyamin	7:55	7:00	5:57	8:00
6:49	5:51	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:54	6:54	5:55	8:00
6:53	5:50	Golan	7:53	6:58	5:55	7:59

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:32 PM • next week - 8:37 pm

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

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Headquarters: 11 Broadway, New York, NY 10004 • 212-563-4000 • website: www.ou.org



Editor Emeritus: Phil Chernofsky
Editor: Rabbi Aaron Goldscheider | aarong@ouisrael.org
Advertising: Ita Rochel | 02-5609125 or ttads@ouisrael.org
Website: www.ou.org/torah/tt | www.torahtidbits.com

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



Rabbi Avi Berman Executive Director, OU Israel

Writing this column is now an ingrained habit in my weekly schedule. It's very meaningful for me to reflect on the events of the past week or something coming up and formulate my thoughts in a way that I can share a glimpse of the incredible accomplishments of the OU Israel staff or convey an idea I feel would be meaningful to you, the members of the OU Israel family.

Looking back, the impetus for this column was the pandemic. Pre-corona, I would share these types of thoughts with those of you whom I would run into at the OU Israel Center. Since Covid-19 prevented me from meeting people here in our building, I wasn't able to utilize my natural instinct to share what's happening here. I am grateful for the fact that I am now able to share these ideas and happenings at OU Israel with a wider audience. It is particularly touching to me that so many of you have taken the time to email, call or whatsapp feedback and share your insights.

In addition, I felt that it was important to

An advertisement for Efrat.org.il. On the left is a close-up photo of a young child's face, smiling. To the right of the photo is a dark blue rectangular box with white and yellow text. The text reads: "Save a Life - Gain yours", "1 of 78,542", "EFRAT" in large yellow letters, and "www.efrat.org.il 02-5454500" at the bottom.

create a more personal relationship at a time when we were closed up in our homes. We were unable to share Shabbat meals with friends, catch up with neighbors after Shul, or attend in-person Shiurim. Even if we did bump into someone we knew on the street, social distancing prevented us from sharing a usual handshake or hug. We could not even see each other's faces due to the masks we wore to safeguard our health and the health of those around us.

Let's take advantage of the fact that we can once again see each others' faces

As a parent, I learned very fast that all I need to do when my kids walk in the door after school is to look at their faces to know what occurred that day - whether they had a good day or a bad one. Our facial expressions tell us so much about ourselves and others. Having our faces covered for over a year robbed us from being able to reach out, cheer up, and bring comfort to those in need. Seeing people in masks

The OU Israel Family extends heartfelt condolences to the family of

Isi Leibler z"l

on his passing

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

wasn't just seeing half their faces, it was not seeing the half of the face that shows whether a person is smiling or frowning.

There is a famous idea that there is a precious gift you can give to others without it costing you anything - a smile.

During the pandemic we were unable to share this gift with others. This past Sunday, the Ministry of Health removed the requirement to wear a mask outside. The way I see it, they added a requirement that each of us now pay extra attention to those around us and to make up for a year during which we were unable to do this. Let's take advantage of the fact that we can once again see each others' faces and delve a little deeper into the hearts of those around us and be there for each other in a much more meaningful way.

And in case you were wondering, I plan on continuing this column even though we are now blessed with the ability to see each other once again as we resume in-person shiurim and other programming. I look forward to B'ezrat Hashem seeing your smiling faces here at the OU Israel Center on a regular basis.



Avi, Executive Director, OU Israel
aberman@ouisrael.org

Condolences to Lenny Davidman and Carol Hirshberg and family on the passing of their mother/sister
Phyllis Davidman ע"ה
 המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

בס"ד



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ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM



ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



Rabbi Reuven Tradburks
Director of
RCA Israel Region



1st aliya (Vayikra 16:1-24)

Aharon is instructed to enter the Holy of Holies only through an elaborate process of offerings. He is to bring a private sin offering. And a communal sin offering of 2 identical goats, one as an offering, one sent to the wilderness, determined by lottery. The blood of both his offering and the communal shall be brought into the Holy of Holies, accompanied by incense. The smoke of the incense fills the Holy of Holies. The (scape) goat is sent to the wilderness. The people gain kapara, atonement.

Entry to the Holy of Holies requires an elaborate ceremony of unique offerings; including the scapegoat ceremony and the

incense offered in the Holy of Holies. And it is all performed by the Kohen Gadol.

This continues the powerful and crucial theme of the entire section following Mount Sinai. In G-d's reach for man, his love of man, He has created a place of rendezvous; the Mishkan. However, it is rendezvous with care, with reservation, with humility. The building design is with great detail. The offerings are with great detail; when they are brought, how they are brought, the Kohanim's role in bringing them. G-d says: You may approach Me, I want you to approach Me, but with care. Here, He invites man to rendezvous in the Holy of Holies – the inner, intimate chamber, with the Aron and the tablets, covered by angels. This intimate invitation requires a very elaborate procedure; unique offerings like the scapegoat and the incense, sin offerings, olah offerings. The closer, the more intimate; but also, the more care and preparation required.

This is a powerful and crucial theme: G-d invites man, wants man, but demands man's understanding of his inadequacy and his human foibles (sin offerings). And while man is invited to the Holy of Holies it is with great limitation. Not every person, not every day; it is one person, the Kohen Gadol, only one time a year. G-d remains mysterious, ineffable, infinite, unknowable. This is the delicate balance the Torah is creating; G-d wants man. Man is noble, the invitee of G-d Himself. But with enormous deference, enormous humility of man's limited station. Nobility and humility; the majesty in being the invitee of G-d, hand in hand with the reality of our woeful inadequacy.



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1985-2001, killed in the
Sbarro bombing.



2nd aliya (16:25-17:7) This entire ceremony is done once a year on Yom Kippur, to gain atonement and purity. Tell the entire people: all sacrifices are to be brought to the Mikdash. The Kohen is to offer them, so they are pleasing. We are to no longer offer sacrifices to spirits.

Only at the end of the entire description of how one is to enter the Holy of Holies does the Torah tell us that this is to be done on Yom Kippur. As if to say: the goal of Yom Kippur is to enter the Holy of Holies. It is through man's approach to G-d that he gains atonement and purity.



3rd aliya (17:8-8:21) Blood is not to be consumed, for the life is in the blood. I have given it to you to use for atonement on the altar, not to consume. The blood of an undomesticated animal or bird that is killed for consumption, that blood is to be covered with earth. Do not do what the Egyptians or Canaanites do. Do My commands; and live. Sexual relations with relatives are forbidden: including spouses of parents, half siblings, grandchildren, step-siblings, aunts, in-laws. In addition, marrying 2 women who are related. Or a married woman.

The listing of forbidden relationships changes the subject from the laws concerning the Mishkan. It is not the first such change of subject. The laws of Kashrut of Parshat Shemini were also a change of subject. Thus, the first 2 subjects of laws unrelated to our approach to G-d in the Mishkan are food and family. These are the first things said to the first man and woman

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on the 6th day of creation: be fruitful and multiply. And eat of the herbs. Family and food were said to Adam and Eve. Family and food are the first laws to be outlined in detail to the Jewish people.



4th aliya (8:22-19:14) A man shall not lie with a man. Sexual relations with an animal are forbidden. These things (all the above) defile the land: it will spit you out. (Parshat Kedoshim) Be Holy, as I, G-d, your G-d is holy. Revere parents, keep Shabbat. Do not turn to idols or make graven gods. A shlamim offering may only be eaten for 2 days. Help the poor and stranger when harvesting a field by leaving dropped or forgotten produce or grapes. Don't steal, lie or swear falsely. Don't cheat; or tarry paying wages til the morning. Don't curse the deaf, trip up the blind.

This aliya begins Parshat Kedoshim, the best parsha in the Torah. Or at least Rashi says so on the first verse: most topics of the Torah are contained here. There are 51 mitzvot in 64 verses. We have left the topic of holiness of the Mikdash and focus on holiness in our behavior. These are the greatest themes of ethical behavior, helping the poor with dignity, honesty, care for employees, care for the deaf and blind. In just these few verses, our every moment of human interaction becomes meaningful;

when do we not need to be vigilant that what we say is true. And kind. And gives dignity to others. Holiness inheres not just in the Mikdash but in the everyday treatment of others.



5th aliya (19:15-32) Do not pervert justice by favoring either poor or powerful. Don't spread gossip, nor stand by your brother's blood. Don't hate. Don't take revenge; love your neighbor as yourself. Do not interbreed animals, seeds, or wear wool and linen. In the land, fruit is forbidden for the first 3 years of growth, 4th year holy, 5th year permissible. Do not use divination. Nor round the corners of your face or use a straight razor on your beard. Nor tattoo. Nor seek sorcery. Rise before the aged, glorify the wizened.

The mention of justice is a foil: in court, we pursue justice. But not on the streets. It is not our place to be judges, so pick favourites, help the victim. And revenge; we are not judges to mete out just revenge. If he didn't lend you, you still should do the right thing and lend to him.

And 2 of the best verses of the Torah: love your neighbor as yourself. And rise for the aged. As Rabbi Sacks says: it is easy to love mankind, quite a bit harder to love the person next door. We see the warts, as they see ours. But rise above it. All people have goodness. Rise for the aged; perhaps for the wisdom that life itself brings. Quite a contrast to the glorification of youth of our times.



6th aliya (19:33-20:7) Love the convert. Employ accurate weights and measures. One who

In Loving Memory of
David Elijah Feldman z"l
דוד אליהו בן ברוך יוסף ועלקא ז"ל
on his first yahrzeit
ט"ז אייר

gives their child to Molech shall be put to death. And if you don't do it, I will. The one who turns and follows sorcery, I will deal with them. Be holy; for I am Holy.

The convert may feel out of place, different, self conscious, without family, not part of the crowd. Be extra sensitive to those feeling left out.

Accurate weights and measures seems obvious. But the Torah is emphasizing that even when you can get away with it, don't. Like cursing the deaf. Who will ever know?



7th **aliya (20:8-27)** The following receive the death penalty: cursing parents, the long list of forbidden sexual relationships listed above. Observing these laws and not those of the nations will prevent the Land from spitting you out, as it has done to those nations. Since I have distinguished you, it is you who shall possess the Land, the land flowing with milk and honey. And you shall distinguish between animals to be eaten and those not. Be holy to Me and I will distinguish you to be My people.

The Jewish idea of ethical monotheism is on full display in Kedoshim. Holiness wanders seamlessly in the parsha from taking care of the poor, to laws of sacrifices, to honesty, to sexual prohibitions, to loving your neighbor, not hating; all under the rubric of holiness. We are to be holy so that the land not spit us out. Certainly something to give pause, to those of us walking the streets of our land. We need to be extra vigilant in all these holy things, ritual, interpersonal, speech, care, love; for our success in this land rests upon it. ■

Jeff Mor
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HAFTORAH ACHAREI MOT/KEDOSHIM AMOS 9:7-15

(ACCORDING TO THE ASHKENAZI CUSTOM)

This week's haftorah speaks about exile and punishment that will be the result of the Jewish people straying from the path of the Torah.

Amos, the great prophet, brings a message from God in which he reminds the people of Israel of God's kindness and his love of his nation.

Although God is forced to punish the nation for their misdeeds He will never completely destroy his nation. They will be sent into exile and unfortunately will find themselves in every corner of the world - but the time will come when they will return to the land of their soul.

At that time the House of David will lead the nation and peace and prosperity will abound.

The conclusion of the haftorah resounds with the following uplifting message: "And I will return the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall rebuild desolate cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their produce." ■

Condolences to
Yaakov Amrofel and family
on the passing of his father
Henri z"l

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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB
OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

IN THE PARSHA

Holiness: A Definition

He never returned phone calls. He certainly never returned e-mails. He rarely smiled.

He had very sophisticated tastes in wine and fine liquor. A seven-course gourmet dinner with a wine pairing at each course was almost an everyday occurrence for him.

He had the vocabulary of a sailor and seemed to be acquainted with the obscenities and profanities of every known language.

Don't get me wrong. He had many fine qualities, and considered himself to be religious, even pious.

"After all," he would say, "I am careful that the meals that I order are always absolutely kosher. The Torah doesn't prohibit wine, nor does it require us to refrain from delicious food, and it places no limits on the quantity of food that we eat."

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He would expound upon the fact that he found nothing in the Torah requiring one to return phone calls or e-mails. He even insisted that, at least in the written Torah, he found no objection to the use of vulgar language.

I knew this person, let's call him Reuben, for nearly 50 years. I was associated with him in various capacities, and often worked with him on charity projects. Although he scrupulously investigated every cause that approached him for contributions, and he was very careful as to the causes to which he made contributions, I cannot deny that he was generous by almost all standards.

I must admit that I often wondered about his relationship with his wife. Obviously, I was not privy to the intimate details about their relationship. I did meet Reuben's wife several times, and she always appeared to be quite sad, even defeated. She certainly did not share his *joie de vivre*, dressed quite modestly compared to his lavish wardrobe, and she certainly never resorted to his foul language.

Reuben died a few months ago. One of his close business associates, who knew him as a religious Jew, eulogized him as a person who exhibited holiness. "He was no saint," proclaimed this associate, "but from my perspective as an irreligious per-

son, Reuben was a holy man.”

Now, it is common, and even to some extent permissible, to exaggerate the merits of the deceased during a eulogy for him. But there was something about the adjective “holy” that I simply could not accept and felt compelled to protest. It was certainly inappropriate for me to protest in public at the funeral, and I felt it was pointless to protest to the well-meaning person who delivered the eulogy.

So I decided to use this column as the venue for that protest.

What does it mean to be holy? For the answer to that, we need to examine a verse at the beginning of the second of this week’s double-Torah portions, *Acharei Mot* and *Kedoshim* (*Exodus* 16:1-20:27). The verse reads: “Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.”

A man can observe every detail of the Torah’s laws about family purity yet not be a loving husband

The two greatest commentators on the Bible in the Jewish tradition, Rashi and Ramban (Nachmanides), enunciate definitions of “holiness.” Rashi insists that to be holy means to be separate, distant, from various sinful exploits, especially sexual promiscuity. He says that the Hebrew words, “*kedoshim tihyu*, ye shall be holy,” are best understood as, “*perushim tihyu*, ye shall keep a distance.”

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Ramban, however, takes issue with Rashi, although he characteristically does so with great courtesy and even reverence for his predecessor. Ramban’s definition of holiness expresses one of his most basic teachings, and in my opinion, one of the perspectives of Judaism which is often forgotten and needs to be re-emphasized from time to time.

Ramban writes that there is more to being holy than merely to abide by the rules and regulations of the Torah. Yes, he writes, the Torah does not forbid gluttony, and it is quite possible to be a glutton yet not violate any of the laws of kashrut. True, he continues, one can use all manner of vulgar language yet violate no explicit biblical command. A man can observe every detail of the Torah’s laws about family purity yet not be a loving husband.

Ramban coins a phrase: “*Naval bereshut hatorah*,” which can be translated either as, “a knave within the bounds of Torah,” or alternatively, “a knave with the Torah’s permission.” Holiness, for Ramban, consists of all those behaviors which are to be expected from a decent human being, even if those behaviors are not explicitly prescribed by the Torah.

Reuben was a man whom I knew all of my life. Although he was not perfect, he had his positive qualities and I certainly cannot take it upon myself to condemn him. But he was not holy. Indeed, he missed the point about what the Jewish religion was all about.

Our religion is indeed about obedience and compliance to a set of laws—some

ordained by God and some instituted by wise and holy men—but that is not *all* that it is about. It is about attitudes, and it is about relationships. It is about ethical behaviors which need not be prescribed in the form of rules, but is to be expected of every reasonable human being.

Some would explain Ramban’s thesis in terms of the age-old distinction between the letter of the law and the spirit of the law. That is certainly one way of understanding it. Reuben is a prime example of someone who did not see beyond the letter of the law.

Our daily prayer book contains the following verse in *Isaiah* 59:21:

“This is my covenant with them says the Lord: My spirit which is upon you, and the words I have placed in your mouth, shall not depart from you or your children or your children’s children...”

Clearly, the Almighty’s covenant has two components: His spirit and His words. Reuben kept the latter, but ignored the former. Holiness consists of adherence to them both. Ramban teaches us that holiness is about that spirit. The Torah itself, by addressing the commandment “*kedoshim tiheyu*, be holy” to all of us, is teaching us that we are all capable of achieving that spirit. We are expected to be a *goy kadosh*, a holy people. ■

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Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"L

Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

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HaRav Ya'akov Zvi ben David Ariele zt"l

לעילוי נשמות

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Dedicated by Dr. Robert Sreter DDS., M.S.

Sprints and Marathons

It was a unique, unrepeatable moment of leadership at its highest height. For forty days Moses had been communing with God, receiving from Him the Law written on tablets of stone. Then God informed him that the people had just made a Golden Calf. He would have to destroy them. It was the worst crisis of the wilderness years, and it called for every one of Moses' gifts as a leader.

First, he prayed to God not to destroy the people. God agreed. Then he went down the mountain and saw the people cavorting around the Calf. Immediately, he smashed the tablets. He burned the Calf, mixed its ashes with water and made the people drink. Then he called for people to

join him. The Levites heeded the call and carried out a bloody punishment in which three thousand people died. Then Moses went back up the mountain and prayed for forty days and nights. Then for a further forty days he stayed with God while a new set of tablets was engraved. Finally, he came down the mountain on the tenth of Tishri, carrying the new tablets with him as a visible sign that God's covenant with Israel remained.

This was an extraordinary show of leadership, at times bold and decisive, at others slow and persistent. Moses had to contend with both sides, inducing the Israelites to do *teshuvah* and God to exercise forgiveness. At that moment he was the greatest ever embodiment of the name Israel, meaning one who wrestles with God and with people and prevails.

The good news is: there once was a Moses. Because of him, the people survived. The bad news is: what happens when there is no Moses? The Torah itself says: "No other Prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face" (Deut. 34:10). What do you do in the absence of heroic leadership? That is the problem faced by every nation, corporation, community and

family. It is easy to think, “What would Moses do?” But Moses did what he did because he was what he was. We are not Moses. That is why every human group that was once touched by greatness faces a problem of continuity. How does it avoid a slow decline?

The answer is given in this week’s parsha. The day Moses descended the mountain with the second tablets was to be immortalised when its anniversary became the holiest of days, Yom Kippur. On this day, the drama of *teshuvah* and *kapparah*, repentance and atonement, was to be repeated annually. This time, though, the key figure would not be Moses but Aaron, not the Prophet but the High Priest.

That is how you perpetuate a transformative event: by turning it into a ritual. Max Weber called this the routinisation of charisma.¹ A once-and-never-again moment becomes a once-and-ever-again ceremony. As James MacGregor Burns puts it in his classic work, *Leadership*: “The most lasting tangible act of leadership is the creation of an institution – a nation, a social movement, a political party, a bureaucracy – that continues to exert moral leadership and foster needed social change long after the creative leaders are gone.”²

There is a remarkable Midrash in which various Sages put forward their idea of *klal gadol ba-Torah*, “the great principle of

1 See Max Weber, *Economy and Society* (Oakland, Calif.: University of California Press, 1978), 246ff.

2 James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper, 1978), 454.



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the Torah.” Ben Azzai says it is the verse, “This is the book of the chronicles of man: On the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God” (Gen. 5:1). Ben Zoma says that there is a more embracing principle, “Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.” Ben Nannas says there is a yet more embracing principle: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Ben Pazzi says we find a more embracing principle still: “The first sheep shall be offered in the morning, and the second sheep in the afternoon” (Exodus 29:39) – or, as we might say today, Shacharit, Mincha and Maariv. In a word: “routine”. The passage concludes: The law follows Ben Pazzi.³

What Jews have, he argues, modern economies lack: a system of self-control that allows economies to flourish without booms and crashes, inflation and recession

The meaning of Ben Pazzi’s statement is clear: all the high ideals in the world – the human person as God’s image, belief in God’s unity, and the love of neighbours – count for little until they are turned into habits of action that become habits of the heart. We can all recall moments of insight

3 The passage is cited in the Introduction to the commentary HaKotev to Ein Yaakov, the collected aggadic passages of the Talmud. It is also quoted by Maharal in Netivot Olam, Ahavat Re’a 1.

or epiphany when we suddenly understood what life is about, what greatness is, and how we would like to live. A day, a week, or at most a year later the inspiration fades and becomes a distant memory and we are left as we were before, unchanged.

Judaism's greatness is that it gave space to both Prophet and Priest, to inspirational figures on the one hand, and on the other, daily routines – the *halachah* – that take exalted visions and turn them into patterns of behaviour that reconfigure the brain and change how we feel and who we are.

One of the most unusual passages I have ever read about Judaism written by a non-Jew occurs in William Rees-Mogg's book on macro-economics, *The Reigning Error*.⁴ Rees-Mogg (1928-2012) was a financial journalist who became editor of *The Times*, chairman of the Arts Council and vice-chairman of the BBC. Religiously he was a committed Catholic.

He begins the book with a completely unexpected paean of praise for halachic Judaism. He explains his reason for doing so. Inflation, he says, is a disease of inordinacy, a failure of discipline, in this case in relation to money. What makes Judaism unique, he continues, is its legal system. This has been wrongly criticised by Christians as drily legalistic. In fact, Jewish law was essential for Jewish survival because it “provided a standard by which action could be tested, a law for the regulation of conduct, a focus for loyalty and a boundary for the energy

⁴ William Rees-Mogg, *The Reigning Error: The Crisis of World Inflation* (London: Hamilton, 1974), 9–13.



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of human nature.”

All sources of energy, most notably nuclear energy, need some form of containment. Without this, they become dangerous. Jewish law has always acted as a container for the spiritual and intellectual energy of the Jewish people. That energy “has not merely exploded or been dispersed; it has been harnessed as a continuous power.” What Jews have, he argues, modern economies lack: a system of self-control that allows economies to flourish without booms and crashes, inflation and recession.

The same applies to leadership. In *Good to Great*, management theorist Jim Collins argues that what the great companies have in common is a *culture of discipline*. In *Great By Choice*, he uses the phrase “the 20-Mile March” meaning that outstanding organisations plan for the marathon, not the sprint. Confidence, he says, “comes not from motivational speeches, charismatic inspiration, wild pep rallies, unfounded optimism, or blind hope.”⁵ It comes from doing the deed, day after day, year after year. Great companies use disciplines that are specific, methodical and consistent. They encourage their people to be self-disciplined and responsible. They do not over-react to change, be it for good or bad. They keep their eye on the far horizon. Above all, they do not depend on heroic, charismatic leaders who at best lift the company for a while but do not provide

it with the strength-in-depth they need to flourish in the long run.

The classic instance of the principles articulated by Burns, Rees-Mogg and Collins is the transformation that occurred between Ki Tissa and Acharei Mot, between the first Yom Kippur and the second, between Moses’ heroic leadership and the quiet, understated priestly discipline of an annual day of repentance and atonement.

Turning ideals into codes of action that shape habits of the heart is what Judaism and leadership are about. **Never lose the inspiration of the Prophets, but never lose, either, the routines that turn ideals into acts and dreams into achieved reality. ■**

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE

- How is Jewish Law a container for the spiritual and intellectual energy of the Jewish people?
- Are you surprised that Ben Pazzi’s principle is viewed as the greatest in the Torah, or does it make sense to you?
- How can you find inspiration in consistent, daily ritual and routine?

Covenant and Conversation 5781 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z”l.

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt”l are part of the ‘Covenant & Conversation’ series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on www.rabbisacks.org.

5 Jim Collins, *Good to Great* (New York: HarperBusiness, 2001); *Great by Choice* (New York: HarperCollins, 2011), 55.



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The Book of Vayikra revolves around “Mikdash”, the Temple and Mishkan, beginning with the laws of Korbanot (offered in the Mikdash), continuing (in Parashat Shmini) with the laws of Tum’ah and Tahara (who may/may not enter the Mikdash) and, starting with today’s parashiyot, the laws of sanctity and holiness (of the Mikdash and the nation). In fact, the basic theme of these parshiyot is expressed in the closing words of the first parasha, the command not to defile the land with moral turpitude, a warning that leads us directly into the opening words of next parasha: “kedoshim t’h’yu”, “you shall be holy.” Rashi throughout his commentary explains that the root idea of “kedusha” is separation. Hashem demands that we be separate, unique, “holier” (no, I didn’t say better) than the other nations. It is the same demand He made of us when we stood at Har Sinai: “V’atem t’h’yu li mamlechet kohanim v’goy kadosh”, to be a holy nation, one dedicated to the service of G-d.

Surprisingly, our haftarah from Sfer Amos opens with words that seem to express precisely the opposite view: “Hahlo chiv’nei chushiyim atem li”, “Behold you are just like the Cushite nation to me”, adding that G-d has taken other nations out of foreign lands just as He had done for Israel! Given this truth, why did Chazal

establish that we read this selection which, seemingly, undermines the very theme of the parasha?

In actuality, this chosen reading is especially pertinent to the theme of kedusha, for it expresses a most important idea: that the “specialness” of Israel is not predicated upon miracles of her past, not on her lineage or “yichus”, nor on Hashem’s promised miracles for future generations. Rather, Israel’s chosenness is based upon their ability to retain the status of kedusha, a standing which can be achieved and kept only through their fealty to G-d and His mitzvot. When Israel shrugs off her commitment to Hashem, when she ignores her miraculous past and, thereby, denies her glorious future, she is no different than any other nation. She is, in fact, worse than they are. Amos expresses this idea so powerfully in the third chapter of his book when he states: “Rak etchem yada’ti...al ken efkod aleichem et kol avonoteichem”, It is because G-d revealed Himself to us, because we have witnessed His miracles over and over again, that He expects fidelity and faithfulness from us more than He does from other peoples!

No. Kedusha is not a gift bestowed upon us that makes us special; it is an obligation we are challenged to fulfill in order to retain the special relationship we have with the Almighty. ■



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Giving the Benefit of the Doubt

The Torah dictates “*B’tzedek tispot Amisecha*” (you shall judge your fellow with righteousness, Vayikra 19:15). In *Pirke Avos*, Chazal take it a step further by stating that one should grant others the benefit of the doubt (“*kaf zechus*”, Avos 1:6).

Two *pessukim* later in our parsha we are told to rebuke others (*hocheach tocheach es amisecha*). How is one to know when to rebuke and when to judge the other favorably? Perhaps the answer is not only with respect to when to judge, but with respect to **how** to judge. In both *pessukim* the term “*amisecha*” is used. The other individual is referred to as a **comrade**.

It is important to offer rebuke in a loving and caring manner out of concern for the other. To bring out the best in another individual rather than to embarrass or humiliate them. We have to first make sure we are offering the rebuke to sincerely help the other individual improve upon themselves. Then I am judging the other righteously. It is all in our attitude and perception.

A story is cited by the Tifferes Shimshon that brings this point home. Towards the end of WWII when the US army entered the concentration and labor camps, Rabbi Eliezer Silver served as a Rabbi (chaplain) and tried to facilitate organizing minyanim and other communal religious activities in the liberated camps. There was one individual who profusely refused to participate in any religious activity. After Rabbi Silver inquired, the individual explained that during his time in the concentration camp he witnessed a man who was able to hide a siddur in the barracks and he would lend out the siddur for use by others for half an hour in exchange for a piece of bread, which was rather scarce. The individual explained to Rabbi Silver, that witnessing such a wicked act, bartering a prayer book for a piece of bread, turned him off totally, that he wanted to have nothing to do with the group with which such an individual associated. Therefore, he could no longer practice Judaism.

Rabbi Silver startled by the survivor’s response replied: why do you focus on that wicked individual who took advantage of others by bartering his siddur for bread. Why don’t you look at all those righteous individuals who were willing to sacrifice their meager source of nutrition in order to be able to daven?

B’tzedek tispot Amisecha teaches us to

maintain the proper perspective and to have a positive outlook – always awarding the other the benefit of the doubt!

Before we judge our friend, neighbor or spouse, let's introspect and ensure that we are doing so with the proper motivation and in a respectable manner so that it will indeed yield positive results. ■

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P*arashat Kedoshim* is unique in that it was said in the presence of the entire community of Israel. Rashi (*Vayikra 19:2*) explains that since “many important aspects of Torah” are found in this *parashah* it was necessary to present it “*behakhel*”, with the entire nation in attendance. What makes this *parashah* so unique? What are these ‘important aspects’ found here?

One classic approach to understand this is that the mitzvot related here are a repetition of the *Aseret Hadibrot*, hence this section takes on a special significance.

Rav Reiss in *Merosh Tzurim* suggests that the ‘important aspects’ Rashi is referring to is *kedushah* itself. The call to pursue holiness is so fundamental in Judaism that it must be articulated before all *Am Yisrael*. Indeed, before receiving the Torah we were told to “become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (*Shemot 19:6*). To live as a Torah-Jew one must act in a manner of holiness; it is the foundation of our very existence.

The command to be holy, explains Rav Sheinerman in *Ohel Moshe*, had to be

said in a public forum to ensure that each person would know that he possesses the ability to achieve such sanctity. One cannot excuse or absolve himself of this obligation based on his social settings or peer group. Being created in Hashem’s image includes the capacity to reach these great heights. Rav Grossbard in *Daat Shraga* adds that this is precisely why the *parashah* emphasizes interpersonal mitzvot. The key to *kedushah* is to live an elevated life while involved in the common activities of the everyday. Being careful to pay a worker on time, honoring one’s parents, leaving a corner of the field to the poor, not taking revenge are all examples of elevating the mundane to something superior.

It is quite easy to get drawn into the world of physical pleasures for its own sake and forget the mandate for which we were created

Kedushah is a lifetime challenge to live for the sake of heaven, not simply to satisfy our personal desires, notes the Tosher Rebbe in *Avodat Avodah*. Hence, the first brachah we give to a *chatan* and *kallah* is “*shehakol bara lechvodo*”; we are remind-

ing them as they begin building their new home that it must be set on the foundation to increase *kevod shamayim* in this world. Similarly, when one eats, he should focus on saying the appropriate *brachot* with *kavanah*, having *divrei Torah* at the meal and eating for the purpose of serving Hashem. It is quite easy to get drawn into the world of physical pleasures for its own sake and forget the mandate for which we were created. Rav Wolbe suggests the following exercise: leave over a bit of food on your plate at the end of your meal. Stopping before you are full displays the ability to control one's desires, and not be controlled by them.

Moreover, the mitzvah of *kedushah* was shared publicly to teach us, says Rav Kaufman in *Mishchat Shemen*, that *kedushah* is not found by separating oneself from society. Often, one may think that seclusion or meditating on a mountain top is the path to living a life of holiness. The Torah emphasizes that it is specifically among people, accessing the *koach* of the community, that one can achieve a noble and exalted existence. ■

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Light!

Rav Yisroel Belsky, zt'l, Rosh Yeshivah of Torah VoDaas, was an exceptional Torah personality. One of the great *poskim* of the generation, Rav Belsky was a *gadol* with multifaceted expertise: he was a shochet, a sofer, a musician, and a mohel, and had vast knowledge and interests raging from physics and chemistry, to engineering, astronomy, and botany. However, Rav Belsky's intellectual bandwidth, abilities and greatness in Torah was matched by his love of life and concern for people.

The Rosh Yeshiva's parents, Reb Berel and Mrs. Chana Belsky, were righteous and modest *balebatim* committed to the Yidishkeit of their children. Mrs. Belsky was involved in community affairs and dedicated time and resources to advancing Jewish causes.

Someone once asked the Rav, "What did your mother do to merit a son like you?" Rav Belsky smiled and replied, "I remember from the time I was a young child that

my mother would put me on her lap and sing to me, 'You are my sunshine, my only sunshine...' She made me feel so good, so loved. I felt like there was nothing I could not accomplish."

Our sedra is the source of the 'Golden Rule': וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כָּמוֹךָ, "And you shall love your friend as yourself." (19:18) Rashi famously comments in the name of Rebbi Akiva, זהו כלל גדול בתורה, "This is a great principle of the Torah."

It is in fact who we are...
It is natural for us to love
our fellows and show them
generosity whenever possible

Rebbe Klonymous Kalman Epstein of Krakow, the *Maor v'Shemesh*, understands the notion of "a great principle of the Torah" to mean that this mitzvah is the *yesod kol haTorah kulah*, "the foundation of the entire Torah". *V'ahavta l're'acha kamo-cha* is the most omnipresent of mitzvos; in every encounter with others we have an opportunity to uphold and fulfill it. As the philosopher Martin Buber notes, in the intimacy of our religious lives, *V'ahavta* is

so fundamental to our identity and practice that all of *Yiddishkeit* “lives in its light”, and is animated by this mitzvah.

Indeed, the great *mashgiach*, Rav Shlomo Wolbe, *zt'l*, in *Alei Shur* (Part 1, p. 190) writes: “Every commandment between man and his fellow man is based on a single premise: bringing light to the lives of others.”

Regarding the mitzvah of *V'ahavta*, the Rambam and others ask, ‘How can we be commanded to love, to feel something, to have certain emotions?’ The *Sefas Emes*, on *Parshas VaEschanan*, declares that the question is itself the answer: “There is a natural reservoir of love of Hashem and love of other Jews in every one of us. It is in fact who we are.” As simple, sweet, natural and intuitive it is for a parent to cradle their child and swaddle them with encouragement and love, so it is natural for us to love our fellows and show them generosity whenever possible.

This week, we approach the great day of Lag baOmer, the *hilulah* or celebration of the *Tanna* Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, when Rebbe Shimon revealed the Holy *Sefer haZohar* to his closest disciples before leaving the world. *The Zohar* is much more than the primary textbook of Jewish mysticism, the secrets of the Torah, and a *sefer* of inner light and deep wisdom. It is a guidebook to navigating the world of the soul, and it allows us to see that there is a reality beyond that which we can sense, measure or understand.

The teachings, pathway and *avodah* of Rebbe Shimon Bar Yochai ‘illuminate’

us with love and positivity, enabling us to enter *lifnai v'lifnim*, ‘into the Holy of Holies’, the innermost depths of a Jewish soul, and to reveal the secret, the highest gates of purity. As Rebbe Shimon himself teaches, אָנן בחביבותא תליא מילתא, “For us, the matter is dependent on love” (*Zohar* II:128a).

May the light of the holy Tanna Rebbe Shimon bar Yochai, the light of *v'Ahavta*, shine bright, illuminating our lives with confidence and faith that there is nothing we cannot accomplish. ■



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SUN, APR 25

9:00 AM

Rabbi David Walk

Tehillim – Divine Poetry

10:15 AM

Rabbi Aharon Adler The

Giants Who Shaped Modern
Orthodoxy

11:30 AM Rabbi Yitzchak

Breitowitz Mishlei: Wisdom
for Life (L'Ayla) (Zoom only)

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

Men's Gemara Chabura S,T,H
<https://zoom.us/j/887981820>
(Zoom only)

4:30 PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

Men's Gemara B'lyun S,M,W,Th
<https://zoom.us/j/86466998217>
(Zoom only)

8:00PM Special Event

Goals and Aspirations as
reflected in Sefiras Haomer
A special virtual shiur with
Rabbi Zev Leff

<https://zoom.us/j/82158407855>

MON, APR 26

9:15 AM

Mrs. Pearl Borow

will be part of the L'Ayla
Rosh Chodesh Seminar (see
below)

10:30 AM

**Rabbi Aaron
Goldscheider**

Rav Soloveitchik on the
Parsha

11:45 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Herschler

Ethics, family and society in
the writings of Rav Hirsch,
Rav Kook and Rav
Soloveitchik

4:30PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

Parshat HaShavua
<https://zoom.us/j/888974573>
(Zoom only)

9:00 PM

Rabbi Sam Shor

Penimiot HaTorah-
Inspiration from the Masters
of Jewish Thought [facebook.com/OUIsrael](https://www.facebook.com/OUIsrael)

TUE, APR 27

9:00 AM

**Rabbi Yitzchak
Breitowitz**

Minchat Chinuch
(Zoom only)

9:15 AM

Mrs. Shira Smiles

Torah Tapestries
(L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

Parshat HaShavua

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

5:00 PM

Mrs. Sylvie Schatz

Chazal: Insights Into
Our Times (L'Ayla)

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WED, APR 28

9:00 AM
Rabbi Shimshon Nadel
Halacha and Medina

10:15 AM
Rabbi Anthony Manning
Contemporary Issues in Halacha
and Hashkafa

11:30 AM
Rabbi Alan Kimche
Great Jewish Thinkers

4:30PM
Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM
Rabbi Baruch Taub
Halacha (Zoom only)

8:30 PM
Rav Meir Goldwicht (Hebrew)
[https:// zoom.us/j/2244321902](https://zoom.us/j/2244321902)
Parshat Hashavua Passcode: 18

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THURS, APR 29

9:00 AM
Rabbi Ian Pear
Meaning in Mitzvot

10:15 AM
Rabbi Baruch Taub
Parshat HaShavua

11:30 AM
Rabbi Shai Finkelstein
Unlocking the Messages
of Chazal

2:00 PM
Rabbi Jeffrey
Bienenfeld

4:30PM
Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

8:00 PM
Rabbi Ari Kahn
Parshat HaShavua
<https://zoom.us/j/2624570009>
(Zoom only)



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TARAGIN

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Geulas Yisrael: A Fortress and a Sunrise

We expect redemption to be immediate and rapid but it is often gradual and plodding. Since redemption is a staged process it can include pauses and even temporary reversals. Just because redemption halts, doesn't mean that the overall process has terminated.

There are two very different metaphors which depict the gradual nature of redemption. Twice, Dovid Hamelech compares redemption to a tower or a fortress. He employed the terms migdol (Shmuel II 22:51) and magdil (Tehillim 18:51) to describe the "construction" of geulah. Alternatively, our Chazal viewed a sunrise as a metaphor for Jewish redemption. Two sages were visiting Lake Kinneret viewing an early morning sunrise. They compared the resplendent sunrise to the redemption of the Jewish people: "It starts haltingly but gains force as it progresses- kimm'a kimm'a (little by little)" (Yerushalmi Yoma 3:2).

These two metaphors portray very different features of redemption. Redemption is a Divine event which revamps the world independent of human participation. The

sunrise metaphor stresses that the process can repair our fallen and dark world independent of human interaction. However, ideally, Hashem wants human beings to initiate their own redemption. He desires that the perfection of history be a product of human effort complemented by Divine revelation. The fortress metaphor evokes this ideal scenario- that humanity will construct a perfect world – brick by brick. The fortress image depicts the ideal pattern of a redemption authored by human effort. Sometimes though, human effort won't fully succeed. We try to redeem our world as best we can through human convention but when we fall short Hashem intervenes and redeems our broken world for us. The sun also rises upon the human fortress.

A second difference between a sunrise and a fortress concerns the various realms which are impacted by redemption. Redemption isn't a narrowly Jewish experience. Though we spearhead the process, redemption revolutionizes all of human society. Final redemption ushers in a utopian world of common welfare and universal prosperity. This sweeping influence upon the totality of humanity is evoked by the image of a fortress symbolizing a well-constructed and well-designed city. However, redemption doesn't only benefit humans and doesn't only alter human history. Man lives in symbiosis with Nature and the crimes of men

affect the purity and functionality of the natural world. When Jews are redeemed, Nature herself is restored and the world reverts to its original Divine splendor. Two parallel prophecies (one in Yechezkel and one in Zecharya) speak of a stream of healing water emanating from the Mikdash and fertilizing the barren regions of Israel. The sunrise symbolizes larger planetary consequences of redemption.

A sunrise also underscores the inevitability of redemption. Living “in history” means occupying a world which has a definite beginning and a clear conclusion. Redemption isn’t an “option” for historical resolution, rather it is a preordained terminus which Man can merit or achieve. Redemption is the destiny of history. We know exactly “how” history will end and exactly “where” it will end. The only items unclear are “when” it will end and “whose shoulders” will carry history toward its conclusion. The sunrise captures the inexorableness of historical redemption: just as the sun is irrepressible, similarly, Jewish redemption is

programmed into the fabric of history and will occur unconditionally.

Redemption promises many benefits: universal peace, a healed world, the abolition of poverty and injustice, and expanded intellectual potential- among other achievements. All these worldwide features are centered upon a specific structure located in the city of G-d. All the Messianic promises will emanate from the “fortress” atop the hill- the rebuilt Beit Hamikdash. We are all walking to the fortress. ■

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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

PESACH SHENI

This coming Monday we commemorate *Pesach Sheni*, literally the second *Pesach*. In *Parshat Beha'alo-cha*, we are instructed regarding this second opportunity for those who were unable to offer the *Korban Pesach* at its proper time to be able to participate and fulfill this *mitzva*.

Since there were some men who were unclean, having come in contact with a corpse and could not offer the *Korban Pesach* on that day. Appearing that same day before Moshe and Ahron, those men said to them, "Unclean though we are by reason of a corpse, why must we be prevented from presenting Hashem with an offering at its set time with the rest of the Jewish People?" Moshe said to them, "**Imdu**- Stand by, and let me hear what instructions Hashem gives for you." Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying: Speak to the Jewish people, and say: When any of you or of your posterity who are defiled by a corpse or are on a long journey would offer the *Korban Pesach* to Hashem, they shall offer it in the second month, on

the fourteenth day of the month, at twilight. They shall eat it with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, and they shall not leave any of it over until morning. They shall not break a bone of it. They shall offer it in strict accord with the law of the Korban Pesach..."

Teshuva, the opportunity for growth and change, the opportunity to move forward... is a great gift from Hashem!

The *Chidushei HaRim*, the first *Gerer Rebbe zy'a*, explains that the word **Imdu** does not mean to stand by and wait, rather it means **Imdu** stand up, even though you may have been unable to perform the *mitzva* initially, don't fall into despair. **Imdu- stand up-Hashem** gives us the opportunity for a second chance!

So too in our days, in the absence of the

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Korban Pesach, there is an eternal message of *chizuk*, inherent in these verses, and represented by this sacred day of *Pesach Sheni*. **Imdu-** Stand up! Each of us can stand upright once again before *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* through *teshuva and tefila*. It is never too late!

This important idea is similarly reflected and developed even further in a powerful teaching from *Rebbe Naftali Tzvi of Ropschitz, zy'a*. *The Ropschitzer* taught that a person might think that as a result of their many mistakes or flaws, that there is no hope for them, that it is impossible for them to turn their lives around, to improve their circumstances. Giving up, selling oneself short, explains the *Ropschitzer*, is not only counterproductive, but is also an act of great heresy! *Teshuva*, the opportunity for growth and change, the opportunity to move forward, and leave our mistakes or missed opportunities in the past, is a great gift from *Hashem!* One who feels that they are not capable of *teshuva*, explains the *Rebbe*, is not simply selling himself short, but rather denying the endless kindness, compassion and love that the *Ribono Shel Olam* has for each and every member of *Klal Yisrael*.

The message of *Pesach Sheni*, is precisely this idea, to leave behind those past mistakes or missed opportunities, and move forward and embrace the potential for growth and success, to embrace the gift of *teshuva*, to tap into our innate strength that *Hashem* has endowed each of us with, and in so doing transform ourselves and the entire world. ■

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Chametz Owned on Pesach (continued)

The prohibition of *chametz* on Pesach has many stringencies. For example, *chametz* which is found in a mixture is included in the prohibition of owning *chametz* on Pesach (see *Mishna Berura* 442:1). When our Sages instituted the decree of *chametz she'avar alav haPesach* (*chametz* owned by a Jew during Pesach, which is also forbidden after Pesach), it was based on the biblical prohibition of owning *chametz* on Pesach. In other words, any *chametz* that is prohibited to own on Pesach would be included in the decree of *chametz she'avar alav haPesach*.

Mixtures

Any mixture that contains actual *chametz* that is greater than 1/60 of the product is subject to the biblical prohibition of *bal yera'eh* and *bal yimatzei* (Jewish ownership on Pesach) and to the decree of *chametz she'avar alav haPesach*. Even if the *chametz* is less than 1/60 of the mixture, if the *chametz* is an essential ingredient

in the product, the product is forbidden after Pesach. One common application is when the *chametz* is a *davar hama'amid* (a component that is essential to hold the food or texture together). Another example is strong flavor. Any *chametz* additive that gives the dominant flavor is included in the decree of *chametz* after Pesach, even if it is less than 1/60 of the mixture. Many modern products have mixtures of *chametz* and are included in the prohibition of *chametz* after Pesach. This can include soup mixes, sauces, syrups and much more. If such a product was accidentally purchased on Pesach or was not included in one's sale of *chametz*, it must be thrown away. Since the prohibition of *chametz she'avar alav haPesach* includes both consumption and benefit, one may not give such food as a gift or feed it to one's animals. As previously mentioned, this applies to all Jews and not just to the original owner.

Chametz nukshe

Chametz nukshe refers to *chametz* that had something wrong with its fermentation; either it did not become completely fermented, or it was not fully fit for human consumption (only barely edible). According to the *Magen Avraham* (OC 447:46), pure *chametz nukshe* is not included in the prohibition of *chametz she'avar alav hapesach*. While many authorities including the *Mishna Berura*

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(447:107) do not accept this ruling, *chametz nuksh*e in a mixture is a much easier case. Such a mixture is permitted after Pesach as long as the *chametz nuksh*e is not more than fifty percent of the total (*Pri Megadim* 442 EA:2).

Cosmetics and medicines

Certain cosmetics may contain *chametz* such as wheat alcohol. However, since the *chametz* in them is almost certainly *chametz nuksh*e and is in a mixture, one may be lenient and use them after Pesach. Regarding medicines, there is a difference between edible medication and non-edible tablets that are swallowed. Edible *chametz* medication which has flavor is included in the decree of *chametz she'avar alav haPesach*. However, one should consult with a pharmacist to determine if there is actual *chametz* in the medication. Non-edible tablets that are swallowed do not normally contain *chametz*. In a case where *chametz* is in the formula (such as specific vitamins, homeopathic pills and certain prescription drugs), one may be lenient and use these pills after Pesach. The reason for this leniency is due to the fact that any *chametz* found in non-edible medication is certainly *chametz nuksh*e, and because it is found in a mixture (*Nitei Gavriel* 60:10). In addition, since the medication is swallowed and not consumed like regular food, in halachic

terminology it is considered for benefit rather than for consumption, in which case many *poskim* are lenient (see *Emunat Itecha* 47). The OU Israel hotline has resources to answer questions regarding the kashrut of medications.

Utensils

In a case where a utensil was used for *chametz* on Pesach, the utensil itself is not included in the decree of *chametz she'avar alav haPesach* and is permitted after the chag without kashering. The *Shulchan Aruch HaRav* (OC 447) explains that since *chametz* which was absorbed in utensils is not included in the biblical prohibition of owning *chametz* on Pesach, our Sages did not extend the decree to include utensils after Pesach, even if someone purposely cooked *chametz* on the chag. Similarly, non-*chametz* food cooked in *chametz* utensils before Pesach, such as soup (which could theoretically be kosher for Pesach), is permissible for consumption after Pesach, since flavor from a pot is not included in the decree of *chametz she'avar alav haPesach* (*Pri Megadim* 442 EA:9, *Mishna Berura* 442:1).



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In summary:

- Mixtures containing *chametz* are included in the decree of *chametz* after Pesach which was owned on Pesach, both for consumption and benefit. Such food is forbidden to all Jews. One may not feed it to one's animals or use it for gifts.
- The decree applies where *chametz* is greater than 1/60 of the mixture. In a case where the *chametz* is an essential ingredient, any amount is prohibited.
- *Chametz nükshe* on its own is included in the decree, but if it is less than 50% of a mixture, there is room to be lenient.
- Cosmetics containing *chametz* are permitted after Pesach, even if they were owned on Pesach.
- Flavored medicines that are edible, such as syrups and chewable tablets, might be included in the decree. (The OU hotline can be contacted for clarification)
- Non-edible medicine (e.g. pills that are swallowed) that contains *chametz* may be used after Pesach.
- Utensils that had *chametz* cooked in them **on** Pesach are permitted after Pesach without kashering.
- Food (that does not contain *chametz*) that was cooked in *chametz* utensils before Pesach is permitted after Pesach. ■

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RABBI EPHRAIM

SPRECHER

Faculty, OU Israel Center

No Talking in Shul!

“My Shabbatot you shall observe, and My Sanctuary you shall revere.”

(Vayikra 19:30). Rashi comments that giving the proper respect to the sanctuary (Beit Hamikdash) is expressed by not entering with ones walking stick, or while wearing shoes or a money belt or with dust on ones feet. Today we have no Beit Hamikdash, but the Gemara in Megillah 29 teaches that our shuls are מקדשי מעט which means mini sanctuaries and must be treated with great respect and reverence.

Tractate Derech Eretz Raba chapter 3, one of the 14 so called “minor tractates”, records an incident at the end of the life of R. Elezar ben Azariah when he was seriously ill, his students came to him and asked him “How can we be worthy of life in the World to Come?” He answered them “Go out and be careful with the honor due to your friends, and when you are standing in prayer, know before Whom you are standing. This will earn you life in the World to Come.”

Chavos Yair wonders why R. Elezar ben Azariah prefaces his advice with the words “Go out”. It seems out of place and irrelevant to the advice he offers.

He explains that R. Elezar ben Azariah’s comment for addressing the great difficulty some people have avoiding talking during davening. This occurs mainly on Shabbat when friends see each other and have time to catch up on news of family, community or business. This is especially true now that many of us are back in shul, after a year, and some of us feel that we have to catch up with our friends, so we must be conscious of this.

Unfortunately this talking often takes place during davening or Kriat HaToah and leads to a desecration of Hashem’s sanctuary. At times a person feels that it is impolite not to respond to a question or comment from ones shul friend and feels compelled to talk, even if it is in the middle of davening in shul.

In this light, we can understand the message of R. Elezar ben Azariah. If you want to be careful in the honor due your friends, then GO OUT of Shul and talk there. When you are davening in shul, be aware before Whom you are praying. This will earn you life in the World to Come!

If only people would take to heart the words of the Chavos Yair and thereby bring about a marked improvement in the decorum in our shuls, they would then merit the great benefits that come from sincere prayer. ■



RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

GOLDSCHIEDER

Kedusha Is A Human Endeavor

Hermann Cohen, a 19th century philosopher whose viewpoints influenced Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's zt"l thought¹, comments on the opening verse in parshat Kedoshim. He draws a distinction between its two clauses:

"You shall be holy, / for holy am I, Hashem, your God (19:2)

Concerning God, holiness is inherent or intrinsic - *'I am holy.'* However, regarding man - *'you shall be holy'* should be understood to mean that you are to *become* holy. Holiness for man is a task, it is an attainment. (Hermann Cohen, *Religion of Reason: Out Of The Sources of Judaism*, p.96).

In this same vein Rabbi Soloveitchik said, "Holiness is created by man, by flesh and blood" (*Halachic Man*, p.47). *Kedusha* is actualized by man. Man's greatness is that he can invest an object, a place, and even time with sanctity.

A conspicuous example where there

1 Rabbi Soloveitchik studied in the University of Berlin, writing his doctorate on the philosophy of Hermann Cohen.

appears to be inherent *kedusha* is *kedushat Shabbat*. Certain sources claim that in this case *kedusha* is *not* dependent on man. The Talmud describes Shabbat holiness as *keviah ve'kayama* (*Pesachim 117b*) - that its sanctity has been 'set and established' from the very beginning of creation.

Seemingly, the holiness of Shabbat should present a serious challenge to the Rav's theory. However, the Rav held fast to his argument that the key component in all holiness is man's participation. He offers the following three authentications to the idea that man plays the essential role in establishing the holiness of Shabbat:

Firstly, consider the way Shabbat is described in *Vayikra* 23:2-3. The Torah includes the Shabbat with the festivals: "...these are my appointed festivals. For six days labor may be done, and the seventh day is a day of complete rest." It appears that in addition to the sanctity of Shabbat that was ordained at the end of creation, Shabbat is listed first among the festivals that the Jewish people are to sanctify. (OU Jewish action, *Kiddush-Positive Testimony*)

Rabbi Soloveitchik in "*Shi'urim Lezekher Abba Mori*," posits that the *kiddush* that we recite on Friday night adds holiness to the preexisting holiness of Shabbat. Thus, even Shabbat has a layer of human

sanctification. One of Rabbi Soloveitchik's main proofs for this is the talmudic passage which discusses why it is preferable to recite kiddush as early as possible on Friday night, but there is no similar preference regarding the *havdala* that is recited on Saturday night:

There is a difference between ushering the day in and ushering it out. Ushering it in, the earlier we do so the better, as it shows that we cherish it. Ushering it out, we delay it, so that it should not appear as a burden upon us. (*Pesachim* 105b)

The Gemara asserts that on Friday night it is preferable to recite *kiddush* early, so as to usher in the holy day of Shabbat as early as possible. Rabbi Soloveitchik asks: If *kiddush* is merely a recitation of words of praise, why then is it preferable to recite it early? This passage proves that on a certain level, *kiddush* bestows holiness upon the day, its sanctity being incomplete until *kiddush* is recited (Chaim Navon, Holiness, Etzion.org).

Based on the above sources, Rabbi Soloveitchik suggested that the *kiddush* on Shabbat is more than just a recitation of the praise and acknowledgement of the sanctity of Shabbat. Rather, *kiddush* is actually man's participation with God in the sanctification process.

How does man sanctify that which is already holy? The answer is that perhaps the holiness of Shabbat has two aspects: the prohibition against work and a sanctity akin to that of the festivals. That labor is forbidden on the seventh day is ordained by God alone, regardless of any-

thing done or said by man; this aspect of Shabbat holiness is endowed exclusively by God. However man is called upon to invest the day with an additional festive character of 'moed.' In this respect Shabbat resembles the other festivals, which are totally dependent on Israel's sanctification. (Ibid.)

The Rav's third proof regarding man's role in sanctifying the Shabbat is the notion of *Tosefet Shabbat* - "that we add from the profane onto the holy" (*Rosh Hashana* 9a). How is it that we can add additional hours to the holiness Shabbat? Is it not the twenty four hour span of time predetermined by the Torah? Apparently the answer is that *kedusha*, even the *kedusha* embedded in Shabbat, is determined by the Jew. Through a Jew's intent and his engagement, the day is infused with holiness. ■

 
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DIVREI MENACHEM

BY MENACHEM PERSOFF

Special Projects Consultant, OU Israel Center
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In the Merit of the People

Our Parsha begins by recording that after the death of Aharon's two sons, Hashem tells Moshe to caution his brother not to enter the Holy Sanctuary (*Kodesh Kodoshim*) at any time but Yom Kippur when he will atone for the people's sins.

The reference to Nadav and Avihu's demise implies that Aharon should not repeat the same mistake as his sons, not just by acting in error but also by refraining from behaving inappropriately. For although the reason given here for the son's loss of life is that they "approached before Hashem," several traditional Torah commentators added that they died, *inter alia*, on account of not honoring Moshe and abstaining from having children (cf. Netivot Shalom, *Acharei*).

What is the connection between these observations, the Yom Kippur service, and the sons' downfall? During the Yom Kippur service, the Kohen Gadol would tremulously enter the *Kodesh Kodoshim* to ask for the people's penitence. Notably, during that fearful time, the Kohanim and the people gathered outside in the Temple court, *the Azara*. They were participating in

Aharon's mission, as it were, by prostrating themselves and praying. The term *Azara* hints that they were there to help, to assist Aharon in his fateful quest.

The people, then, are an integral part of the forgiving process, for Aharon was indeed appointed "*from among the people*" (Shemot 28:1). The Netivot Shalom indicates that only in their merit and with their support could Aharon successfully complete the Avodah service on Yom Kippur. It was as if Aharon and the people were as one during that auspicious day.

However, Nadav and Avihu were far removed from the people, even from Moshe, their teacher. In today's terminology, we would say they were on a different planet. They were indeed very holy, but their abstinence and disdain for Moshe demonstrated their distance from Klal Yisrael. Their fire was foreign (cf. Shemot 10:1) not only because it was not requested but also because it was totally removed from the interests of the people as a whole. ■

Shabbat Shalom! *Menachem Persoff*

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Accidentally Paying Back Early

Question: Recently, the Citigroup “bank” mistakenly paid some \$900 mil. to Revlon’s creditors before the loans were due. A few big creditors refused to return the money. A court ruled that since the creditors took the money (they were owed) in good faith, they need not return it. Citigroup cannot demand the money from Revlon and will be paid by Revlon when the loans are due. Would the halachic ruling be the same?

Answer: We saw a bit of further information in financial newspapers but cannot promise to have captured all the details and legal nuances. Our presentation of the view of Halacha is thus quite general.

This decision relates to two questions – 1. Should the mistake be reversed (Citigroup vs. creditors)? 2. Must the bank take responsibility for its mistake and how (Citigroup vs. Revlon)?

The creditors received the money, apparently without wrongdoing on their part. On the other hand, if one innocently accepts a present intended for another person

delivered by a courier, he must return it if it is demonstrated that the transaction was a mistake. This is a broad rule regarding misinformed transactions/commitments (see Shulchan Aruch, Choshen Mishpat 25:5). It is not that simple to apply that rule here because it is not objectively a full mistake, as the creditors received money due to them, even if it was envisioned to have been given under different circumstances, so perhaps the creditors can act on them once they are in their hands.

Thus, before a loan is due, payment has no place in the lender’s hands unless the borrower intends to pay him

The following cases are good precedents. Reuven owes Shimon for two loans and pays him partially. The Shulchan Aruch (CM 58:4) rules that Shimon can determine which loan the money goes for (which is significant if one of the loans has strong guarantees). Furthermore, even if Reuven said he was giving the money for one loan and Shimon was silent, Shimon can say later that he received it for the other loan (ibid.). Even if Reuven gave money to Shimon to deliver it to Levi for Levi’s loan, Shimon can keep the money for his own loan (ibid. 5). So we might conclude that

Revlon's creditors are "in the driver's seat" once they have control of money owed, and Revlon/Citigroup's intention is inconsequential.

However, this is not so because the creditors do not yet have the right to demand the money. The K'tzot Hachoshen (83:1) and Netivot Hamishpat (Chiddushim 83:1) say that in the case of two loans, where only one is due, the lender must take the payment for the one that is due. Likewise, the deliverer of payment cannot claim the money for his own not-yet-due loan (Pitchei Choshen, Halva'ah 6:(16)). Likewise, the Tumim (67:16) rules that seizure of assets for a loan, which often gives the lender extra rights, applies only when the loan is due. Thus, before a loan is due, payment has no place in the lender's hands unless the borrower intends to pay him. (A possible exception is if there is specific reason for concern that the borrower will lack funds to pay when the due date comes – see Shulchan Aruch, CM 105:4 and Sha'ar Mishpat ad loc. 4.) Therefore, it is likely that Halacha disagrees with the court ruling, and that the mistake should be remedied by return of the money. (If the confusion damages the creditors, compensation may be appropriate.)

Regarding affairs between Citigroup and Revlon, when an agent makes a clear mistake to the detriment of the one he

represents, he must compensate him for the loss (Shulchan Aruch, CM 185:1). Sometimes, the lack of the agent's authority causes a situation whereby a transaction with a third party does not stand, and sometimes it stands and the agent must compensate (ibid. 182:2). One could argue that it would be more appropriate for payment to be taken from Revlon and that Citigroup should pay the damage this causes. However, (halachic/financial analysis is beyond our present scope), Citigroup gave their own money, and while normally they could charge Revlon, there is no reason for Revlon to agree. Therefore, according to the court's ruling regarding the creditors, we agree that Citigroup needs to wait until it is time for Revlon to pay. ■

Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact info@eretzhemdah.org to join.

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RABBI GIDEON

Machon Puah for Fertility and Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha

WEITZMAN

The Frozen Embryo

Molly Gibson is a phenomenon, she is also less than one year old. She was born a few months ago to a couple from Tennessee and joined her sister, Emma, who is now a delighted four-year-old big sister. What makes this story unusual is that Molly was frozen for 27 years. That makes her about the same age as her mother, Tina Gibson.

Molly was born from an embryo that was frozen 27 years ago, and recently “adopted” by Tina and her husband, Ben. The Gibsons had struggled with fertility challenges until they used a frozen embryo and Emma was born. Another embryo from the same batch was used to achieve their latest pregnancy, and Molly was born. Molly and Emma are genetic siblings as well as being born to the same biological mother.

This is the longest time on record that an

embryo has been frozen and thawed which resulted in a successful pregnancy and a healthy birth.

It seems that such records exist in order to be broken, and every so often a case is reported in which embryos have been frozen longer and longer. We can almost claim that frozen embryos have no “shelf life” and will exist indefinitely in liquid nitrogen until they are used.

This means that embryos cryopreserved today may only be used decades in the future. The genetic parents may be deceased before the embryos are used. The birth mother may eventually be “younger” than her children, having been born after the embryos were frozen.

We do not foresee any medical problem with such treatment, nor do there appear to be ethical concerns. It remains an interesting case that may point to a new trend.



Oded Lewensohn,
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There are, though, halachic concerns, not necessarily with the length of time that the embryos have been frozen, rather with embryo adoption itself.

Some groups and clinics promote embryo adoption as a preferred option for couples who require an egg donation. The advantage is that generally egg donation is a very expensive and complex procedure. A donor needs to be located who looks similar to the recipient. She needs counseling to ensure that she is aware of the procedure and is fully willing to undergo the procedure. She must receive hormonal injections, be monitored, tested, the eggs must be retrieved. This process takes time and is expensive. There is also no guarantee that enough viable eggs will be produced.

Embryo adoption seems to be a much easier and more productive way of achieving viable embryos. More on this next week. ■

The Puah Institute is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems. Offices in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles & Paris. Contact (Isr) 02-651-5050 (US) 718-336-0603 www.puahonline.org

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Preparing The Garden For Shemithah, #1:

From now on, we will learn Hilchot Shemithah regularly.

The main Shemithah-related issues we will focus on, in the coming year:

Preparing private gardens for Shemithah, growing at home and the use of detached platforms (*matza minutak*), eating plants that are grown in the garden according to Halacha, consumerism during Shemithah – what fruits and vegetables should we buy this year?, also: How does an Otzar beit Din work? – and additional Shemithah-related issues.

Melachot **D'oreita** in Shemithah

The Torah expressly forbids four *melachot* during Shemithah (Vayikra 25: 4-5): “You shall not **sow** your field or **prune** your vineyard. You shall not **reap** the aftergrowth of your harvest or **gather** the grapes of your untrimmed vines.”

In Shemot 34:21 the Torah says, “You shall cease from labor even at **plowing** time and harvest time.” Some of the Tannaim

believe that this is a reference to Shemithah.

All types of sowing (*zeri'ah*), planting trees (*netiah*), and planting plants (*shtila*) are forbidden: trees, vegetables, and flowers. Even watering plants immediately after they have been planted, in order to cause them to sprout – is forbidden (as part of the *din* of planting).

Pruning or trimming (*zemirah*) is the action of shortening the branches of grapevines, to allow new fruit branches to emerge. Most opinions hold that pruning is *d'oreita* for all trees, not only the grapevine.

Harvesting (*ketzirah* and *betzirah*) are permitted for individuals and families, but are forbidden for commercial purposes.

Plowing (*charishah*) is the work of improving or reclaiming the soil.

It is forbidden to carry out these *melachot* on Jewish land in Eretz Yisrael. Even a non-Jew cannot perform them for a Jew; for example, the non-Jewish gardener cannot perform the *melachot* for the Jew. Some of the farmers sell their fields to the non-Jew; we call this “*heter mechira*” and will be discussed more thoroughly in the future. In any event, there is no justification for selling private gardens to non-Jews. Therefore, these five *melachot*

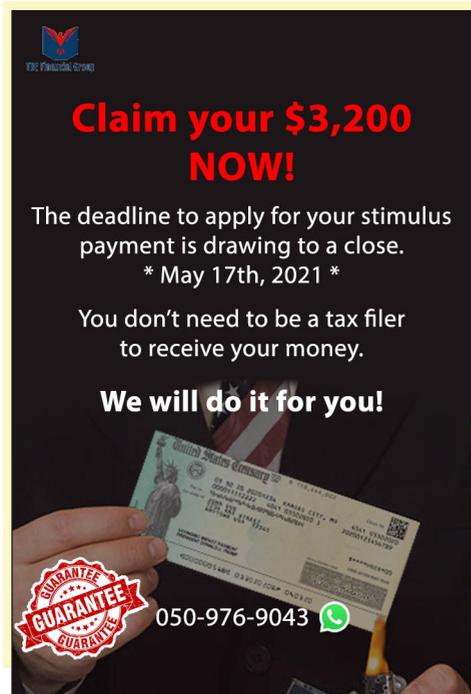
are always forbidden in our gardens, even if we live in an apartment building. We are also not permitted to perform the *melacha* through “*grama*” (indirectly).

Currently, we have no Beit Mikdash; thus today the mitzvot of Shemitah are *d'rabbanan*.

What about other *melachot* that are not expressly mentioned in the Torah? More about that next week.

Do you have a practical, real-life question regarding Shemitah? E-mails may be sent to: h.moshe@toraland.org.il

We are now in the last stages of proofreading our book in English on Hilchot Shemitah. Of course, we'll let you know when it's ready! ■




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Achieving Kedusha

Acharei-Mot and Kedoshim are the two parshiot that we read this coming Shabbat. This double portion deals with seemingly two very different topics. Acharei-Mot describes the Yom Kippur service on the holiest day of the year, followed by Kedoshim which enumerates mostly commandments that are considered Ben Adam l'Havero, between man and his fellow. One seems lofty, and is the pinnacle of holiness through separating ourselves from physical distractions, while the second seems to deal with much more mundane

matters. The commandments of honoring parents, not stealing, and giving charity, are a few examples of the commandments enumerated in Kedoshim. What is meant to be learned from the juxtaposition of these two parshiot? Furthermore, the call for Am Yisrael to be *Kadosh*, holy, is not present in the verses that describe Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, but appears instead when describing the many commandments between man and his fellow. It is Kedoshim

וַיְדַבֵּר אֲלֵי בְנֵי-עֵדֻת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם
קְדוֹשִׁים תְּהִיוּ כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם. "You shall be holy, for I, the LORD your G-d, am holy." (Vayikra 19:2) What does it mean

to be Kadosh, and how does fulfilling commandments such as honoring our parents and giving charity make us holy/Kadosh?

The juxtaposition of these two parshiot highlights the tension between two important ideals in Torah: wanting to elevate ourselves spiritually while simultaneously living and engaging in this world. On the one hand we understand that kedusha is achieved through separating ourselves from negativity and impurity. As Rashi states in his commentary on the words קדושים: תהיו

הוּו פְּרוֹשִׁים מִן הָעֲרִיבוֹת וּמִן הָעֲבָרוֹת, שְׂכַל מְקוֹם שְׂאִמְתָּה מוֹצֵא "separate yourself from improper relationships and from sins, as every place that you find discussion of separation from improper relations you see that kedusha is mentioned." Yet the commandments that directly follow the directive to be Kadosh are mitzvot Ben Adam lehevero. In fact kedusha is not merely separation for the sake of being separate, but rather in order to connect to something greater and to elevate oneself. The Torah describes HaShem as Kadosh, as He is the ultimate connector and source of everything in this world, but also elevated *beyond* anything in this world. How are we to achieve being similar to HaShem in this way and become Kadosh?

It is true that we are supposed to separate ourselves from improper relationships and sins and Yom Kippur is the pinnacle during which we achieve a lofty state of being furthest from physical needs and desires. However the goal of that separation is to

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prepare us to connect to others. Therefore the directive to be Kadosh/holy is followed by the commandments that allow us to reach this state of connection. We are striving to connect to HaShem our Creator and to want to live a life that demands more from us. We are commanded to connect to our parents, family, am Yisrael and the world around us for good. This is all accomplished through giving and acts of kindness, of seeing beyond our selfishness and helping those around us. Just as when one wants to create a perfect seal on any surface we need to make sure to remove all the dust that is preventing us from connecting, so too we need to separate



ourselves from negativity in order to make that perfect connection. The separation is a step towards connection and once we are able to elevate and to connect we achieve *kedusha*. It is for that exact reason that after the description of the Yom Kippur service and the improper relationships, the Torah goes on to enumerate the list of commandments that help us to get to the higher level of *kedusha* through the actions that will help us to connect to HaShem, and all of His creations.

In a similar way, students experience their year in Israel in the holiest place in the world where they are immersed in Torah learning and self discovery away from their families and many other distractions. However the goal is not to remain in that separated state, but rather to return to their families and

communities and to start the process of connecting in a positive way to all those around them. All these actions will truly help us achieve the lofty goal of being Kadosh like our Creator.

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BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



Kavanah in Shemoneh Esrei

It's the start of a new year and Miriam has decided to work on her davening. She realizes that her kavana (concentration) is not great and that her mind wanders a lot in the middle of davening. But she has decided that this year is going to be different. She is going to make sure to concentrate on every word and imbue it with meaning. She takes three steps back to begin her first Shemoneh Esrei of the year, and before she has a chance to notice, she is mentally planning her to-do list, thinking about a work-related issue, preparing a grocery list, and deciding what to make for dinner. She finishes her Shemoneh Esrei and with a start, realizes that she has not had any kavana at all for the entire Tefilla! She is shocked and disappointed and not sure how to fix the situation.

I would venture to say that most of us can probably relate to the above scenario. We truly want to connect to Hashem in our davening and want our Tefilla to be a spiritually uplifting experience, and yet, we somehow are unable to control our minds and thoughts as we daven.

This is true for all of our Tefillot, but especially pertinent to the Shemoneh

Esrei. The **Shulchan Aruch** (OC 101:1) writes that a person is required to have Kavana for the entire Shemoneh Esrei. If he is unable to do so, he should at least concentrate for the first bracha ('Avot'). If he did not have kavana for the first bracha, he must repeat the entire Shemoneh Esrei. The **Rama** quotes there that in today's generation (he wrote this in the 1500's), one does not go back and repeat because *he surely will not have kavana the second time around either*, so there is no point in saying it again!

Wow! The fact that we can assume that most people will not have kavana even on their second try is quite depressing. But, on the other hand, we can understand from here that we are not alone in our struggles. Already in the Rama's times, people were having difficulty with Kavana. Wandering minds are a part of human nature. And this fact is amplified a thousand times in today's super busy world.

The question is – what do we do about it?

The **Shulchan Aruch** (OC 98) gives many suggestions. He recommends that one pay careful attention to the meaning of each word. One should remind himself that the Shechina (Divine Presence) is standing before him. One should try and imagine how he would act if he were speaking before a human king – how he

would prepare his words beforehand and pay careful attention to everything he would say so as not to mess anything up. One should spend time preparing before davening. He also suggests davening in a place and at a time where there will not be distractions.

I think one of the most practical suggestions the Shulchan Aruch gives is the first one we mentioned above. There, the Shulchan Aruch brought down the ideal (to have kavana for the whole Shemonah Esrei) and the practical (to try and have kavana for at least the first bracha). I think this is an important message for us. In order to be successful in our davening, we need to know ourselves and to work on ourselves at the level that we are at. We need to be realistic. We should shoot for the stars, we should try to work on our kavanah for the entire davening, but at the same time, we need to be practical. So if one is not yet ready to have kavana for all of Shemoneh Esrei, every day take a specific bracha and make sure to concentrate extra hard on at least that one bracha. And then move on from there.

A similar idea is brought down by the **Chofetz Chaim**. As human beings, we have limited attention spans. If we want to be able to concentrate on each bracha, we need to prepare for a moment before each individual bracha. Before each bracha, we need to pause and think about we are about to say. Don't just mumble the entire Shemonah Esrei by rote. Stop, think, decide what you want to praise and request from Hashem in that specific bracha, and then continue.

This idea of pausing in the middle of our Tefilla is actually brought down in the **Shulchan Aruch** as well. (OC 98) He says as soon as you feel your mind begin to wander, stop and don't continue until you are able to get rid of those thoughts and bring yourself back to the Tefilla. **Rav Naftali Amsterdam** (one of the leaders of the Mussar movement in the 1800's) used to pause at three specific points in the Shemonah Esrei in order to bring his mind back into focus.

To conclude - having Kavana in our davening is not an easy task. But the main point is to take baby steps, be realistic in our expectations, find "tricks" that work for us, to be patient and not to despair, to ask Hashem for help in this area, and to be proud of ourselves for each moment of success. ■

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Purifying ourselves

In this week's Parsha, Acharei Mot-Kedoshim, we talk about two types of ideas. In Parshat Acharei Mot the parsha reflects upon spiritual content and discusses the work of the Beit Hamikdash, Kohanim, and Yom Kippur. Parshat Kedoshim refers to the work of the physical person and to Am Yisrael. For instance, we see how a person should act, such as not going according to the alien laws and the importance of purity.

Both Parshiot start with a statement of prevention. Acharei Mot, according to Rashi, starts by telling us not to go into the Mikdash when we are impure. Kedoshim opens by telling us to be purified as people and to stay away from sin.

The other common denominator between both Parshiot is the Issur of Arayot (adultery).

What is it about Arayot that is so horrible according to the Torah? Rav Kook explains that the Issur of Arayot is very serious since according to the Torah the right use of this act is potentially the holiest act. It is the force that brings life to the world. Using it for the wrong reason makes its holiness disappear.

What both Parshiot are trying to tell us is that the way to connect the Kedusha of the Mikdash and the individual is by prevention from the bad drives, such as Arayot. To become completely holy, we must learn how to prevent and purify oneself from the bad things. Shabbat shalom.



Akiva Sunshine 11th Grade, Raanana

Defying All Odds

Throughout history, the Jewish people have faced many hardships and persecutions. Yet, we have managed to defy all odds and find a way to survive and keep moving forward. Many people might be intrigued by how we continue to thrive in a world where it can seem like everyone is against us.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains how in this week's Parsha, Parashat Kedoshim, we get a clue to our great success. Parashat Kedoshim starts off with HaShem instructing us to be holy, "קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' " "You shall be holy, because I, HaShem, your God, am holy." The Parsha continues with two more basic Jewish laws, "איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתתי תשמרו" "Every man shall fear his mother and his father, and you shall observe My Shabbat. Here we see three ideas that teach us about the

fundamental nature of the Jewish people: Holiness, respecting our parents, and keeping Shabbat.

One of the most sought after questions is what does it mean to be holy? One answer that is given is that holiness isn't just spirituality or closeness to HaShem, rather it is a lot more about our daily lives: healthy eating and drinking, and even your sleep schedule. The second idea, honoring our parents, teaches us that we shouldn't just be good to ourselves, but rather we should spread it to others starting with our parents. The third and final idea, keeping Shabbat, teaches us that we should not only be good and respect human beings but we should also respect HaShem and do our best to get close to him.

These three ideas are perhaps the most basic versions of our three types of mitzvot. בין אדם לבין אדם, בין אדם לעצמו, and finally בין אדם לחברו (Between man and man, man and his friend, and man and HaShem). These three ideas that became the foundations for what it means to be Jewish is possibly the reason we as a nation have been able to stay strong through all of our many challenges. ■

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Real Life Rescues



Saving The Life Of a Southern Neighbor

Kibbutz Eilat - Two weeks ago, at 7:00 PM on Tuesday night, United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Eli Koon was in his home in Kibbutz Eilat, located a few minutes away from Eilat, when he received an emergency alert to a suspected stroke on his Kibbutz. Eli, who was just 200 meters away from the location, jumped on his ambucycle and sped to the given address, arriving first on the scene in 90 seconds.

A 64-year-old woman who hadn't been feeling well all day had collapsed in her home. She had been on the way to her bed to lie down and rest. The woman's alarmed husband called United Hatzalah's Dispatch and Command Center for help. Upon his arrival, Eli found the woman who was fully conscious but feeling very ill. Eli performed a quick neurological assessment and checked her vital signs. There was no apparent indication of a cerebrovascular accident or stroke.

An ambulance crew arrived just a few minutes after Eli, and it was decided to transport the woman to the hospital. Eli assisted in getting her into the emergency vehicle and was about to go home on his ambucycle when the ambulance suddenly stopped. The driver jumped out of the front and rushed to Eli, the woman had just fainted.

Hopping into the back of the ambulance, Eli and the ambulance driver quickly discovered that the woman had just suffered a cardiac arrest and was pulseless. Eli instantly launched into CPR and began chest compressions. The ambulance driver attached a defibrillator and called for an intensive care unit to the scene.

The team kept oxygenated blood circulating to the woman's vital organs for almost 25 minutes until they succeeded in regaining a steady pulse. After the woman's pulse had returned, the mobile intensive care ambulance arrived at the scene. With the woman safely on the way to the hospital for emergency catheterization, Eli was finally able to return home.



"The ambulance driver and I initiated CPR just a few seconds after the woman lost consciousness," recounted Eli. "Because we were able to intervene so quickly, the chances are high that she will recover without brain damage. In cases of cardiac arrest, time is the most critical factor and thankfully, she received high-quality medical intervention in the most crucial minutes."



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