

# Torah Tidbits

כ"ט ניסן תשפ"ב APR 30<sup>TH</sup> '22 ISSUE 1465

פרשת קדשים

PARSHAT KEDOSHIM - SHABBAT MEVARCHIM  
AVOT 2

ב"ה

OU  
ישראל

OU Israel  
wishes you  
and your family  
Yom Ha'atzmaut  
Sameach!



Special  
Yom Ha'atzmaut  
Divrei Torah  
from Torah Tidbits  
Writers and Staff  
pages 50-61



Save The Date!  
Musical Tefila Chaggigit  
with Rabbi Shlomo Katz  
Tachana Rishona  
Wed | May 4 | 7:30 pm  
see page 35 for details



ושבו  
בנים  
לגבולם  
ידמיהו לא: טז

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT KEDOSHIM

Candles 6:42PM • Earliest 5:54PM • Havdala 7:58PM • Rabbeinu Tam 8:36PM

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Gavriel Novick // Ezra Bourkoff

## HELPFUL REMINDERS

### SHABBAT MEVARCHIM



המולד יהיה ביום ראשון, עשרים דקות וחלק אחד אחרי חמש בבקר  
ראש חדש אייר יהיה ביום ראשון ובים שני הבא עלינו ועל כל ישראל לטובה  
Rosh Chodesh Iyar is on Sunday May 1 and Monday May 2

### KIDDUSH LEVANA



Earliest Kiddush Levana, 3 Days After Molad **4 Iyar/ Wed. night May 4**  
7 Days After Molad **8 Iyar/ Sun. night May 8**  
Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until **15 Iyar/ Sun. night May 15**  
until **12:17 am**



YOM HAZIKARON is observed this Tuesday evening (May 3) and Wednesday.  
YOM HA'ATZMAUT is celebrated this Wednesday evening (May 4) and Thurs-  
day.

# CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



## OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	EARLIEST	KEDOSHIM	HAVDALA	EMOR		
				Candles	Earliest	Havdala
6:42	5:54	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:58	6:47	5:58	8:03
6:59	5:56	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	8:00	7:04	6:00	8:05
7:00	5:55	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:58	7:05	5:59	8:04
6:57	5:54	Gush Etzion	7:58	7:02	5:58	8:03
6:59	5:56	Raanana / Tel Mond / Herzliya / K. Saba	8:00	7:04	6:00	8:05
6:58	5:55	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:04
6:59	5:56	Netanya	8:00	7:05	6:00	8:06
6:58	5:55	Be'er Sheva	7:58	7:03	5:59	8:04
6:59	5:56	Rehovot	7:59	7:04	6:00	8:05
6:42	5:56	Petach Tikva	7:59	6:47	6:00	8:05
6:58	5:55	Ginot Shomron	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:05
6:50	5:56	Haifa / Zichron	8:01	6:55	6:00	8:07
6:57	5:54	Gush Shiloh	7:58	7:02	5:58	8:03
6:59	5:56	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	8:00	7:04	6:00	8:06
6:58	5:54	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:58	7:02	5:58	8:04
6:57	5:54	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:58	7:02	5:58	8:03
7:00	5:57	Ashkelon	8:00	7:05	6:00	8:06
6:59	5:56	Yad Binyamin	7:59	7:04	5:59	8:05
6:53	5:54	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:59	6:58	5:58	8:05
6:57	5:53	Golan	7:58	7:02	5:57	8:04

**Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:36 PM** • next week - 8:41 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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## JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 days Wed.- Shabbat

April 27 - May 7 / 26 Nisan - 6 Iyar

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:04 - 4:53
Sunrise	5:58 - 5:48
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:17 - 9:12
Magen Avraham	8:38 - 8:32
Sof Zman Tefila	10:28 - 10:20
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:37 - 12:35
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:10 - 1:09
Plag Mincha	5:52 - 5:58
Sunset (Including Elevation)	7:21 - 7:28

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# DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



**RABBI AVI BERMAN**  
Executive Director, OU Israel



It is hard to believe that the month of Nissan is almost over. Having spent the weeks leading up to Pesach preparing, cleaning and finally basking in the beauty of the Chag HaMatzot, we find ourselves approaching Iyar, a time of rebirth - both spiritually and physically. Now that each of us has navigated our way through our personal Mitzrayim and celebrated our Geulot, HaShem helps us end the month with a unique Mitzvah that serves as an important reminder: **we cannot underestimate the power of potential and must appreciate the start of new beginnings.**

During the month of Nissan, Am Yisrael has a very special Mitzvah to fulfill, one that can pass us by if we are not careful, and can only be fulfilled once each year. The first time we see blossoming fruit trees this month, we have the Mitzvah of saying Birkat Ha'Ilanot:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שְׁלֵא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ  
כְּלוּם וְבָרָא בּוֹ בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהַנּוֹת בְּהֵם  
בְּיָמֵי אֲדָם.

Blessed are You, HaShem, King of the Universe, Who has made nothing lacking in

משפחת או יי ישראל שולחת תנחומים  
לאודליה ודוד בר-אל ומשפחתם  
על פטירת אביה  
הרב כרמי מצליח ז"ל  
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

His world, and created in it goodly trees to give mankind pleasure.

I look forward to this Mitzvah every year. Not only do I find Birkat Ha'Ilanot brings me to a deeper level of Emunah in HaKadosh Baruch Hu, it also helps me stop and appreciate the incredible world He created for us. I find that once I am able to say this Bracha, I have greater Kavannah during Shmonah Esrei, specifically when I say,

"...בְּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶת־הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־כָּל־מִינֵי  
תְּבוּאָתָהּ לְטוֹבָהּ"

For those of us fortunate to live in Eretz Yisrael have seen the power of our Tefillot over the past eight months when we said, "מְשִׁיב הַרוּחַ וּמוֹרִיד הַגֶּשֶׁם." We certainly had our fair share of a rainy and cold winter that watered our crops and filled lakes and rivers throughout the country. Now, as Pesach ends and Spring settles across Eretz Yisrael, a time of rebirth spreads across this holy land.

It is important to note that we do not wait to say Birkat Ha'Ilanot until the trees are in full bloom. Rather, we say the Bracha only when the trees just begin to form buds. **By stopping to appreciate the blossoming of the trees and reciting Birkat Ha'Ilanot, HaShem helps us see the**

תנחומים  
לחיים מרגוליות על פטירת  
אמו ע"ה  
המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

**potential in nature, in ourselves and in others.**

Perhaps this Mitzvah resonates with me so deeply because I am Zoche to be a parent. I can still recall in vivid detail the first ultrasound my wife and I went to when she was pregnant with our oldest child. I remember seeing his tiny body form as each week passed, marveling as he reached each stage of development. Tiny little hands, little toes, a nose, eyes, a small heart that began to beat. His size grew from a few millimeters to a body that is now healthy, big and strong. As I look at the blossoming trees around Eretz Yisrael, I remember that first ultrasound and appreciate the brilliance of HaShem who helped a little fetus grow into a human being. Today, my oldest son is 24, and as a father of his own children, undoubtedly finds himself in awe as each one grows with the careful guidance of the Borei Olam.

Beyond appreciating the beautiful world that HaShem made for us, Birkat Ha'Ilanot is also a time of self-reflection. Each and every tree has so much potential inside of it. Potential that we will only see in the coming weeks as they bloom and form delicious fruits of all kinds that will fill supermarkets and line the alleys of Shuk Machaneh Yehudah - a place I enjoy visiting every Erev Shabbat. Now is the time to praise HaShem for the world around us that continues to provide lessons for life.

For just like the budding trees, we each have tremendous potential inside ourselves. Some of us might



have already begun budding, others blossoming, others in need of pruning, others in need of uprooting and replanting to a place where we will ultimately grow to our potential.

For those who have yet to fulfill this Mitzvah, make sure you don't miss out! Now is the time to appreciate the world that HaKadosh Baruch Hu made for us and recognize the power of a new beginning.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat - and a healthy Spring!

Rabbi Avi Berman  
Executive Director, OU Israel  
[aberman@ouisrael.org](mailto:aberman@ouisrael.org)

May the learning from  
this issue of TT be לעילוי נשמת  
הרב אברהם ישעיהו דולגין ז"ל  
**Rabbi Simon A. Dolgin z"l**

On his 18th Yahrzeit, 28 Nissan

*The Dolgin, Glasser, Weinstock  
and Slomiansky families*

Condolences to Passy Brill and family  
on the passing of her husband

**Cyril Brill z"l**

המקום ינחם אתכם בתוך שאר אבלי ציון וירושלים

# KEDOSHIM

## ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven  
Tradburks**  
Director of  
RCA Israel Region

Parshat Kedoshim is one of the best parshiot in the Torah. Or at least Rashi says so on the first verse: most of the topics of the Torah are contained in Parshat Kedoshim. Meaning – in learning this one parsha we touch on almost all the main themes of the mitzvot of the Torah.

There are 51 mitzvot in 64 verses. These include some of the most beloved ethical mitzvot: love your neighbor as yourself, help the poor with dignity by leaving parts of your harvest for them, honesty, care for employees, concern for the vulnerable; the deaf, blind and ger. As well as warnings to not follow all types of sorcery. And to administer justice with vigilance. And forbidden sexual relationships and idolatry.

But besides simply enjoying the content of all these rich mitzvot, their context provides an important principle.

The last 11 parshiot, reaching back to Teruma, have revolved around one main theme: G-d's invitation to us to rendezvous with Him in the Mikdash. This holy encounter demands purity from us. These 11 parshiot have dealt with the many rules to ensure our encounter with Him is one of Kedusha. In these 11 parshiot we have also

been instructed in Kedusha in 2 particular human activities: food (the laws of kashrut), and sexual relations. Both of these are also framed as being areas of holiness. And next week we will have the holy days outlined.

We could easily assume: our task as Jews is to be holy. Holiness means to encounter G-d on His terms in His place. And during holy times; Shabbat and holy days. And also to be holy in those things we most closely share with the animal world: food and procreation. We are not animals. We are in His Image. And so in those very things that are earthy, we limit ourselves, expressing our noble station. Food and sexual relations.

But then we have Parshat Kedoshim. Be holy. How? Honesty. Care for others. No sorcery. Caring for employees. No idol worship. A court system that is just. Forbidden relationships. Concern for the vulnerable.

You know, it looks like every way you turn there is another mitzvah. I thought holiness is, well, I thought it was in things that are holy. Mikdash. Shabbat. Not your employees. Or your court. Or your generosity. Or honesty.

The Torah has introduced a dramatic and revolutionary idea. Holiness is everywhere. The Torah has transformed our lives into the stage for holiness. How we treat each other, how we speak, our food, our relationships, our time. Our every moment becomes a moment of holiness: to be truthful, to be generous, to think, love and fear Him.

And one beautiful stylistic tool emphasizes this. The commentaries struggle to identify the thematic flow of the 51 mitzvot of this parsha. It certainly looks like there is no particular pattern. We all could rearrange the list of mitzvot into neater cate-

gories: those between man and G-d, those between man and man, societal mitzvot, encounters with idol worship. That would make a neater flow to the parsha.

It could be that the Torah is using a stylistic tool: a flow of consciousness. You know how our minds fly all over the place: we think about where we are going, then last night's dinner, then how our neighbor is feeling, then what the kids are up to.... Perhaps, the Torah is employing that style in our parsha. As if to say, whatever you think of, wherever you turn, that internal process of yours that travels the world in 60 seconds, moving from one topic to another – that is where Kedusha can be found. In everything we do. Respect parents, keep Shabbat, don't swear falsely, leave some harvest for the poor, be fair in your courts... Whatever you think of – there's a holiness moment. Our lives are full of moments that can be holy. Everything we do. What a gift: our trite and mundane everyday life has been transformed to the stage for holiness. And that is our Parsha.



**1<sup>st</sup> aliya (Vayikra 19:1-14)** Be Holy, as I, G-d, your G-d am holy. Revere parents, keep Shabbat. Do not turn to idols or make grav-

May the Torah learned in this Torah Tidbits be לעילוי נשמת  
 החבר אשר בן החבר נפתלי ומטלה הירש ז"ל  
 נלב"ע ג' אייר - יום הזכרון  
 In loving memory of  
**A. Asher Hirsch z"l**  
 on his 15th yearzeit  
 Gimmel Iyar - Yom HaZikaron  
*You are missed by us all*



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en 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.

There is a definite repetition or perhaps development of the 10 commandments in these mitzvot. Though not in the exact order they appear in the 10 commandments, but thematically connected.



**2<sup>nd</sup> aliya (19:15-22)** 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 or seeds, or wear wool and linen.

Each of these mitzvot is rich. But to not spread gossip. That is a great one. Oh how the information age has truly perfected the spreading of gossip. I was in someone's home and on the back of the door, for you to see as you left home, was a dvar torah on not spreading gossip. That is a holy reminder.

And one of the best verses of the Torah: love your neighbor as yourself. 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.



**3<sup>rd</sup> aliya (19:23-32)** In the Land, fruit is forbidden for the first 3 years of growth, 4<sup>th</sup> year holy,

5<sup>th</sup> 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.

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Rise for the aged; for the wisdom that life itself brings. Quite a contrast to the glorification of youth of our times.



**4<sup>th</sup> aliya (19:33-37)** Love the convert. Employ accurate weights and measures. 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.

I could leave it at that. But I can't. I have the good fortune to be the Director of Machon Milton, the RCA course of study for converts here in Jerusalem, run in partnership with Shavei Yisrael. We need to be sensitive when inviting converts of those in the process of converting to our homes – we need to be sensitive to their feelings. Perhaps they don't want to tell their story again, for the 50<sup>th</sup> time. Or 100<sup>th</sup>. Maybe they just want to enjoy Shabbat dinner and speak of the parsha, sing zemirot, and participate like everyone else. So. Don't ask them their story. And we need to go out of our way to bring the one who is clearly uncomfortable a siddur and chumash and invite them to sit beside us. After all, love the convert.

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?



**5<sup>th</sup> aliya (20:1-7)** One who gives their child to Molech shall be put to death. And if you don't

In loving memory of  
**Ernest Kamins ז"ל**  
 אשר אליעזר בן אברהם לייב ז"ל  
 on his sixth yahrzeit  
*From his Wife, Children, Grandchildren  
 and Great Grandchildren*

**"מקום, זמן לעשות..."**  
 זלמן ברנשטיין ז"ל

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do it, I will. The one who turns and follows sorcery, I will deal with them. Be holy; for I am Holy.

There are things done in the name of great piety that are not pious at all. Child sacrifice has a rationale to it: I am willing to give my most precious to G-d. Just that it is a perverted rationale. While we should always strive to understand those who behave unlike us, we should not tolerate behavior that is perverse in the name of piety.



**6th aliya (20:8-22)** 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

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 does not spit us out. Certainly something to give us pause, 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.



**7th aliya (20:23-27)** 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 wide range of holy things outlined in the parsha is our expression of being holy to Him. And He, in turn, will make us distinct.

---

## HAFTORAH

### 1 SAMUEL 20:18-42 MACHAR CHODESH

---

Today's *haftarah* is read on a Shabbat that is immediately followed by Rosh Chodesh. Indeed, the reading opens with the words, "Yonatan said, "Tomorrow is the [first of the] new month."

The story is one of loyalty and devotion. David and Yonatan are dear friends.

## A SHORT VORT

BY RABBI CHANUCH YERES  
Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אלהם קדשים תהיו

"Speak unto all of the congregation of the children of Israel and say to them You shall be holy" (19:2)

Rabbi Yechezkel Halberstam (son of Sanzer Rebbe 1813-1898, Poland) asks a simple question. Would it not be more appropriate to be stated in the command form "Kedoshim Heyu...Be Holy"? Why does the pasuk use the future tense. You shall be?

Perhaps, he answers, this is the commitment, the future promise by G-d that the Children of Israel will become sacred and pure, thereby, meriting the future redemption. As Maimonides states in his Laws of Repentance (7:5) The Torah ensures that eventually Israel will repent their ways, end their exile and merit immediate redemption. As stated in Deuteronomy (30:1-3) "And it shall come to pass...and you shall return unto G-d...and then G-d will turn thy captivity...and will return and gather thee from all the peoples.

Celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut this week, who would have thought that over 150 years ago Rabbi Halberstam would see fit to find words of prophecy and hope in Parshat Kedoshim that we are watching unfold before our very own eyes. Shabbat Shalom and Chag Ha'atzmaut Sameach

Yonatan's father, King Shaul, despises David, fearing that he will depose him from the throne. Sensing danger, Yonatan told David to hide in the field rather than attend Shaul's Rosh Chodesh feast. Yonatan then attended the feast and gauged the king's mood. Realizing that Shaul was determined to kill David, Yonatan went out to the field, shot three arrows and called to his assistant, "The arrow is beyond you," a predetermined signal to his friend that it was not safe to return to the king's palace.

Before parting, the two friends kissed and wept, and swore to maintain their mutual affection for generations to come. ■

## STATS

	KEDOSHIM
of 54 sedras in Torah	30th
of 10 in Vayikra	7th
Lines	109
Rank (Among The 54)	49th
Parshiyot	4
P'tuchot	3
S'tumot	1
P'sukim	64
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	49/9
Words	868
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	49/9
Letters	3229
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	49/9

## MITZVOT

	KEDOSHIM
Mitzvot (pos/prohib)	13+38

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**THE PERSON**

**BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB**

OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

**IN THE PARSHA**

# I Get No Respect!

I love visiting residences for senior citizens. For one thing, being around truly older people invariably helps me feel young by comparison.

Recently, I was a weekend guest scholar at such a residence. I dispensed with my prepared lectures and instead tried to engage the residents of the facility, not one of whom was less than ninety years old, in a group discussion. This proved to be a very wise move on my part, because I learned a great deal about the experience of getting old. Or, as one wise man insisted, “You don’t get ‘old’—you get ‘older.’”

The question that I raised to provoke discussion was this: “What made you first realize that you were getting ‘older?’”

I was taken aback by the reactions of the group, because there were clearly two very different sets of responses.

One member of the group responded, “I knew I was getting older when people

started to ignore me. I was no more than a piece of furniture to them. Worse, they no longer noticed me at all.”

About half of the group expressed their agreement with this person’s experience. They proceeded to describe various experiences that they had in being ignored. Some of those stories were quite poignant and powerful. One woman even described how she was present at the outbreak of a fire in a hotel lobby, and the rescue workers “simply did not see me sitting there. That is, until I started to scream!”

But then some of the others spoke up expressing quite different experiences. One gentleman said it for the rest of this second group: “I knew that I was getting older when passengers on the subway or bus stood up for me and gave me their seat.” That basic gesture of respect conveyed to the members of this group of senior citizens that they had indeed reached the age when they were not ignored, but rather the beneficiaries of acts of deference.

The discussion then entered another phase, as both groups agreed that, while they certainly did not want to be ignored, they also were resentful of these gestures of respect. The group unanimously supported



the position articulated by the oldest person there, who said: “We don’t want gestures of respect. We want genuine respect.”

It seems that the entire group, although appreciative of those who relinquished seats on the subway for them, wanted something more. They wanted their opinions to be heard, their life experience to be appreciated, and their accumulated wisdom to be acknowledged. Symbolic gestures were insufficient, and sometimes were even experienced as demeaning.

This week’s Torah portion, *Parshat Kedoshim* (*Leviticus* 19:1-20:27), contains the basic biblical commandment regarding treatment of the elderly: “You shall rise before the aged and show deference to the old; you shall fear your God: I am the Lord.” (*ibid.* 19:32)

Rashi’s comments on this verse indicate how sensitive he was to the subtle reactions expressed by the members of my little group. Here is what he says, paraphrasing the Talmudic Sages: “What is deference? It is refraining from sitting in his place, and not interrupting his words. Whereas one might think to simply close his eyes and pretend not to even see the old person, the verse cautions us to fear your God, for after all, he knows what is in the heart of man...”

Interestingly, not sitting in *his* seat means much more than just giving him a seat on the bus. It means recognizes that the elderly person has his own seat, his own well-earned place in society, which you, the younger person, dare not usurp. It is more

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than just a gesture. It is an acknowledgment of the valued place the elder has in society, a place which is his and his alone.

Similarly, not interrupting the older person's conversation is much more than an act of courtesy. It is awareness that this older person has something valuable to say, a message to which one must listen attentively.

How well our Torah knows the deviousness of which we are all capable. We can easily pretend not to notice the older person. But He who reads our minds and knows what is in our hearts will be the judge of that. We must fear Him and not resort to self-justification and excuses. We must deal with the older person as a real person, whose presence cannot be ignored but must be taken into full account in our conversation.

Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, in his commentary on this verse, refers us to a passage in the *Midrash Rabbah* on the weekly portion of *Beha'alotecha* in the *Book of Numbers*, which understands the

phrase "you shall fear your God" as being the consequence of your showing deference to the elderly. Thus, if you treat the elderly well you will attain the spiritual level of the God-fearing person. But if you refrain from showing the elderly that deference, you can never aspire to the title "God-fearing person" no matter how pious you are in other respects.

There is another entirely different perspective on our verse which provides a practical motive for honoring the elderly. It is to be found in the commentary of Abraham ibn Ezra, who explains the phrase "You shall fear your God" in the following way:

"The time will come when you will be old and frail and lonely. You will long for proper treatment at the hands of the young. But if you showed disrespect for the elderly when you were young, and did not "fear God," God will not reward you with the treatment you desire in your own old age."

As each of us strives to show genuine respect to our elders, we help construct a society in which the elderly have their proper place. That society will hopefully still be there when we become older, and then we will reap the benefits of our own youthful behavior.

Our Torah portion is entitled *Kedoshim*, which means "holy." One of the major components of the holy society is the treatment it accords to every one of its members, especially those who are vulnerable. Treating the elderly with genuine respect, truly listening to them and valuing their contributions, is an essential part of what it means to be a "holy people." ■

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# COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from  
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Dedicated by  
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## From Priest to People

Something fundamental happens at the beginning of this parsha and the story is one of the greatest, if rarely acknowledged, contributions of Judaism to the world.

Until now, Vayikra has been largely about sacrifices, purity, the Sanctuary, and the Priesthood. It has been, in short, about a holy place, holy offerings, and the elite and holy people – Aaron and his descendants – who minister there. Suddenly, in chapter 19, the text opens up to embrace the whole of the people and the whole of life:

The Lord said to Moses: “Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them, ‘Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.’” (Lev. 19:1–2)

This is the first and only time in Leviticus that so inclusive an address is commanded. The Sages explained this to mean that the

contents of the chapter were proclaimed by Moses to a formal gathering of the entire nation (*hak'hel*). It is the people as a whole who are commanded to “be holy”, not just an elite group of priests. It is life itself that is to be sanctified, as the chapter goes on to make clear. Holiness is to be made manifest in the way the nation makes its clothes and plants its fields, in the way justice is administered, workers are paid, and business conducted. The vulnerable – the deaf, the blind, the elderly, and the stranger – are to be afforded special protection. The whole society is to be governed by love, without resentments or revenge.

What we witness here, in other words, is the radical *democratisation of holiness*. All ancient societies had priests. We have encountered four instances in the Torah thus far of non-Israelite priests: Malchizedek, Abraham’s contemporary, described as a Priest of God Most High; Potiphara, Joseph’s father-in-law; the Egyptian Priests

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as a whole, whose land Joseph did not nationalise; and Yitro, Moses' father-in-law, a Midianite Priest. The priesthood was not unique to Israel, and everywhere it was an elite. Here for the first time, we find a code of holiness directed to the people as a whole. We are all called on to be holy.

In a strange way, though, this comes as no surprise. The idea, if not the details, had already been hinted at. The most explicit instance comes in the prelude to the great covenant-making ceremony at Mount Sinai when God tells Moses to say to the people, "Now if you obey Me fully and keep My covenant, then out of all nations you will be My treasured possession. Although the whole earth is Mine, you will be for Me *a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*" (Ex. 19:5-6), that is, a kingdom *all* of whose members are to be in some sense priests, and a nation that is in its entirety holy.

The first intimation is much earlier still, in the first chapter of Genesis, with its monumental assertion, "Let Us make humankind in Our image, in Our likeness'... So God created humankind in His own image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them" (Gen. 1:26-27). What is revolutionary in this declaration is not that a human being could be in the



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image of God. That is precisely how kings of Mesopotamian city states and Pharaohs of Egypt were regarded. They were seen as the representatives, the living images, of the gods. That is how they derived their authority. The Torah's revolution is the statement that not some but *all* humans share this dignity. Regardless of class, colour, culture, or creed, we are all in the image and likeness of God.

Thus was born the cluster of ideas that, though they took many millennia to be realised, led to the distinctive culture of the West: the non-negotiable dignity of the human person, the idea of human rights, and eventually, the political and economic expressions of these ideas - liberal democracy on the one hand, and the free market on the other.

The point is not that these ideas were fully formed in the minds of human beings during the period of biblical history. Manifestly, this is not so. The concept of human rights is a product of the seventeenth century. Democracy was not fully implemented until the twentieth. But already in Genesis 1 the seed was planted. That is what Jefferson meant when he wrote, "God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have

removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the Gift of God?"<sup>1</sup>

The irony is that these three texts - Genesis 1, Exodus 19:6, and Leviticus 19 - are all spoken in the priestly voice Judaism calls *Torat Kohanim*.<sup>2</sup> On the face of it, Priests were not egalitarian. They all came from a single tribe, the Levites, and from a single family within the tribe - that of Aaron. To be sure, the Torah tells us that this was not God's original intention. Initially it was to have been the firstborns - those who were saved from the last of the Ten Plagues - who were charged with special holiness as the ministers of God. It was only after the sin of the Golden Calf, in which only the tribe of Levi did not participate, that the change was made. Even so, the priesthood would have

1 *Notes on the State of Virginia, Query XVIII.*

2 *There is, of course, a prophetic call to equality also. We hear, in all the prophets, a critique of the abuse of power and the exploitation of the poor and powerless. What made the Priestly voice so significant is that it is the voice of law, and thus of the legal structures that alleviated poverty and set limits to slavery.*

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been an elite, a role reserved specifically for firstborn males. So deep is the concept of equality written into monotheism that it emerges precisely from the priestly voice - from which we would least expect it.

The reason is this: religion in the ancient world was, not accidentally but essentially, a defence of hierarchy. With the development, first of agriculture, then of cities, what emerged were highly stratified societies with a ruler on top, surrounded by a royal court, beneath which was an administrative elite, and at the bottom an illiterate mass that was conscripted from time to time either as an army or as a *corvée*, a labour force used in the construction of monumental buildings.

What kept the structure in place was an elaborate doctrine of a heavenly hierarchy whose origins were told in myth, whose most familiar natural symbol was the sun,

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and whose architectural representation was the pyramid or ziggurat, a massive building broad at the base and narrow at the top. The gods had fought and established an order of dominance and submission. To rebel against the earthly hierarchy was to challenge reality itself. This belief was universal in the ancient world. Aristotle thought that some were born to rule, others to be ruled. Plato constructed a myth in his *Republic* in which class divisions existed because the gods had made some people with gold, some with silver, and others with bronze. This was the “noble lie” that had to be told if a society was to protect itself against dissent from within.

Monotheism removes the entire mythological basis of hierarchy. There is no order among the gods because there are no gods, there is only the one God, Creator of all. Some form of hierarchy will always exist: armies need commanders, films need directors, and orchestras, conductors. But these are functional, not ontological. They are not a matter of birth. So it is all the more

impressive to find the most egalitarian sentiments coming from the world of the Priest, whose religious role *was* a matter of birth.

The concept of equality we find in the Torah specifically and in Judaism generally is not an equality of wealth: Judaism is not communism. Nor is it an equality of power: Judaism is not anarchy. It is fundamentally an equality of dignity. We are all equal citizens in the nation whose sovereign is God. Hence the elaborate political and economic structure set out in Leviticus, organised around the number seven, the sign of the holy. Every seventh day is free time. Every seventh year, the produce of the field belongs to all, Israelite slaves are to be liberated, and debts released. Every fiftieth year, ancestral land was to return to its original owners. Thus the inequalities that are the inevitable result of freedom are mitigated. The logic of all these provisions is the priestly insight that God, Creator of all, is the ultimate Owner of all: “The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is Mine and you reside in My land as strangers and temporary residents” (Lev. 25:23). God therefore has the right, not just the power, to set limits to inequality. No one should be robbed of dignity by total poverty, endless servitude, or unrelieved indebtedness.

What is truly remarkable, however, is what happened *after* the biblical era and the destruction of the Second Temple. Faced with the loss of the entire infrastructure of the holy, the Temple, its Priests, and sacrifices, Judaism translated the entire system of *avodah*, Divine service, into the everyday life of ordinary Jews. In prayer, every

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Jew became a Priest offering a sacrifice. In repentance, each became a High Priest, atoning for their sins and those of their people. Every synagogue, in Israel or elsewhere, became a fragment of the Temple in Jerusalem. Every table became an altar, every act of charity or hospitality, a kind of sacrifice.

Torah study, once the speciality of the priesthood, became the right and obligation of everyone. Not everyone could wear the crown of Priesthood, but everyone could wear the crown of Torah. A *manzer talmid chacham*, a Torah scholar of illegitimate birth, say the Sages, is greater than an *am ha'aretz Kohen Gadol*, an ignorant High Priest. Out of the devastating tragedy of the loss of the Temple, the Sages created a religious and social order that came closer to the ideal of the people as "a kingdom of Priests and a holy nation" than had ever previously been realised. The seed had been planted long before, in the opening of Leviticus 19: "Speak to *the entire assembly of Israel* and say to them, 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'"

Holiness belongs to all of us when we turn our lives into the service of God, and society into a home for the Divine Presence. That is the moral life as lived by the kingdom of priests: a world where we aspire to come close to God by coming close, in justice and love, to our fellow human. ■

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**O**n this Shabbat, days after Yom HaShoah and before Yom HaZikaron, it is fitting that we read the second of the two parshot of Acharei Mot-Kedoshim (“following the death of the martyrs”). The haftarah, however, reflects tomorrow’s arrival of Rosh Chodesh Iyar with the story found in the 20<sup>th</sup> perek of Shmuel A. The well-known episode relates the difficult trial, a test of faithfulness, for both David and his dear friend (and brother-in-law) Yonatan, the son of King Sha’ul.

Following Sha’ul’s failure to follow G-d’s command when warring against their intractable enemy, Amalek, Hashem removed His favor from Sha’ul and placed it upon His choice of successor, Sha’ul’s son-in-law, David. As a result, Sha’ul struggled with bouts of depression and jealousy, even twice attempting to murder David. When David fled the palace to escape the King’s effort to spear him, he told Yonatan of Shaul’s desire to kill him, something that Yonatan could not accept, as his father had sworn to him that he would not harm David. Our haftarah tells the story of how the two friends tried to

reveal Sha’ul’s true intentions, which, indeed, Sha’ul does - for when David’s presence was twice missed at the festive Rosh Chodesh meals, the King angrily reacts by publicly accuses him of being a rebel who was trying to usurp the throne.

The next day, Yonatan tearfully reveals to David what happened and urges him to escape before he is murdered. In the end, Yonatan acts nobly, faithfully serving his father and continuing to show him the respect due to him, and, similarly, David never attempts to harm the King throughout his flight from Shaul’s pursuit, despite numerous opportunities to do so.

Although the opening words of the haftarah declaring “Machar Chodesh”, that “tomorrow is Rosh Chodesh” form the obvious connection between the Shabbat and the haftarah, there is more we see in the story that helps us understand its choice for the reading. King David is symbolized by the moon, which is why we declare “David, Melech Yisra’el, chai v’kayam” every month when we stand before the moon and recite Birkat HaL’vana. The Tiferet Shlomo explains that, as the moon grows and is

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then diminished and once again reborn, so too David had times of ascendancy and power followed by times of trouble and powerlessness, only to be reinvigorated again. Most meaningful is that, like the moon, David humbly “diminished” his “light”, denied and personal glory, as, throughout his Sefer Tehillim, he credits Hashem for his successes, his strength and his victories.

I would therefore add that, this year there is an additional significance to the haftarah’s message and its lesson regarding David’s character. The humility of Israel’s second king was entrenched in David’s understanding that Israel’s destiny, like his own, would include difficulties, losses and, yes, even martyrdom. Like the moon, there would be ascendancy and powerlessness. Ultimately, however, David had faith that G-d would restore the strength and success. He knew that Hashem would, once again shed His eternal light over His people, and, through them, enlighten the entire world.

“David Melech Yisrael Chai V’Kayam” – David, his strength, his kingship and his faith remain alive until this very day.

...which is true of his nation as well! ■



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# Love Your Neighbor?

In this week's parsha we find one of the most famous commandments, “*v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha*”, to love your neighbor as you love yourself. This is quite a difficult task. We can understand being obligated to respect someone else, but how can one be forced to love someone else? How are we to understand this obligation? We will offer a few explanations:

**Rav Levi Yitzhak M'Bardichiv** – highlights that the imperative is to love another like you love **yourself**. Each of us is aware of our shortfalls. Even though we are not perfect, we are able to overlook our faults in order to be satisfied with ourselves. Similarly, we must strive to overlook the imperfections of others and to accept them.

**Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch** – focuses on the use of the term “*l'reacha*” to explain the imperative. It is interesting to note that the *pasuk* does not state “*v'ahavta et reacha*” – which would be translated as love your neighbor. Rather the Torah uses the term “*l'reacha* (with the letter *lamud*). Perhaps this is to underscore that one is not obligated to love their neighbor, but to act in a **loving manner towards** their neighbor. Emotions cannot be forced upon us, but *actions* can be. As the *chinuch* states in

several places, we are obligated to act in a certain manner as our actions eventually affect our emotions. Whether or not we like another, we are required to treat them in a respectful manner and eventually that would lead to deeper feelings of affection.

If I may add, we sometimes state that we need to avoid *sinat chinam* (translated as hatred for no reason) and replace it with *ahavat chinam* (love for no reason). Truthfully, we should avoid *ahavat chinam* as well. Love someone for no reason? We should be able to find even something small to love about another. If we cannot find a reason to appreciate another, then we have a problem.

**Rav Elchanan Wasserman** – offers an alternative explanation. If I am alive, it is due to the will of God. There is a purpose for my existence, and I am to fulfill a certain *shlichut* (task). If that is true with respect to ourselves it is true with respect to others as well. Therefore, I must take care in how I treat others, because they were placed on this earth by God to fulfill a purpose as well.

Rav Elchanan's explanation resolves another related question. There is a well-known story in the Talmud (Shabbat 31), whereby a convert asks Hillel to teach him all of the Torah in an abbreviated manner. Hillel responds with the statement “do not treat others in a way in which you would despise being treated by others”, essentially a statement that is very similar to our

pasuk of *v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha*. From Hillel's response, one could potentially derive mitzvot *ben adam l'chavero* – how to act to one another, but how could one deduce the mitzvot *ben adam l'makom* – commandments between man and God?

Based on Rav Elchanan's explanation we can comprehend Hillel's intention. If I understand that I am to respect others because God placed them in this world and they each serve a purpose, I am testifying as to God's dominion over the world and his *hashgacha pratit*.

Another way of understanding Hillel's statement as being inclusive of mitzvot *ben adam l'chavero* is as follows. Once we appreciate others and perform acts of *chesed* for each other, we come to understand that there is someone who is performing amazing acts of *chesed* on our behalf. Someone who created the world and provides us with all our needs. Avraham and Ruth were both tremendous *ba'ale chesed* through which they each came to recognize God. Through mitzvot *ben adam l'chavero*, they achieved an appreciation of mitzvot *ben adam l'makom*.

May we be able to overlook the faults of others, appreciate their attributes and through our acts of loving kindness be worthy of a *geula shlema bimhera b'yamenu*. ■

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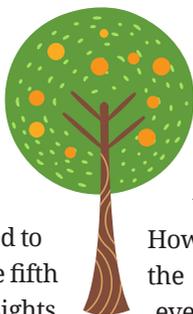
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# Fortuitous Fruit

If you are lucky enough to have a fruit tree growing in your garden you may be familiar with the fascinating mitzvot of *orlah* and *neta revai*, mentioned in this *parashah* (*Vayikra 19:23-25*). Torah law prohibits eating the fruit of a tree for the first three years. One is then required to dedicate the fruit to Hashem in the fourth year and is only then allowed to enjoy the produce of his trees in the fifth year. Many commentators offer insights into the significance of these laws and parallels to our lives.



The Rambam views this mitzvah as a response to idolatrous practices. It was not uncommon for idolaters to use magic formulas to speed up the growth of fruit, thus we are commanded to desist from eating

a tree's produce for its first few years. The Ramban, however, sees this as an appropriate expression of gratitude to Hashem. In a tree's first few years its fruit is of inferior quality, and therefore we wait until it is more developed so we can offer the first quality produce as *bikurim* to Hashem before enjoying it ourselves.

Rav Moshe Feinstein in *Darash Moshe* explains that at first glance this mitzvah seems counter intuitive. The Torah goes to great lengths teaching us not to be wasteful or destroy any property. How are we to understand destroying the fruit of the first few years? However, notes Rav Moshe, this is exactly the point. We must recognize the limitation of our understanding and maintain our observance of Hashem's word even if it makes no sense to us. Upholding Torah and mitzvot is not dependent on how we understand things, rather on appreciating that there is a greater scheme way

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Rav Hirsch points out that these *pesukim*, according to Rabbi Akiva, are the source for saying blessings before partaking of food. Just as one brought his fruits in the fourth year to Yerushalayim to eat in the presence of holiness, likewise, we need to continually remind ourselves that we must eat in “the presence of Hashem.” Each time we say the word “*Baruch*” we create a stronger awareness of Hashem’s beneficence and the need to elevate our physical existence to serve Hashem.

The *Ohr Hachayim Hakadosh* sees a parallel here to man. The Torah teaches that “man is like the tree of the field” (*Devarim 20:19*). A child is preverbal his first three years and is so to speak ‘closed.’ In his fourth year we begin to teach “*Torah tzivah lanu Moshe*” and other aspects of holiness. Only in the fifth year do we begin to teach the child Torah properly. This is the source notes *Nitai Gavriel* for an “*upsherin*” or “*chalachah*” on a little boy’s third birthday. We initiate the child into the realm of *kedushah* by giving him his first haircut and leaving his *payot* uncut. We clearly demonstrate a desire to raise him in the Torah’s ways, teaching him to dedicate his life to Hashem and His mitzvot. ■

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**11:30AM** Confrontation and  
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**Breitowitz**

**10:30AM**

Parshat HaShavua

**Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

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**Dr. Deborah Polster**

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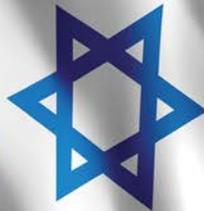
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**Rabbi Goldwicht**

Parshat HaShavua

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# Kedoshim: Unpacking the Process

The great tzadik of Yerushalayim, Rav Aryeh Levin, zt'l was the paradigm of kindness, holiness and righteousness. A beloved sage who radiated *ahavas ha-brios*, 'love of all beings', exemplified a life of *Toras Chesed*, earning the trust and respect of Jews from all walks of life.

In the early days of the fledgling State, due to difficult economic conditions, there were a number of stores in the center of town that remained open on Shabbos. Community activists and rabbanim worked to educate and inspire, convince and cajole the shop-keepers to respect the sanctity of Shabbos as well as the *kedusha* of Yerushalayim — and to close their stores by sundown. One store owner was particularly obstinate in his refusal to close his shop.

When Reb Aryeh heard of the situation, he volunteered to intervene. That Friday afternoon, dressed in his Shabbos finery, Reb Aryeh visited the store. He walked up and down the aisles, surveying the goods, observing the hustle and bustle of customers coming in, making their purchases. As the sun began to slide behind the stone buildings, and the inner glow of Shabbos

spread through the Holy City, Reb Aryeh made himself comfortable on a chair next to the entrance of the store.

The owner was unsure what Reb Aryeh was doing and began to feel uncomfortable with the *tzadik's* presence. The time for *Mincha* had already arrived, and Reb Aryeh showed no sign of moving. He just sat there watching the steady flow of customers entering and exiting the shop....

"*K'vod HaRav*, dear Rabbi" the owner finally whispered, blushing, "...is there anything I can do for you?" Reb Aryeh's voice was gentle and full of empathy: "My dear brother! When I heard that an *ehrliche yid* like yourself keeps his store open on Shabbos, I'll be honest, I couldn't understand how it was possible. I needed to come and see for myself how difficult it must be for you to close your business. And...seeing how many customers are here and how much business you are doing, I must say, I feel for you, this must be such a challenge for you."

The yid was visibly moved "*K'vod HaRav*, I don't know what to say; I've taken so many threats, so much pressure, and the harshest criticism from people who have never even met me. It means so much to me that you came here today, and that you really do understand how hard this is for me..."

Reb Aryeh rose to leave, looked the shopkeeper in the eyes, and wished him a heartfelt "Shabbat Shalom." Soon thereafter, the store was closed for Shabbos — in

honor of the holy Shabbos...and ostensibly, in honor of Reb Aryeh.

In this week's sedra, Parshas Kedoshim, we are called upon to lovingly and respectfully admonish our brother who has erred:

לֹא־תִשְׁנֵא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ  
הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חָטָא:  
לֹא־תִקֵּם וְלֹא־תִטּוֹר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ  
וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה'.

“You shall not hate your brother in your heart.

You shall surely rebuke your fellow, but you shall not bear a sin on his account.

You shall neither take revenge from nor bear a grudge against the members of your people;

you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

I am Hashem. (19:17-18)

Unpacking the structure and sequence of these instructions reveals an insightful inner road map, process and a *derech* toward achieving what our sages consider *klal gadol baTorah*, “the most essential principle of Torah”: וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ.

Healthy relationships are founded on open, honest communication. לֹא־תִשְׁנֵא אֶת־ אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְבְּךָ, “Do not to hate your brother in your heart,” is therefore the first and foundational step on this path. We may at times

feel slighted, jealous, angry, resentful, sad or bitter. All such feelings are normal. The Torah only warns us not to harbor such negative feelings, to be careful to not let them fester, for if they fester, they may eventually erupt upon another person.

With the directive of הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ, “admonish your neighbor who has erred,” the Torah encourages us to acknowledge and honestly address our feelings so that we can respond to distressing situations consciously and constructively.

*Tochacha*, admonishment or ‘rebuke’ is not easy. Yet, while it may be hard to express painful emotions or tell someone of your disappointment or disapproval, when *tochacha* is shared within a context of love and respect, it can create deeper connection with the other and better spiritual health for both of us. The essence of *tochacha* is reflected in the Arizal’s teaching that all souls constitute one body, and the performance of a *mitzvah* or *aveirah* by any one of us affects us all. The spiritual health of our collective body thus depends on the wellbeing and functioning of each limb.

While the instructions in these *p’sukim* emphasize loving others, they also acknowledge that inappropriate behavior or unholy acts of another person call for *Tochecha*,



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corrective action and *tikun*. ולא־תשא עָלָיו חַטָּאת “and do not carry sin on his account” implies that if we fail to speak out regarding destructive attitudes or behaviors, we can, in a sense, onboard that sin. However, as the order of verses shows, our call to mutual responsibility is sandwiched by *ahavas Yisrael*. When we communicate openly and with empathy, it allows us to stay clear and connected to Hashem, and to maintain our relationship with the other person without weighing it down with harshness or blame. It also keeps us from picking up and carrying the burden of a sin that could have been prevented.

Ultimately, ולא־תטר, we must not hold a grudge, and וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ we must love them, for an individual who has sinned is deserving of love and cannot be defined by their error or wrongdoing. This includes ourselves — we should never hold a grudge, even against ourselves, for our errors.

The Alter Rebbe, in Tanya, 32, clarifies this:

שאף הרחוקים מתורת ה' ועבודתו... צריך למשכן בחבלי עבותות אהבה, וכולי האי ואולי יוכל לקרוב לתורה ועבודת ה', והן לא, לא הפסיד שכר מצות אהבת רעים

“Those who are far from God’s Torah and service... must be drawn close *with strong bonds of love*...” Thus, the mitzvah ‘to love’ and the mitzvah ‘to hate’ can co-exist. It is a mitzvah to hate *the evil* that exists within a person, while loving the hidden spark of Godliness that resides within him.

ולא־תקם ולא־תטר, ‘not taking revenge nor

bearing a grudge’, suggests a methodology of ‘letting go’ and moving forward in bruised relationships — and a practical step in moving from ‘not hating’ to cultivating ‘love’. The Torah’s specific choice of language in this pasuk, כְּבִי עַמֶּךָ, “members of your people”, focuses our attention upon the fact that each and every Jew is “my dear brother” or sister. A well-known parable is first expressed in the Talmud Yerushalmi: ‘If one were to accidentally cut their hand with a knife, can we imagine that a sane and healthy person would cut the other hand in retribution?’ Taking seriously the *issur* of taking revenge and the *aveira* of bearing a grudge, enables us to live day to day with the Arizal’s teaching that all Jews are members of the same sacred body.

The Kopitschnitzer Rebbe, Reb Avraham Yehoshua Heschel zy’a, would say that the mitzvah of *V’ahavta* does not refer to loving tzadikim, for it is impossible *not* to love good, kind, righteous people. Therefore, the commandment is to love those who are difficult to love. *V’Ahavta* applies to those with whom we strongly disagree, people who choose to live very differently than we do, or who seem to have opposing values and worldviews.

The Baal Shem Tov has revealed that *ahavas Yisrael* is the first portal that leads into the courtyard of Hashem’s palace. May we be *zoche*, have the merit, to enter this gate — and to reveal the spark of Godliness in one another! ■

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**RABBI AARON**

Editor, Torah Tidbits

**GOLDSCHIEDER**

Following the celebration of Pesach there is a custom to study a chapter of *Pirkei Avot* each Shabbat, completing all six chapters in advance of the festival of Shavuot. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik offered the following insights regarding the importance and purpose in learning this unique section of the Mishnah.

## Pirkei Avot: Masorah of the Heart

Both in theme and style the *mishnayot* of Pirkei Avot stand in stark contrast to the halachic dictates which make up the majority of the Mishnah. The directives found in *Avot* advance an ethical system and recommend a course for character development. The Sages accentuated this idea when they stated: “Whoever wants to be a chasid, an ethical personality, must live in conformity with...the sayings incorporated into *Avot*” (*Bava Kamma* 30a)

With the aforementioned idea in mind Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik took note of the curious title of this beloved work, known simply as *Avot*. Usually, the name of a tractate denotes the subject matter with which it deals. *Me’iri* (1239-1310) explained the term *Avot* in a twofold way. First, the word

*Avot* suggests foundational principles; a similar term regarding the laws of Shabbat: *Avot melachot* - major categories of labor.

A second explanation why this title was chosen is that the term *Avot* means, literally, fathers. The *Meiri* states: “*Avot*, which teaches, that they are words that were issued from the fathers of the world, the pillars upon which the edifice of Torah rests” (Introduction to *Avot*, *Machon ha-Talmud ha-Yisraeli* edition, p.10). (Halachic Morality, p. 6)

Why does *Pirkei Avot* begin by elucidating the transmission of the *masorah*? It would seem to be more logical that the entire corpus of the mishnah would begin with a statement regarding the chain of Torah transmission?

The Rav beautifully suggested that the answer lies in the fact that there is a double aspect of the *masorah*. First we have the formal *halachic masorah*. This is technical teaching; we study texts and abstract methodology. Secondly, there is the intimate personal *masorah*. “The teaching in such a case is not consummated via formulated principles, via memorizing laws and texts, through the transmission of theoretical wisdom, but through life itself.” (Ibid. p. 8)

*Pirkei Avot* begins by delineating the chain of *masorah* in order to emphasize the indispensability of the second facet of the *masorah*; that which is transferred not through formal teaching but through

exposure to shining examples of goodness and righteousness.

A Jew is mandated to absorb the master's instructions and emulate his ways. The Rav cited the Talmudic teaching which describes Elisha's attachment to his teacher Eliyahu: "Attending to [those who study] Torah is greater than studying [Torah under them], as it is stated: "Here is Elisha the son of Shafat, who poured water on the hands of Eliyahu (2 Kings 3:11). [In describing the connection between Elisha and his teacher Eliyahu,] the verse does not say that he studied Torah under him; rather, the verse states that he poured water on his hands (*Berachot* 7b). (Ibid., p.8) The Rav added, "To learn, in the sense of masorah, means to try to merge with someone else - the master who unknowingly reveals himself to the student." (Ibid., p.9).

There is a striking phrase often employed throughout Pirkei Avot: *Hu Haya Omer* ('he would say'). The Rav cited the commentary of the Bartenura (1445-1515) who suggested this denotes that this was an aphorism that the Sage would often repeat. The Rav suggested that *Hu haya* means that he 'lived' his teaching, he modeled that particular behavior in his own life, and therefore, *omer*, he said it through his actions. His message was impactful because he lived his teaching. (Divrei HaRav, p.100-101)

The Torah repeatedly advises man to emulate God, "You shall walk in His ways"

(Devarim 28:9) - as He is, so shall you be (Sota 14a). This notion, said the Rav, should be employed equally in the student-teacher relationship. "Man learns from God by imitating Him. The approach to God begins with *imitatio Dei* and ends with ecstatic yearning for closeness and attachment - *devekut*. The same is true of inter-human relationships at the *masorah-personal* level. The wellspring of the spoken word is not a philosophical exposition, but a living personality who sets up standards and abides by them" (Halachic Morality, p. 9).

The Rav elegantly described the exceptional nature of the *talmid - teacher* relationship: "Two pairs of glowing eyes, that of pupil and master, stare at each other and penetrate the veil of guarded privacy. Their mutual knowledge of one another,

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the desire on the part of the disciple to be near his master, to feel his noble spirit, to become like him, creates a community of existence, a deep-felt and experienced partnership” (Ibid).

Perhaps the most venerable example of this relationship is Moshe’s bond with his student Yehoshua. The Almighty commanded Moshe “to place some of his *hod* (majesty)” upon Yehoshua (Bamidbar 27:20). The term *hod* implies a quality which is seemingly unconnected to the intellectual realm. *Hod*, says the Rav, is that which Yehoshua experienced simply by being in the presence of an exalted persona. He was now to assimilate a bit of that majesty within his own character. Moshe placed two hands on the head of Yehoshua when conferring the blessing of leadership (Bamidbar 27:23). The Rav suggested that

each hand had a distinct symbolism. One hand represented conferring the wisdom of the Torah, the other hand, “the *masorah* of the heart” - the feeling and emotion towards Torah and the Almighty that one receives from a mentor (Chumash Mesorat HaRav, Parshat Pinchas).

The Rav held the above concept close to his heart. There were times he bemoaned the fact that he inadequately transmitted the “heart of the *Masorah*.” At other times he felt more confident: “When I teach my students, no matter how complicated the *sugya* is, I try to pass on to them more than just knowledge. I pass on to them not only knowledge, the abstractions and the concepts of the halacha, but also something that I experience, something personal, something intimate, a part of myself.” (The Rav, Rakeffet, Vol. 2, p.242) ■



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## DIVREI MENACHEM

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# Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh!

This week's Parsha opens with Hashem addressing Moshe: "Speak to the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael and say to them: You shall be holy (*Kedoshim Tiheyu*), for holy am I, Hashem, your God."

In and of itself, the plain meaning of this command is clear. Hashem's will was to rest His Shechinah among our people so that we could fulfill our mission to serve Him as individuals and as a nation. To achieve this goal, we were (and still are) to avoid spiritual contamination (as outlined in the Parsha and elsewhere). To cite Rashi, wherever there is such separation, there is holiness.

In that way, we might achieve the goal of becoming a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Moreover, expressing that

we should be holy "because Hashem is holy" implies that we should try to emulate the Almighty's attributes, observe His commandments, and behave morally. We might thus become elevated in this world and, concomitantly, advance the material aspects of our worldly existence to a higher spiritual level.

The root word *Kadosh* indicates something set apart, generally, in a positive sense. For example, we associate *Kedushah* with Shabbat, Yom Kippur, the Holy of Holies, the sanctity of marriage, and offerings set aside for the Kohanim in the Beit Hamikdash.

When we recite the Kedushah prayer in the repetition of the Amidah, we proclaim (together with the angels in the upper spheres), *Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh Hashem Tzeva'ot* – "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts" (Isaiah 6:3). Rabbi Dr. J. A. Hertz described this chant as "a cry of eternity, proclaiming the ineffable nature, supreme majesty, and universal sovereignty of God."

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The threefold repetition indicates that Hashem's influence pervades (1) eternity (the dimension of time) and physical space (the upper and lower spheres: (2) Heaven and (3) Earth). Or perhaps, to paraphrase Rabbi Hertz, we thus understand Hashem in His most superlative: indescribable, unsearchable, and infinite holy (separate, detached, transcendent).

But if Hashem is distant and separate, how do we perceive Him, and how does He permeate our existence?

The answer lies in the second part of Isaiah's proclamation that "the whole earth is filled with His glory." Thus, Hashem's "Glory" is His manifestation in our world; it is the outward expression and radiation of His divine power. Indeed, for Rav Elie Munk, the entire world is "a dull afterglow of Hashem's hidden light, the unfolding of the divine immanence, God's raiment of glory."

So, when we next look at heavenly galaxies or reflect upon a human birth or, unexpectedly, see the hand of God in our lives, let us dwell on the dual and dialectical aspects of Hashem's essence in awe and love as we strive to bring *Kedushah* into our lives. ■

Shabbat Shalom! *Menachem Persoff*

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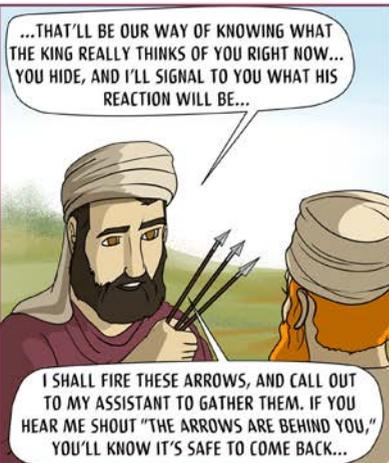


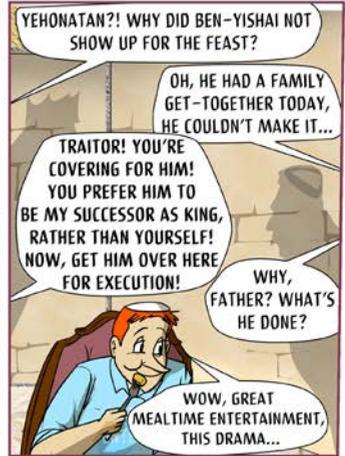

...SO THERE I AM, LOUNGING IN THE OFFICE CHAIR, WITH MY FEET ON THE KEYBOARD, SOCKS OFF, CLIPPING MY TOENAILS WITH ONE HAND AND SHAVING WITH THE OTHER, WHILE SINGING "HONEY-PIE" OVER THE PHONE TO BATZI, WHEN YOUR DAD WALKS IN AND ASKS ME IN HIS MOST POLITELY FURIOUS VOICE WHAT I THINK I'M DOING IN HIS OFFICE. SO I JUMP UP AND SPLUTTER "WAIT..."



WELL, IT GETS VERY CONFUSING, HAVING ALL THE OFFICE DOORS IN THE SAME BORING WOODEN COLOUR, IF ONLY YOUR DAD WOULD LET ME PAINT MINE SHREK-GREEN AS I'VE BEEN BEGGING HIM FOR YEARS, THESE MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS WOULDN'T HAPPEN...

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# FROM THE VIRTUAL DESK OF THE OU VEBBE REBBE

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## Mechayei Hameitim After Long Separation

**Question:** I will soon see my son-in-law after a more than two year Corona-forced separation. We have been in frequent contact and have seen each other often on Zoom. Should I say the *beracha*, “... *mechayei hameitim*” (Who brings the dead to life)?

**Answer:** The *gemara* (Berachot 58b) says that upon seeing a friend after separation, after thirty days he recites *Shehecheyanu* and after twelve months, “... *mechayei hameitim*”. According to most opinions, if one recites the latter, he does not recite the former (Magen Avraham 225:2; Mishna Berura 225:4). The *berachot* are predicated on the assumption of significant joy over the reunion, making it logical that it is only for friends one is fond of (Tosafot 58b), and even very fond of (Shulchan Aruch, OC 225:1).

*Shehecheyanu* is a common, general *beracha* for a wide variety of happy experiences. *Mechayei Hameitim* is surprising for this context, as its daily usage relates to belief in Hashem literally resurrecting

the dead, not reuniting with a live person. The Mishna Berura (ibid.) is among those who explain that since after twelve months, Rosh Hashana has passed, in which a person’s fate was decided, one can be happy that his friend survived. There is precedent for a celebratory *beracha* for another’s survival (Berachot 54b regarding *Hagomeh*).

*Mechayei Hameitim*’s unique nature may help explain why people do not commonly recite it (as reported by the Ben Ish Chai (I, Eikev 13) and many others) in this context with the full formula, including Hashem’s Name, known as *shem u’malchut*. (People often say “*baruch mechayei hameitim*” as a half-joke upon seeing someone after a long absence). The Panim Meiros (I:65) says that since it is borrowed from *Shemoneh Esrei*, where it lacks the full formula, it is recited without Hashem’s Name. The Ben Ish Chai explains that it is because not everyone about whom it would be said appreciates the comparison.

Finally, in regard to your question, the Aruch Hashulchan (OC 225:2) says that since the *beracha* relates to resolving the doubt whether a friend is alive, if one communicated with him during the twelve

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months, he does not recite it. The Mishna Berura (ibid. 2) cites a *machloket Acharonim* about this and says not to make a *beracha* due to *safek* even regarding *Shehecheyanu*. However, Yechaveh Da'at (IV:17) takes issue with him because the logic (see Aruch Hashulchan ibid.) and sources (Halachot Ketanot I:120 gives a different explanation) on the matter apply only to *Mechayei Hameitim*.

Therefore, we cannot recommend reciting *Mechayei Hameitim* in your case. *Shehecheyanu* is a much more plausible option, for the happiness of seeing someone for the first time in [well over] thirty days, as Yechaveh Da'at ibid. and Yaskil Avdi (OC 25:3) recommend. Many *poskim* are against even *Shehecheyanu* and even if the two were not in touch, as not every friendship qualifies for the *beracha*. This approach is augmented by the opinion that such a *Shehecheyanu* is not mandatory (see Yechaveh Da'at ibid.). Although you seem close, Chesed La'alafim (OC 225:15) and

Nimukei Orach Chayim (225:1) say that since if the *beracha* were commonplace in this context, people would be embarrassed not to recite *Shehecheyanu* for a friend even if they are not close, the *minhag* developed to stop saying it for friends. Perhaps for a close relative this is not a concern (ibid.). Regarding a child-in-law, the question is interesting. On the one hand, the relationship is often very close. On the other hand, it is not as emotionally intense, and since it varies greatly from family to family, it makes sense to be concerned about embarrassment and opt for a *lo plug* without a *beracha*. Also, while Zoom is not like seeing in person, it might reduce the excitement of subsequently seeing in person and precludes the *beracha* (see ibid.). The stronger claim is that it does not preclude excitement in person, so that the *beracha* is appropriate.

In summary, while *Shehecheyanu* is probably called for, those who opt for halachic caution can thank Hashem (important) informally (see Birkat Habayit 24:1). ■

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B'CHODSHO

BY RABBI SHMUEL GOLDIN

Faculty, OU Israel

Rabbi Emeritus, Congregation Ahavath  
Torah, Englewood NJ

# The Jew and His Land

*A Contemplation Likrat Yom Ha'atzmaut*

This Land has always been a part of who we are... from the very first words that launch our story...

*"Lech lecha,"* God says to Avraham, the progenitor of the Jewish People, *"mai'artzecha, mi'moladetecha, u'mi'beit avicha; el ha'aretz asher ar'eka."* "Go for yourself, from your Land, from your birthplace, and from the home of your father; to the Land that I will show you."

With this directive, two synchronous journeys are launched: the spiritual journey of the Jew across history and his physical journey, a continuous passage towards the Land of Israel. For while most of us have lived, for most of our history, in exile; we have never left the Land behind. We have dreamt of, prayed for, and steadfastly believed in, our ultimate return. That belief sustained us through the darkest of years; the certainty that our destiny will ultimately be fulfilled in the Land of Israel.

We have never been, we could not be, completely without the Land....

But, if we have needed, at the very least, the dream of the Land to survive as a nation; the Land has needed us, as well. *The relationship is symbiotic.*

Physically, this truth can be seen today in the flourishing of Israel's countryside under Jewish hands; in the greening of the deserts, in blossoming of the former swamps, in the burgeoning fields, orchards and groves.

Our contribution to the Land, however, is not relegated solely to the physical realm. Conceptually, we are taught that, *just as we need the Land to fulfill our national destiny, the Land needs us to fulfill its destiny.*

This truth is reflected in a powerful halachic phenomenon...

*At what point in history,* the Rabbis ask, *does the Land of Israel acquire its sanctity?*

Their answer is startling. For although the Land of Israel, according to Rabbinic thought, is "chosen" for greatness from the dawn of Creation; it is not "sanctified" until centuries later. Even Avraham's seminal journey to the Land does not trigger the Land's consecration.

Sanctification will have to wait. It will wait until the family of Hebrews becomes a nation; it will wait until we are shaped through the combined experiences of slavery, Exodus and Revelation; it will wait until our forty wilderness years have passed. *The Land of Israel is only sanctified,* the rabbis maintain, *with the entry of the Israelite Nation into its borders.* The Land of Israel can only be sanctified through the participation of the Nation in partnership with God.

But, even with the recognition of this principle, complications emerge...*The rabbis chronicle not one, but two, sanctifications of the Land.*

*Kedusha Rishona*, the first sanctification emerges upon the nation's first entry into the Land, under the leadership of Joshua. This sanctification is temporal, according to most authorities, dissipating with the dual exile: of the ten Tribes of Israel at the hands of the Assyrians and of the remaining tribes at the hands of the Babylonians.

The Ten Tribes disappear into the mists of history, while the Babylonian Jews retain their identity in exile. In the nation's absence, however, the sanctity of the Land of Israel dissipates. All that remains is the isolated holiness of the city of Jerusalem.

*Kedusha Shenia*, the second sanctification, unfolds with the return of a small portion of the Babylonian exiles to the Land. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nechemia, these returnees rebuild the temple and lay the groundwork for the Second Jewish Commonwealth. In the process, they sanctify the Land to a level the first sanctification could not achieve. *Kedusha Shenia* consecrates the Land in perpetuity. Even when the bulk of the Jewish nation is again exiled from Israel, this time by the Romans, the Land remains holy.

At face value, the distinction between these two courses of sanctification seems counterintuitive. Of the two national entries into the Land, the first would appear to be

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the more decisive. Why does the sanctification attained by a modest returning remnant, in the days of Ezra and Nechemia, surpass that achieved by the powerful conquest of the Land under Joshua?

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik suggests that the answer may lie in the procedural difference between the two entries into the Land.

The conquest in Joshua's time begins in the peripheries of the Land and moves inward. Only generations later, is the heart of Israel, the city of Jerusalem, conquered by King David.

Those returning from Babylon, in contrast, journey immediately to Jerusalem and, thus, strike directly to the Land's core. The sanctification of the Land then moves outward, allowing Jerusalem's enduring holiness to infuse its surroundings.

The Rav's suggestion serves to remind us that our relationship with the Land of Israel must be based upon a spiritual foundation, if it is to achieve permanence...

An additional explanation might be offered, however, for the superiority of the second national entry into the Land under Ezra and Nechemia.

Joshua and the Israelites enter the Land of Israel when the nation is still in its infancy and is able to operate under God's direct guidance and command. The return of the exiles from Babylon, centuries later, unfolds at a very different time. The non-prophetic period of Jewish History is dawning, and no longer will God

communicate directly with His people.

Those who follow the lead of Ezra and Nechemia, as well as those who immediately precede them, must discern God's will and act upon it through their own devices. Their difficult decision to leave the comfort of the Babylonian community and face the overwhelming challenges involved in a return to their Land, thus transcends the actions of Joshua's time in value and strength.

The sanctification created through the initiative of this returning remnant, in accordance with what they believed to be God's will, therefore becomes permanent.

Emerging from the mists of history, a clear symbiotic relationship between the Jew and his Land. From the dawn of our story, *we have needed the Land and the Land has needed us. Each achieves its ultimate destiny only when paired with the other.*

The great fortune we enjoy, living in a time when the Land is once again in our hands-should never be taken for granted. Those of us who have returned home, can take pride in the fact that we, like the remnant from Babylon, have seized the initiative. Now, however, our task remains... to take full advantage of the historic opportunity granted to us. We are challenged to strike to the sanctified core of our relationship to the Land; to seek greater *kedusha* in our own lives and in the society that we create...so that, this time, *b'eizat HaShem*, our presence on the Land of Israel will bring about our full redemption. ■

Rabbi Goldin is the author of the OU Press volumes "Unlocking the Torah Text," and "Unlocking the Haggada."



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## SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Just two weeks ago on the *Layl HaSeder*, we recalled- *Baruch Shomeir Havtachato L'Yisrael- Blessed is He who has kept his promise to the Jewish People.*

The saintly, **Rabbi Yissacher Shlomo Teichtel, zy'a hy'd**, in his incredible moving work *Eim HaBanim Smeicha*, wrote of the fulfillment of promises that have begun to unfold with the return of the Jewish People to *Eretz Yisrael*.

*Rav Abba said. There is no clearer sign of Mashiach, than when the verse (Yechezkel 36:8) is fulfilled: Mountains of Israel will give forth their fruit to My People, Israel (Sanhedrin 98a). Our Jewish brothers came to the Land and built cities, villages, gardens and orchards. They transformed great expanses of disease infested swamps into fertile lush fields. They sacrificed themselves to build the Land. This must be the work of Hashem and a sign that our salvation is soon to come! This is without doubt the beginning of redemption...*

As we look ahead and begin to prepare to celebrate *Yom Ha'atzmaut* in the coming week, I thought it might be meaningful to share an insight from a great Torah personality from the early years of *Medinat Yisrael*.

One of the great religious personalities of the pre-state *Yishuv* and early years of *Medinat Yisrael*, was the **Ohalei Yaakov of Tel Aviv, Rabbi Yaakov Friedman, zt'l, the Admor of Husiyatin zy'a**. The Rebbe of *Husiyatin*, was fortunate to make *aliya* from

Poland, just ahead of the Nazi onslaught, settling in *Tel Aviv* in 1938, where he lived until his passing in 1954. Within the Rebbe's beautiful teachings we not only find depth and inspiration, but are often given a glimpse of this very challenging period in Jewish history.

One particularly poignant message that the *Ohalei Yaakov* shared was a sermon for the *Shabbat* of *Parshat Ki Tavo* in 1952. The *sedra* opens with these words:

*V'haya Ki Tavo El Haaretz-And it shall be when you arrive upon the Land...*

The *Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh*, in his comments on this verse explains: *V'haya-Lashon Simcha*. Our arrival to the Land of Israel is something to celebrate and rejoice over!

The *Rebbe of Husiyatin*, asked regarding this insight of the *Ohr HaChaim*:

*When we look at the reality and spiritual circumstances here in Eretz Yisrael today (in 1952), one can't help but ask-how are we to rejoice? Yes, indeed we have merited to receive the gift of Medinat Yisrael, and for the beginning of the ingathering of the Exiles, but how can we rejoice when we look at the lack of spirituality which seems rampant among us. I do not wish to pass judgment, Chas V'Shalom, rather our way is always to find merit and see the good. There are three reasons for the spiritual malaise which is so worrisome and a cause for deep concern. 1. A portion of our people have received a poor education 2. A portion of our people live in*

difficult conditions and circumstances, abject poverty 3. The Shoah which nearly decimated our people, and left so many broken physically and despondent emotionally and spiritually, from which we have yet to recover.

However, there is no room for despair! The Torah has already promised us that indeed the Jewish People will return to the ways of Hakadosh Baruch Hu-V'Shavta Ad Hashem Elokecha.

***This Spiritual Renewal will not come from any other place, except for here in Eretz Yisrael. The Spiritual Renewal of Am Yisrael will indeed come forth from this Center of Jewish Life we are building now here in Eretz Yisrael...."***

*Baruch Hashem*, in the seventy years since the Rebbe shared this powerful message, Torah learning and Jewish commitment, and ritual observance here in *Eretz Yisrael* has indeed grown exponentially. *Baruch Shomeir Havtachato L'Yisrael- Blessed is He who has kept his promise to the Jewish People.*

*Yehi Ratzon*, may we indeed merit to witness the fulfillment of *Hashem's* promise to the Jewish People, to see continued spiritual transformation taking root here in our sacred Land, and may we experience in the days ahead, the redemption and transformation of the entire world, which will flow forth from *Artzeinu HaKedosha....*

*Moadim Lisimcha Legeula Shleima!* ■

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## GEULAS YISRAEL

BY RABBI MOSHE TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Eztion

# Yom Ha'atzmaut-Saints, Sinners, and Second Sons

Living through redemption is never easy. Ecstatic that our historical dreams have materialized, we are sometimes exasperated by the confusion of redemption. Redemptive experience provides no road-map and the swirl often leaves us with more questions than answers. Living through geulah demands a deeper faith drawn from the collective soul of Jewish history.

One of the most baffling redemptive mysteries is the secular nature of our national rebirth. The initial Zionist visionaries were primarily secular, the state they crafted isn't religious, and our citizenry remains predominantly secular. This "state" we inhabit is very different from the Israel of our imaginations.

To many, the secular nature of this national renaissance proves that it cannot be the hand of G-d. Those who deny the divine nature of the State of Israel, continue to wait for a religiously-spirited redemption

to restore, not just Land and peoplehood, but recognition of Hashem from "one corner of the earth to the other". This hasn't yet transpired.

How do "believers" decode this historical enigma? The answer, of course lies in our past, deeply buried along the trail of Jewish history.

Throughout Jewish history two approaches were adopted toward religiously disobedient Jews. Some castigated them as sinners and historical outcasts. Others possessed enough imaginative sweep to validate the inner virtue of every Jew, both saints and sinners. Some excluded and some included. Hashem always showed preference for the includers.

Ironically the pious often excluded, while the less righteous sometimes found it easier to include. Moshe Rabenu suffers momentary tzara't after he questions our collective faith and doubts our ability to rally toward redemption. He quickly recovers from this misstep, becoming the great defender of disobedient Jews.

A jaded Eliyhau Hanavi ascends the Carmel mountains, and indicts the intransigent Jewish paganists. He is immediately "retired to Heaven" in a chariot of puritanical fire. Hashem doesn't desire prophets who highlight our flaws. He prefers those who defend our virtue, especially when it is less obvious.

By contrast, Gidon, a shofet or judge, hails from a questionable background and

wasn't particularly pious. Yet he is promoted because he defends the integrity of the Jews, wondering to Hashem why they continually suffer foreign invasion. The Jews of the Shoftim era weren't particularly righteous, but, Gidon argues, deserve a better fate. Gidon is precisely the type of leader Hashem seeks. Includers not Excluders.

Three hundred years ago, Chassidut revitalized a sullen and depressed Jewish world. A linchpin of this national revival was a claim about the inalienable virtue of every Jew. Each Jew is vested with Divine essence שמה לעמם ה-ולא קלה (Sefer HaTanya) and that sanctity remains inalterable- regardless of religious behavior. In the great tradition of the "includers" Chassidut ratified every Jew-saint and sinner.

The modern State of Israel is a modern tool for inclusion. Hashem programmed the Jewish heart with the ability to respond to history, people and Homeland even in the absence of religious passion. He planted this deep whisper within our collective consciousness, and we are now hearing that divine whisper being broadcast.

Over the last two centuries, millions of Jewish hearts have become religiously shuttered. Frustrated by Jewish fate and traumatized by centuries of discrimination and persecution, many Jews traded in their religion for membership in a modern world which promised them equality and opportunity. In the wake of the Holocaust many Jews were either terrified of being Jewish

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or utterly confused by a G-d who could allow genocide. Over the past two centuries, and for the first time in history, we have watched most of our population walk out the door of religion.

Where would these Jews be without the State of Israel which has provided them an existential life-raft. Without the State of Israel, millions would be lost to historical oblivion. Yet, so many remain with us, partnering in this great national project of reconstructing history and defending our Homeland. Their uncommon dedication and passion to our collective faith isn't human. It is the sound of a divine whisper. We are watching the hand of Hashem in action. You just need imaginative lenses to appreciate the grandeur of it all.

As we long for the day in which every Jew will turn back to religion, we must ratify all that is right and all that is sacred in the commitment of secular Jews to our Land and to our common destiny. Sadly, this attitude of inclusion has begun to fade. In 1948 there were great hopes that the euphoria of independence and the marvel of divine miracles would quickly turn hearts around. Rav Kook's writings are threaded with hopeful optimism in an inevitable religious reformation. Seventy-four years later we haven't witnessed this renewal. The horizons of a religious revival aren't easily apparent.

Additionally, the attitude of partnership has begun to fray in our politically charged world of identity politics and uncivil discourse. Polarized politics has made it ever-more difficult to reach "across the aisle" and celebrate the common bonds of history which unite us. In our world

of sectarian politics, each sector viciously defends its own limited interests, rather than looking toward consensus agendas. Rude and confrontational discourse is "validated" to achieve a higher "political end". Recently, a religious parliament member chided his political opponents (some of whom are religious), questioning whether they should attend prayers in Jewish synagogues. It is difficult to imagine a statement more corrosive to "inclusive" Zionism. Shouldn't we dream of a world in which every Jew attends synagogue? It was a foolish and historically myopic statement uttered in the name of a political agenda.

Furthermore, social media has narrowed our conversation while locking us into echo chambers. We hear our own positions parroted and rarely appreciate the deeply Jewish values of the 'other'. Many religious Zionist Jews (like myself) live in isolated settlements, and rarely encounter secular Jews. Ignorance and lack of exposure always breeds caricature and stereotype. One of the hidden benefits of serving in Tzahal is the opportunity to encounter our secular partners and learn to appreciate their qualities and their patriotism.

The Riminover Rebbe- a late 18th century "founder" of Polish Chassidut- would refuse to designate the "second son" of the hagaddah as a sinner. He would simply call him the "second son". Millions of these "second sons" are now our partners. One day they will join us as "first sons." ■

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### Gavriel Novick, Director of Regional Development **Patience My Friend**

“When you come to the Land and you plant any food tree, you shall not use its fruit; it shall be blocked from you for three years, not to be eaten.”

The Ramban explains the reasoning behind this mitzvah of orlah. It is similar to the mitzvah of bikurim where we bring our first fruits to Hashem to thank Him for what He has given us. However, by orlah we wait until the fourth year to bring the fruits to Hashem. During the first three years they are forbidden. The Ramban explains this is because the fruit of the first three years is inferior and not fitting to be brought to Hashem. One needs to wait until the fourth year until the tree can produce quality fruits which will be offered to Hashem to show our gratitude.

Perhaps this mitzvah is teaching us that “when you come to the Land” patience is needed. As we celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut, commemorating 74 years of the State of Israel, I think about the patience needed to create such an incredible and thriving country. Just look at how far we have come in over 7 decades. But it has taken time. It did not happen overnight.

Even more relatable, I think about the modern-day Aliyah process. Those first

few years after you arrive in Ben Gurion always come with challenges. It takes time to adjust and come to a place not just of comfort but of growth. But with some patience, you can truly become the best version of yourself and someone that is most fitting to serve Hashem.



### Ezra Bourkoff, 10th grade Modiin **How is Am Israel Similar to a Bone?**

On Yom Ha'atzmaut we celebrate the 74th year since Israel's independence, but why exactly is this day so important to us as Jews?

The word עצמות comes from the word עצם which means bone - bones give us the ability to stand independently.

In 1947 the UN voted by a vast majority for a Jewish state following the Holocaust. The Jews all around the world started to rejoice, however the Arabs were not as happy, as they called the vote of a Jewish state ‘The Nakba,’ which means “catastrophe.” Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Syria all attacked Israel which was just a few days old. But with the help of Hashem, we came out victorious.

We say in Hallel: אבן מאסו הבונים היתה לראש - פינה” “The stone that was rejected by the builders has become the cornerstone.” Israel went from a resented nation of just a few people to being one of the world's leaders in agricultural farming and

technological advancement.

Just as bones strengthen after stress, wear, and tear, so too, our trials and tribulations have fortified and solidified us in Israel. We recognize the importance of not just any Jewish state but the land promised to us by the *הקב"ה* for generations. May Hashem continue to bless our people and help us remember where our power comes from on this *העצמאות* day! ■

NCSY Israel is the premier organization in Israel, dedicated to connect, inspire, empower teen olim to the Land of Israel by encouraging passionate Judaism through Torah and Tradition. Find out more at [israel.ncsy.org](http://israel.ncsy.org)

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# Real Life Rescues



## Witnessing An Accident and Making A Difference

One afternoon before Pesach, a multi-vehicle chain-reaction collision took place on Route 4 near the Yavneh junction. Ram Oz, a volunteer EMT and ambucycle rider with United Hatzalah, was driving along route 4 and witnessed the collision taking place on the opposite side of the highway. Ram instantly veered to the side of the road, radioed in to United Hatzalah headquarters for back-up, grabbed the medical kit from his ambucycle. He then crossed the highway meridian and ran over to the scene to begin triaging the patients.

The violent force of impact had sent one of the transport vehicles tumbling over on its roof. Ram focused initial rescue efforts on the motorist, who remained trapped inside with his legs caught underneath the wreckage.

Extricating the man would prove exceedingly challenging. Another transport vehicle involved in the collision was blocking access to the driver's side. Ram carefully forced an entry through a rear window before scrambling inside and attending to the accident victim.

Additional responders arrived to assist with the rescue. Working together as a synchronized team, Ram and his colleagues managed to extricate the driver from the wreckage. The team then immobilized the patient's lower limbs, secured him to a backboard and transferred him to a mobile intensive care unit for medical transport. Meanwhile, another accident victim who had escaped with less severe injuries was treated by a United Hatzalah ambulance crew and taken to the Assuta Medical Center in Ashdod for further care.

I have responded to many traffic accidents as well as other medical emergencies, but it is rare to see one transpire right before my eyes. It took me a moment to get my bearings and spring into action, but I succeeded at treating a lot of people today and that is why I am out here, together with all of the other volunteers from United Hatzalah, in order to respond quickly and provide that initial care at the scene. No matter what the call I am glad to be a first responder and help make a difference.”



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