

ב"ה
**Torah
Tidbits**

OU
ישראל

ח' אייר תשפ"ג 23' APR 29TH ISSUE 1513

אחרי מות - קדושים

PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM



וְכִי-תֵבֹאוּ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ וְנִטְעַתֶּם כָּל-עֵץ מֵאֵכֶל וְיָקָרָא יֵט: כֹּג



Three Mitzvot of Sensitivity
Rabbi Anthony Manning
Faculty, OU Israel
Co-Director Midreshet Tehillah
page 42



Haftorah Insights
Rebbetzin Dr. Adina Shmidman
Founding Director Of The Orthodox Union
Women's Initiative
page 48

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM
CANDLES 6:41PM • EARLIEST 5:53PM • HAVDALA 7:57PM • RABBEINU TAM 8:35PM

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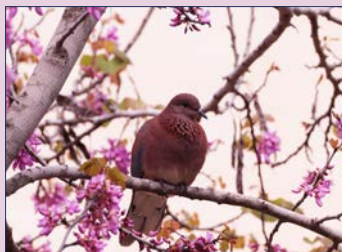
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Tzvi Silver

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Shimmy Goldsmith // Raphael Roshwalb

Kiddush Levana - Iyar

7 Days After Molad **7 Iyar/ Thurs. night April 27**

Last Opportunity to Say Kiddush Levana until **14 Iyar/ Thurs. night May 4 , all night**



This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photo by Julian Alper

I made aliyah from Manchester to Teveria in 2014

I photographed this image which captures a blossoming fruit tree in the Golan.

CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



CANDLES	EARLY	ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM	HAVDALA	EMOR		
				Candles	Early	Havdala
6:41	5:53	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:57	6:46	5:57	8:02
6:58	5:56	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:04
7:00	5:54	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:57	7:05	5:58	8:03
6:57	5:54	Gush Etzion	7:57	7:01	5:57	8:02
6:58	5:55	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:04
6:57	5:54	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	7:58	7:02	5:58	8:03
6:59	5:56	Netanya	7:59	7:04	5:59	8:05
6:57	5:55	Be'er Sheva	7:57	7:02	5:58	8:03
6:58	5:55	Rehovot	7:58	7:03	5:59	8:04
6:41	5:55	Petach Tikva	7:58	6:46	5:59	8:04
6:57	5:54	Ginot Shomron	7:58	7:02	5:58	8:04
6:49	5:56	Haifa / Zichron	8:00	6:54	6:00	8:06
6:56	5:54	Gush Shiloh	7:57	7:01	5:57	8:02
6:58	5:56	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:05
7:01	5:54	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:57	7:06	5:57	8:03
6:56	5:54	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:57	7:01	5:57	8:02
6:59	5:56	Ashkelon	7:59	7:04	6:00	8:05
6:58	5:55	Yad Binyamin	7:58	7:03	5:59	8:04
6:52	5:54	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	7:58	6:57	5:57	8:04
6:56	5:53	Golan	7:57	7:01	5:57	8:03
Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:35PM • next week - 8:40pm						

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

JERUSALEM

Ranges 11 ays Wed - Shabbat
April 26 - May 6 / 5 - 15 Iyar

Earliest Tallit and Tefillin	5:02 - 4:50
Sunrise	5:56 - 5:46
Sof Zman Kriat Shema	9:15 - 9:10
Magen Avraham	8:36 - 8:30
Sof Zman Tefila	10:22 - 10:18
(According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	
Chatzot (Halachic Noon)	12:35 - 12:34
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:09 - 1:08
Plag Mincha	5:52 - 5:57
Sunset (Including Elevation)	7:15 - 7:22



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Torah Tidbits and many of the projects of OU Israel are assisted by grants from THE JERUSALEM MUNICIPALITY



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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY

RABBI AVI BERMAN

Executive Director, OU Israel



Our destiny as the Jewish people is a story of both triumph and deep loss. With *Yom HaShoah*, *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom HaAtzmaut*

behind us we cannot forget the importance of continued education and the need to make history relevant and meaningful for younger generations. As we are reminded every year on *seder* night, we have an obligation to keep our national history fresh in our minds and recognize the ways in which *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* rescues us from destruction.

During the *seder*, when we recite the *Magid* portion, we highlight the destiny of *Am Yisrael* with the recitation of “*Vehi Sheamda*.”

“וְהִיא שֶׁעָמְדָה לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ וְלָנוּ. שָׁלָא אֶחָד בְּלִבָּד עָמַד
עָלֵינוּ לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, אֲלָא שְׁבָכָל דּוֹר וְדוֹר עוֹמְדִים עָלֵינוּ
לְכַלּוֹתֵנוּ, וְהַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְצִילֵנוּ מִיָּדָם.”

And it is this that has stood for our ancestors and for us; since it is not [only] one [person or nation] that has stood [against] us to destroy us, but rather in each generation, they stand [against] us to destroy us, but the Holy One, blessed be He, rescues us from their hand.

In loving memory of
**Rebbetzin Josephine
Reichel ע"ה**

on her 23nd yahrzeit

ז אייר

from the Bronner and Reichel families

Holocaust education becomes more critical with every year that passes. In 2022, it was reported that 14,201 Holocaust survivors died. As the number of survivors dwindles, the next generation will lose the opportunity to meet those who experienced the horrors of the Holocaust, making connection to *Yom HaShoah* more challenging. In contrast, *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom HaAtzmaut* are days that become more meaningful to children as their awareness of the world around them develops.

Although they take place in quick succession, *Yom HaShoah*, *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom HaAtzmaut* each have a specific intention. I recall the passionate way in which Rav Chaim Drukman zt”l would discuss *Yom HaAtzmaut*. He explained that the day is not about the parade, music or barbecues. Rather, the day is about appreciating the miracle of *Medinat Yisrael* and showing our gratitude to Him. I heard similar sentiments growing up from Rabbi Gold, when accompanying my grandfather to shul in *Har Nof*. I hope those who were able to join the OU’s musical *tefillah*, led by Rav Shlomo Katz at *Gan HaPa’amon*, had a meaningful experience.

Unfortunately, I had to miss *Yom HaShoah* in Israel this year and it troubled me greatly. Living in *Eretz Yisrael* as the great grandson of an American liberator of Mauthausen, I have always felt a deep connection to *Yom HaShoah*. But this year, I had to travel to New York and I

was concerned that I would have difficulty connecting to the day. However, what I experienced - in the middle of Time Square no less - impacted me deeply.

In 2020, Southern NCSY (OU's Southern NCSY branch) and ShadowLight, a Toronto-based Holocaust education nonprofit, launched a cattle car exhibition. In stark contrast to Times Square's bright lights and billboards, visitors stepped into the "Cattle Car: Stepping In and Out of Darkness" exhibit. A masterfully-produced 20-minute film was projected onto the walls of the cattle car, showcasing the horrors of the Holocaust.

As one of the most innovative Holocaust education tools, the exhibit has been quite a success over the years. This year, during my trip to the United States, I went to see the exhibit together with Ofir Sofer, Israel's Minister of Immigration and Absorption. We arrived at the intersection of Broadway and 46th Street and found ourselves



Photos of the Holocaust projected onto the walls of the cattle car

moved not only by what we saw, but seeing the reaction of others.

On our way to the exhibit I happened to come across my good friend Moshe Eiesenberg, who himself had just seen the exhibit.

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He shared a powerful interaction that had just taken place.

An African American man approached Moshe and angrily asked why there was a cattle car replica in the middle of Times Square to commemorate the Holocaust, but no boat to commemorate the years of slavery that took place on American soil. Eager to engage in the conversation, Moshe suggested to the man that he first go into the exhibit, after which he would be happy to address his frustrations.

Although reluctant at first, the man did just that - and came out of the cattle car in tears.

After watching the video, the man shared how outraged he was by his severely limited education surrounding the Holocaust. In fact, the most he knew was that it took place in Germany and that Jews and Poles were killed. "What this video showed me in just 20 minutes is something I never learned in all my years of schooling. How can this be?"

Moshe referenced the man's earlier question and asked what he thought about putting a boat beside the cattle car. The man responded, "No. Those two tragedies should stay separate."

The common refrain, "Never again," was felt deeply by those who watched the video. Especially with Minister Sofer beside us.

Minister Sofer shared that since the founding of the State of Israel, the country has become a safe haven for Jews around the world, and will always be ready to protect members of *Am Yisrael* no matter how far from Israel's borders.

The "Cattle Car: Stepping In and Out of Darkness" exhibit brought Holocaust "to life" in the heart of Times Square. It has been visited by people of all backgrounds - including thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish day-school students who traveled with their schools to the corner of Broadway and 46th in order to connect to a time gone by. Although 6,000 miles away from my family and home, I too felt deeply connected to our nation's tragic history.

When my trip came to a close, I was eager to return home and spend *Yom HaZikaron* and *Yom HaAtzmaut* with my family. Our lives here in *Eretz HaKodesh* are a precious gift that our grandparents could never have dreamed of. And yet, without the building of the third *Beit HaMikdash*, *Am Yisrael* continues to face tragedy. As we experience these weeks of self-reflection and improvement as we prepare for *Matan Torah*, I daven that we merit to see the coming of *Moshaich* speedily in our days.

Wishing you all an uplifting and inspiring Shabbat,



Rabbi Avi Berman

Executive Director, OU Israel

aberman@ouisrael.org

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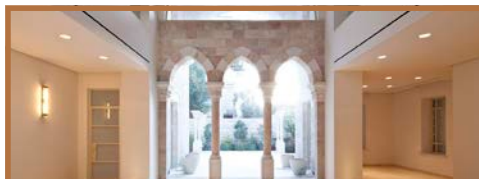
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ALIYA-BY-ALIYA
SEDRA SUMMARY



**Rabbi Reuven
Tradburks**
Director of
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1st aliya (Vayikra 16:1-24)

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

Entry to the Holy of Holies requires an elaborate ceremony of unique offerings; including the scapegoat ceremony and the incense offered in the Holy of Holies. And it is all performed by the Kohen Gadol.

This continues the powerful and crucial theme of the entire section following Mount Sinai. In G-d's reach for man, his love of man, He has created a place of rendezvous; the Mishkan. However, it is rendezvous with care, with reservation,

with humility. The building design is with great detail. The offerings are with great detail; when they are brought, how they are brought, the Kohanim's role in bringing them. G-d says: You may approach Me, I *want* you to approach Me, but with care. Here, He invites man to rendezvous in the Holy of Holies – the inner, intimate chamber, with the Aron and the tablets, covered by angels. This intimate invitation requires a very elaborate procedure; unique offerings like the scapegoat and the incense, sin offerings, olah offerings. The closer, the more intimate; but also, the more care and preparation required.

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



2nd aliya (16:25-17:7) This entire ceremony is done once a year on Yom Kippur, to gain

atonement and purity. Tell the entire people: all sacrifices are to be brought to the Mikdash. The Kohen is to offer them, so they are pleasing. We are to no longer offer sacrifices to spirits.

רפואה שלמה
אורה בת ריאנה

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



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

The subject of entry into the Mikdash gives way now to the listing of forbidden relationships. These laws are entirely unrelated to the Mikdash. The book of Vayikra is called Torat Kohanim because of the many laws related to the Mikdash – Leviticus in English for the same reason. But, a more accurate name would be Sefer Kedusha; the book of holiness. And in this the Torah presents a radical notion; that holiness inheres not only in the holy place, the Mikdash. And not only in the




Mazal Tov to
Arlene Fox and Family
 on the engagement of her granddaughter
Tamar to Ariel

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holy time of Shabbat and holidays. But in the holiness of our relationships. Holiness is the central theme of Vayikra. Played out in the Mikdash, in offerings, in Tuma and its restrictions of entry into the holy place. But as well in the holiness of private life. Holiness is both public and private, ritual and personal, related to the Holy One and to our fellow man.



4th aliya (8:22-19:14) A man shall not lie with a man. Sexual relations with an animal are forbidden. These things (all the above) defile the Land: it will spit you out. (Parshat Kedoshim) Be Holy, as I, G-d, your G-d is holy. Revere parents, keep Shabbat. Do not turn to idols or make graven gods. A shlamim offering may only be eaten for 2 days. Help the poor and the stranger when harvesting a field by leaving dropped or

forgotten produce or grapes. Don't steal, lie or swear falsely. Don't cheat; or tarry paying wages til the morning. Don't curse the deaf, trip up the blind.

This aliya begins Parshat Kedoshim, the best parsha in the Torah. Or at least Rashi says so on the first verse: most topics of the Torah are contained here. There are 51 mitzvot in 64 verses. We have left the topic of holiness of the Mikdash and focus on holiness in our behavior. These are the greatest themes of ethical behavior; helping the poor with dignity, honesty, care for employees, care for the deaf and blind. In just these few verses, our every moment of human interaction becomes meaningful; every step we take and thought we think needs vigilance. To be true. And kind. And give dignity to others. This parsha is the fullest expression of how holiness need in-

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here in our everyday treatment of others.



5th aliya (19:15-32) Do not pervert justice by favoring either poor or powerful. Don't

spread gossip, nor stand by your brother's blood. Don't hate. Don't take revenge; love your neighbor as yourself. Do not interbreed animal, seeds, or wear wool and linen. In the Land, fruit is forbidden for the first 3 years of growth, 4th year holy, 5th year permissible. Do not use divination. Nor round the corners of your face or use a straight razor on your beard. Nor tattoo. Nor seek sorcery. Rise before the aged, glorify the wizened.

The mention of justice is a foil: in court, we pursue justice. But not on the streets. It is not our place to be judges; judges cannot favor one person over another. But we certainly can. And must. We must favor and help the victim. And revenge; we are not judges to mete out just revenge. If he didn't lend you, forget about it - you still should do the right thing and lend to him.

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



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

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

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

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



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

The Jewish idea of ethical monotheism is on full display in Kedoshim. Holiness wan-

ders 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. Finding a pattern to the list of mitzvot in the parsha is challenging. But that is the point. There is no pattern. Because holiness wanders throughout our life, touching on the myriad pursuits of our day-to-day existence. It's all holy.

The parsha concludes: We are to be holy so that the Land not spit us out. These words must give us pause, those of us privileged to walk the streets of our Land. The Land could spit us out. All these mitzvot are not simply our own personal religious life. We, we who live in our Land, we particularly need to be extra vigilant in all these holy things, ritual, interpersonal, speech, care, love; for our success in this Land rests upon it.

HAFTARAH

AMOS 9:7-15

This week's *haftarah* foretells the exiles and punishments that will befall the Jews because of their behavior— behavior that this week's Torah reading proscribes.

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Rav, Beit Knesset Beit Yisrael, Yemin Moshe

את משפטי תעשו ואת חקתי תשמרו ללכת בהם (יח"ד)

"My ordinances you shall do and my statutes you shall keep, to walk therein." (18:4)

Rabbi Moshe Schreiber (The Chatam Sofer 1762-1839) asks why the Pasuk needs to add the words "to walk therein."? Would it not be enough to warn us simply to do and keep my ordinances and statutes? What is the idea of keep walking with it?

The Chatam Sofer answers that it is not sufficient for a person to learn Torah and observe its laws in a mechanical fashion, allowing them to be fulfilled in a routine and habitual way. Rather, the Pasuk instructs us to "walk with the Torah" meaning renew your enthusiasm and reawaken your motivation every day. We must show commitment to always strive to elevate ourselves to a more meaningful level through practicing the Torah.

Shabbat Shalom

The prophet Amos delivers Hashem's message, reminding the people of Hashem's kindness to them — taking them out of Egypt and singling them out as His chosen nation. Nevertheless, because of their misdeeds, Hashem will destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel; but will not completely destroy the Jewish people. The Jews will be scattered amongst the nations, but eventually they will return to their Land — on the day of the redemption. Hashem will then reinstall the House of David to its former glory and there shall be peace and abundance upon the Land. ■



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of 10 in Vayikra	6th	7th	-
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Parshiyot	15	4	19
P'tuchot	3	3	6
S'tumot	12	1	13
P'sukim	80	64	144
Rank (Torah/Vayikra)	45/6	49/9	-
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IN THE PARSHA

It's All Commentary

I am proud of my large library of Jewish books.

My collection, which my wife half-jokingly refers to as my addiction, began on my 11th birthday with a gift from my maternal grandparents, may they rest in peace. They bought me the then recently published Shulzinger edition of the Five Books of Moses surrounded by numerous traditional commentaries. Those volumes became the cornerstone of my personal library of many hundreds of Judaic works on the Bible, the Talmud, philosophy, history, and codes of law.

These books line the walls of my private study from floor to ceiling.

Over the years, I have had many visitors who were struck by the overwhelming number of books and who reacted with awe and curiosity. Some, particularly

non-Jews, would ask, “Have you read all of these?” When I confessed that I hadn’t read more than very few of them, they often proceeded with yet another question:

“What are they all about? Why are so many books necessary just to explain one religion?”

They could not fathom why so much commentary was written on just a few basic biblical texts.

Often, as I responded to their inquiries, I found myself resorting to an old story of one of our greatest sages, Hillel. To most of you, this story is probably well-known, perhaps even trite. But for many of my visitors, the story was novel, instructive, and almost revelatory.

In this story, Hillel, known for his scholarship and commitment to Torah study but particularly famous for his patience, is provocatively challenged by a heathen who demands to be taught the entire Torah while standing on one foot. Hillel accepts the challenge and says, “What is hateful to you do not do unto others. That is the entire Torah, the rest is but commentary. Now go out and study the commentary.”

I would then explain to my inquisitive visitors that Hillel’s remark was based upon a verse in this week’s double Torah portion, *Acharei Mot-Kedoshim*. There, in *Leviticus* 19:18, we read, “...and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Now, I would continue, loving one’s

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neighbor as oneself is no easy task. We are likely to have numerous and diverse neighbors in the course of a lifetime, and myriad circumstances arise which pose great barriers to our love for them. And so, Jewish scholars throughout the ages have recorded their advice, suggestions, and guidelines for just how to love one's neighbor in every conceivable context and condition. That's what all these books are about, and that's why we need so many of them.

Note that Hillel himself does not choose to use the Torah's original phrase to explain the essence of Judaism to the heathen. He

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does not say, “Love your neighbor.” Rather, he says, “Do not harm your neighbor.” Perhaps this is because, as the medieval commentator Ramban suggests, loving one’s neighbor as oneself is an exaggerated expectation, just too tall an order, and the most Hillel could do was to urge the heathen to do no harm.

Whether one uses the biblical formulation commanding us to love our neighbor, or chooses Hillel’s version which asks us to refrain from harming him or her in a way in which we ourselves would not want to be harmed, the essence of our Torah is this ethical imperative. And the many hundreds of volumes in my personal library, and the hundreds of thousands of similar tomes written throughout the centuries, can all be understood as the constant and perpetual struggle of our sages to develop a “database” sufficient to enable us to realize this ethical imperative.

One such commentary deserves mention, particularly in our age and culture, which has been diagnosed as narcissistic, as overly self-loving.

This commentary takes the form of a story about a disciple of Rabbi Mendel of Kotzk who eavesdropped upon his master as the latter was reviewing this week’s Torah portion aloud. Rabbi Mendel read, “...and thou shalt love thy neighbor...as yourself??? Yes, as yourself!!!” First as a question, and then as a forceful declaration.

The disciple was puzzled by the manner in which his master read the passage. He asked the master’s chief disciple, Reb Hershel, for an explanation. This was his answer:

“The master first asked a question. Can it

be that we are asked to love our neighbor as ourselves? Are we to understand that it is permissible to love oneself? Is it not a basic teaching here in Kotzk that one dare not love oneself, lest he thereby become blind to his own faults?” In our terminology, Rabbi Mendel could not accept the slightest suggestion that narcissism was acceptable.

“Then the master realized a deeper meaning of the verse. Namely, we ought to love our neighbor to the same extent that we are critical of ourselves. The *mitzvah* is that we put in as much effort loving our neighbor as the effort that we should be investing in our own personal spiritual and moral perfection.”

In an age of “me first,” it is even more important that we direct our love outwards towards the other, and not inward toward ourselves. We must, at all costs, avoid self-adulation and self-worship.

That is just one small sample of the vast treasure of commentary that is in our Jewish library. No wonder that our Sages refer to the “ocean of the Talmud,” and to our Torah as deeper than the sea. ■



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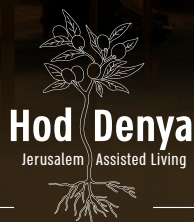
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The Courage to Admit Mistakes

Some years ago I was visited by the then American ambassador to the Court of St James, Philip Lader. He told me of a fascinating project he and his wife had initiated in 1981. They had come to realise that many of their contemporaries would find themselves in positions of influence and power in the not-too-distant future. He thought it would be useful and creative if they were to come together for a study retreat every so often to share ideas, listen to experts and form friendships, thinking through collectively the challenges they would face in the coming years. So they created what they called Renaissance Weekends. They still happen.

The most interesting thing he told me was that they discovered that the participants, all exceptionally gifted people, found one

thing particularly difficult, namely, *admitting that they made mistakes*. The Laders understood that this was something important they had to learn. Leaders, above all, should be capable of acknowledging when and how they had erred, and how to put it right. They came up with a brilliant idea. They set aside a session at each Weekend for a talk given by a recognised star in some field, on the subject of "My biggest blooper." Being English, not American, I had to ask for a translation. I discovered that a blooper is an embarrassing mistake. A gaffe. A faux pas. A bungle. A boo-boo. A fashla. A balagan. Something you shouldn't have done and are ashamed to admit you did.

This, in essence, is what Yom Kippur is in Judaism. In Tabernacle and Temple times, it was the day when the holiest man in Israel, the High Priest, made atonement, first for his own sins, then for the sins of his "house," then for the sins of all Israel. From the day the Temple was destroyed, we have had no High Priest nor the rites he performed, but we still have the day,

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and the ability to confess and pray for forgiveness. It is so much easier to admit your sins, failings, and mistakes when other people are doing likewise. If a High Priest, or the other members of our congregation, can admit to sins, so can we.

I have argued elsewhere (in the Introduction to the Koren Yom Kippur Machzor) that the move from the first Yom Kippur to the second was one of the great transitions in Jewish spirituality. The first Yom Kippur was the culmination of Moses' efforts to secure forgiveness for the people after the sin of the Golden Calf (Ex. 32-34). The process, which began on 17th Tammuz, ended on the 10th of Tishrei – the day that later became Yom Kippur. That was the day when Moses descended the mountain with the second set of tablets, the visible sign that God had reaffirmed his covenant with the people. The second Yom Kippur, one year later, initiated the series of rites set out in this week's parsha (Lev. 16), conducted in the Mishkan by Aaron in his role as High priest.

The differences between the two were immense. Moses acted as a prophet. Aaron functioned as a priest. Moses was following his heart and mind, improvising in response to God's response to his words.

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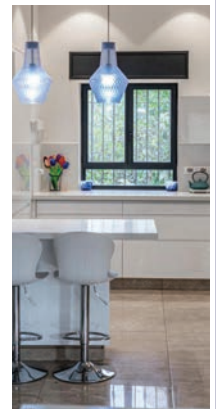
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Aaron was following a precisely choreographed ritual, every detail of which was set out in advance. Moses' encounter was ad hoc, a unique, unrepeatable drama between heaven and earth. Aaron's was the opposite. The rules he was following never changed throughout the generations, so long as the Temple stood.

Moses' prayers on behalf of the people were full of audacity, what the Sages called *chutzpah kelapei shemaya*, "audacity toward heaven," reaching a climax in the astonishing words, "Now, please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book You have written." (Ex. 32:32). Aaron's behaviour by contrast was marked by obedience, humility, and confession. There were purification rituals, sin offerings and atonements, for his own sins and those of his "house" as well as those of the people.

The move from Yom Kippur 1 to Yom Kippur 2 was a classic instance of what Max Weber called the "routinization of charisma", that is, taking a unique moment and translating it into ritual, turning a "peak experience" into a regular part of life. Few moments in the Torah rival in intensity the dialogue between Moses and God after the Golden Calf. But the question thereafter was: how could we achieve forgiveness – we who no longer have a Moses, or prophets, or direct access to God? Great moments change history. But what changes us is the unspectacular habit of doing certain acts again and again until they reconfigure the brain and change our habits of the heart. We are shaped by the rituals we repeatedly perform.

Besides which, Moses' intercession

with God did not, in and of itself, induce a penitential mood among the people. Yes, he performed a series of dramatic acts to demonstrate to the people their guilt. But we have no evidence that they internalised it. Aaron's acts were different. They involved confession, atonement and a search for spiritual purification. They involved a candid acknowledgment of the sins and failures of the people, and they began with the High Priest himself.

The effect of Yom Kippur – extended into the prayers of much of the rest of the year by way of *tachanun* (supplicatory prayers), *vidui* (confession), and *selichot* (prayers for forgiveness) – was to create a culture in which people are not ashamed or embarrassed to say, "I got it wrong, I sinned, I made mistakes." That is what we do in the litany of wrongs we enumerate on Yom Kippur in two alphabetical lists, one beginning *Ashamnu*, *bagadnu*, the other beginning *Al cheit shechatanu*.

As Philip Lader discovered, the capacity to admit mistakes is anything but widespread. We rationalise. We justify. We deny. We blame others. There have been several powerful books on the subject in recent years, among them Matthew Syed, *Black Box Thinking: The Surprising Truth About Success (and Why Some People Never Learn from Their Mistakes)*; Kathryn Schulz, *Being Wrong: Adventures in the Margins of Error*, and Carol Tavris and Elliot Aronson, *Mistakes Were Made, But Not By Me*.

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year in the United States. So do bankers and economists. The financial crash of 2008 was predicted by Warren Buffett as early as 2002. It happened despite the warnings of several experts that the level of mortgage lending and the leveraging of debt was unsustainable. Tavis and Aronson tell a similar story about the police. Once they have identified a suspect, they are reluctant to admit evidence of his or her innocence. And so it goes.

The avoidance strategies are almost endless. People say, It wasn't a mistake. Or, given the circumstances, it was the best that could have been done. Or it was a small mistake. Or it was unavoidable given what we knew at the time. Or someone else was to blame. We were given the wrong facts. We were faultily advised. So people bluff it out, or engage in denial, or see themselves as victims.

We have an almost infinite capacity for interpreting the facts to vindicate ourselves. As the Sages said in the context of the laws of purity, "No one can see his own blemishes, his own impurities." We are our own best advocates in the court of self-esteem. Rare is the individual with the courage to say, as the High Priest did, or as King David did after the prophet Nathan confronted him with his guilt in relation to Uriah and Batsheva, *chattati*, "I have sinned."

Judaism helps us admit our mistakes in three ways. First is the knowledge that God forgives. He does not ask us never to sin. He knew in advance that His gift of freedom would sometimes be misused. All he asks of us is that we acknowledge our mistakes, learn from them, confess and resolve not to do them again.

Second is Judaism's clear separation between the sinner and the sin. We can condemn an act without losing faith in the agent.

Third is the aura Yom Kippur spreads over the rest of the year. It helps create a culture of honesty in which we are not ashamed to acknowledge the wrongs we have done. And despite the fact that, technically, Yom Kippur is focused on sins between us and God, a simple reading of the confessions in *Ashamnu* and *Al Chet* shows us that, actually, most of the sins we confess are about our dealings with other people.

What Philip Lader discovered about his high-flying contemporaries, Judaism internalised long ago. Seeing the best admit that they too make mistakes is deeply empowering for the rest of us. The first Jew to admit he made a mistake was Judah, who had wrongly accused Tamar of sexual misconduct, and then, realising he had been wrong, said, "She is more righteous than I" (Gen. 38:26).

It is surely more than mere coincidence that the name Judah comes from the same root as *Vidui*, "confession". In other words, the very fact that we are called Jews – *Yehudim* – means that we are the people who have the courage to admit our wrongs.

Honest self-criticism is one of the unmistakable marks of spiritual greatness. ■

These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt"l are part of his 'Covenant & Conversation' series on the weekly Torah teaching. With thanks to the Schimmel Family for their generous sponsorship, dedicated in loving memory of Harry (Chaim) Schimmel. Visit www.RabbiSacks.org for more.

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The combined parshiyot of Avharei-Mot and Kedoshim are followed next Shabbat by the sedra of Emor. It has often been pointed out that the names of these three portions can be joined to express an important concept: “Acharei Mot Kedoshim” - after the death of martyrs, “Emor” – it is proper to speak (of them). Over the recent years, that statement has become more meaningful to our nation as these parshiyot are frequently read during the weeks when we mark Yom HaShoa’ah or Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha’Atzma’ut (as we did this past week).

According to Ashkenazi minhag, we follow the unique custom of reading the haftarah of the first parasha of Acharei Mot and not that of the second parasha of Kedoshim (although there is a minhag in Yerushalayim to read this same haftarah for Kedoshim when the portions are read separately). This reading, the shortest of all haftarot, is taken from Sefer Amos [9;

7-15] and, curiously, seems to have little in common with the theme of the two Torah portions. More troubling is the fact that the first four psukim (almost half of the reading!), focuses upon the punishments that Hashem would rain down upon, what the navi calls, “the sinful kingdom”. And, as the Torah readings are filled with laws of sanctity, morality and those pertaining to the holiest day of the year (Yom Kippur), we rightfully wonder why Chazal chose this short-and “painful” selection for our haftarah.

In answering this question HaRav Soloveitchik turns to two verses-one in the first parasha and one in the second – that sets the theme for our haftarah selection. The Rav points out that it is in these two parshiyot where -for the first time - Hashem raises the possibility that B’nai Yisra’el could actually lose her land and be exiled from it. Both parshiyot use the frightening phrase, in Vayikra 18:28 and 20:22, that the land “vomits” out those who fail to keep

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her holy, and, instead, defile her by ignoring Hashem's laws of morality. The divine insistence that the holy land demands holy behavior from the holy people is the closing theme of each parasha - the parashiyot dedicated to "kedusha", sanctity and holiness.

It is for this reason, argues the Rav that this haftarah was chosen, for its final five p'sukin are words of comfort and encouragement. In effect, the navi is telling his generation – and those who have just heard of the frightening idea of exile in the Torah reading - that the exile would be temporary and that G-d will ultimately return His nation to Tziyon. There will be tragedy and there will be restoration.

And therefore, on this Shabbat, after just having marked the tragedy on Yom HaZikaron and celebrated the restoration on Yom Ha'Atzma'ut, it is especially important to remember...Acharei Mot-Kedoshim - after marking the death of martyrs, we are chargedEmor – to tell of how Hashem has brought geula, the restoration of our nation to her land, through the sacrifices of the Kedoshim and all those who gave so much to bring the promise of Hashem and the message of Amos to fruition. ■

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Parshiyot Achrei Mot and *Kedoshim* are chock full of mitzvot. We will focus one mitzva and highlight insightful thoughts of the Ohr Hachaim Hakadosh.

וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת־קִצִּיר אֲרָצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה פֶּאֶת שְׂדֶךְ
לְקַצֹּר וְלִקְטַט קִצִּירְךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט: (ויקרא יט:ט)

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not fully reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. (Vayikra 19:9).

This *pasuk* commands us to care for the underprivileged by leaving the produce from a corner of our field for the poor (פאה) as well as leaving “gleanings” לקט (ears of grain that fell from the reaper’s hand or the sickle while the grain is being gathered during the harvest) for the poor to claim.

The Ohr Hachaim raises two questions on this *pasuk*:

Singular vs Pleural

Why is it that the beginning of the *pasuk* speaks in the **plural** (ובקצרכם) and then changes to the **singular** לא תכלה פאת שדך? Perhaps this can teach us an important lesson. One should not hypothesize that he has a small field and the corner

he leaves for the poor is *de minimis* and may not have any significant impact on alleviating any shortage of food in society, so it is not worth even complying with this imperative. Even if what is donated can provide a meal for one individual it is worth it. The intention is to resolve an issue in society – therefore the *pasuk* begins with the plural, but even if the result is beneficial for a **single** individual (use of singular), the mitzva should be fulfilled to its fullest degree.

We may add that the performance of *tzedaka* and *chesed* related mitzvot are not only for the benefit of the recipient, but the contributor gains from the contribution as well. As the Sefer Hachinuch teaches us אחרי הפעולות נמשכות הלבבות – our hearts follow our actions. By engaging in acts of *chesed* we program ourselves to be better individuals. The Rambam declares that it is preferable to provide 100 individuals with \$1 each than to provide one person with \$100, so that we get accustomed to being involved in acts of *chesed* and program ourselves to view it as second nature.

Remain Connected

The Ohr Hachaim’s second question is what is the connection between the laws of *leket* and *pe’ah* (לקט ופאה) to the previous *pasuk* that discusses the punishment of *karet* (כרת) for eating a sacrifice after its allotted time? We are not going to get into

the intricacies of what *karet* means, but essentially it is a severe punishment (כרת – literal meaning – disconnect).

The Ohr Hachaim explains, *al pi drash*, if one transgresses and is liable for *karet*, he should not throw in the towel and have the attitude of “well, I am doomed for *karet* anyway so why bother engaging in mitzvot- might as well enjoy life.” This was the erroneous attitude of *acher* (אחר) after he was convinced, he had no place in the world to come. How do we derive this lesson from these *pesukim*?

ובקצרכם – when you feel as if you are cut off (which is the meaning of the word כרת)

לא תכלה פאת שדר – don't remove the corner – in other words, remain attached. Although you may have messed up on one mitzva, retain the connection via the remaining 612 mitzvot. In fact, the *pasuk* continues, ולקט קצירך לא תלקט – even with respect to the mitzva you transgressed- - לקט קצירך try to reconnect to that mitzva as well תלקט. There is always the ability to engage in *teshuva*!

May we perform acts of *chesed* no matter how “small” we may perceive them to be, assist the needy and strengthen our connection to Torah and mitzvot so that we remain *Kedoshim*- a holy nation. ■

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Rewarding Reward

The Torah teaches as an imperative ‘vchai bahem’. Rashi explains that this refers to the reward in the next world, since our world is temporal, and we don’t live forever. At the same time Chazal learn from this Passuk, that it is better to desecrate one Shabbat to save a life, enabling the person to keep many more Shabbatot. It therefore seems that the Passuk is referring to life in this world. How do we reconcile these two ideas?

R. Weinberger z'l in Shemen Hatov, discusses what it means to be a ‘ben olam haba.’ For example, one who says Ashrei three times a day Chazal considers as being a ‘ben olam haba’. Clearly, this does not mean one gets a free pass to the next world. Rather, it refers to living in this world with the mindset of the next. One who invests their service of Hashem with ‘chiyut’ life force, then already in this world, one lives an ‘olam haba’ type of existence.

R. Kestenbaum in Olam Ha'avodah begins his sefer on understanding what it means to have reward in the next world. We often have a picture of olam haba being like candy land, with many treats and rewards waiting for us to partake of them. Obviously, since the next world is not one of physicality this picture is a misnomer. Rather, the next world is

living with the intense feeling of closeness to Hashem, which is developed through doing the mitzvos in this world. Hence, Netivot Shalom explains that Chazal and Rashi are complementary ideas. Our job is to invest life force in each mitzvah that we do. As we say in Shabbat morning davening ‘*tzahala vrina l'zecher malchuto*’, one should feel joy and exhilaration each time we mention the name of Hashem, each bracha becomes an elevated experience. This feeling of closeness and spiritual connection is ultimately the ‘reward’ in the next world. Netivot Shalom in describing a person who may have kept with precision every mitzvah of Shabbat, albeit with no feeling, and no spiritual fire, will find themselves sitting in *gan eden* totally lifeless. One’s experience of the next world is predicated on one’s experience in this world.

R. Weissblum in He'arat Derech teaches us one method of reaching a level of connection and feeling, and that is through preparation. One who contemplates what one is about to do, and in front of whom one is doing this act, dramatically changes the mitzvah that one does. It is easy to ‘fall’ into doing a mitzvah, davening right before sunset, for example without even thinking of what it means to thank Hashem for all that transpired throughout the day. With a little bit of thought one can create a life of mindfulness in serving Hashem, and thereby enhance simultaneously one’s life both in this world and the next. ■

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Getting There

Rav Yaakov Moshe Shurkin, a long-time *maggid shiur* at Yeshivas Rabbeinu Chaim Berlin, learned in the yeshivah of Radin for fifteen years and had a close relationship with the holy Chafetz Chaim. One year, he spent the month of Elul in the yeshivah of Novardok, soaking in their powerful *mus-sar* approach and focusing on inner work and intensive *middos* development. When it came time for him to leave, he went to speak with the rosh yeshivah, Rav Avraham Yoffen. While waiting, he had a brief conversation with the rebbetzin, the daughter of the Alter of Novardok, Rav Yosef Yozel Horowitz. She asked him, “Tell me, please, what would you say is the difference between Radin and Novardok?”

The *bachur* Yaakov Moshe was silent and didn’t know how to answer. The Rebbetzin then said, “I’ll tell you. In Radin, when you are in the presence of the saintly Chafetz Chaim, you are seeing the greatness of the holy Kohen Gadol in his *avodah*, and you learn *vus a mensch ken zein*, what a person

can become, *un vus a mensch darf zein*, and what a person ought to reach. However, here in Novardok, you learn *vus a mensch iz*, what a person *actually* is—where you are holding and what you are right now.”

דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עֵדֻת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קְדוּשִׁים
תְּהִיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם:

Speak to the entire congregation of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I Hashem your God, am holy. (Vayikra 19:2)

The Midrash expounds:

וְהָדִין: קְדוּשִׁים תְּהִיוּ, יָכוֹל
כְּמוֹתִי תִלְמֹד לִוְמָר: כִּי קָדוֹשׁ
אֲנִי, קְדוּשָׁתִי לִמְעֻלָּה מִקְדָּשְׁתְּכֶם
“Be holy” might be taken to imply that you will be like Me, therefore it says, “...for I, Hashem, am Holy” —

My Holiness is higher than your holiness.’ (Vayikra Rabbah, 24:9)

In other words, implied in *Kedoshim tihyu*, “You shall be holy,” is the Ribbono Shel Olam’s qualifier: ‘You might think that My intention in this commandment is for you to be as holy as I am. That is, however, not the case, as the *pasuk* continues, ‘*ki kadosh Ani, Hashem*, “for I, God, am holy”; My holiness is always going to be superior, beyond anything you can attain.’ But we could ask: is it really necessary to point out that we are not actually expected to be equal to God? Does the Midrash really need

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to point out that a human being, a creation of flesh and blood, cannot reach the Infinite heights of our Creator?

Rosh Yeshivas Mir and author of *Sichas Mussar*, Rav Chaim Shmuelevitz, zt"l, had an extraordinary insight into the way Chazal view how powerful we are when we activate our spiritual potential. Each of us has the ability to transcend 'what we are right now' and achieve lofty levels of self mastery in *avodah* and *midos* development. Indeed, we can become so holy that if it were not for the textual confirmation that the *Ribbono shel Olam* does not literally expect us to reach His infinite heights, we would be left with a *hava amina* to believe that indeed we can!

Two hundred years earlier, Reb Dov Ber, The Great Maggid of Mezritch, also revealed a radical teaching: "Be *kadosh* (ki, 'thus') I, Hashem, am *kadosh*": By living a life of *kedushah*, and sanctifying God's name by generating Divine honor, praise and blessing, we are actually able to 'add' to the holiness of Hashem. In this way, קדר למעלה, "My holiness above" in the upper worlds - is מקדושתכם — "dependent on your holiness", dependent upon the way we conduct ourselves here, below, in this world.

בסוף קדשים תהיו literally means "You will be holy." It seems that rather than using the future tense, the Torah's text would have used the form of a command: קדשים היו, "Be holy." Yet, the Rambam sees deliberate meaning in using the future tense:

וכבר הבטיחה תורה שסוף ישראל לעשות תשובה
בסוף גלותו ומיד הן נגאלין
שנאמר: (דברים, לא) "והיה כי יבאו עליך כל הדברים"
וגו,

(דברים ל"ב) "ושבת עד ה' אלקיך",

(דברים ל"ג) "ושבת ה' אלקיך":

And the Torah has already assured us that, ultimately, Yisrael 'will' do *teshuvah* towards the end of her exile and be immediately redeemed: "There shall come a time when you 'will' experience all these things... and you 'will' return to Hashem.... And Hashem 'will' bring you back from captivity."

This Shabbos may we remember *vus a mensch darf zein*, 'who we are', and also consider *vus a mensch ken zein*, 'what we can become' — indeed, what we 'will' one day become: redeemed, free, *kedoshim!* ■




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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

The second of the two *parshiyot* we will read this coming *Shabbat*, *Parshat Kedoshim* begins with the instruction that we must seek holiness—"Kedoshim tihiyu ki Kadosh Ani Hashem Elokechem-You shall be holy, for I, Hashem, your Lord, am Holy."

Our Chazal in the *Midrash Rabba* (*Vayikra Rabba* 24) interpret this verse to mean -Yachol KiMoni-Hashem instructs us "Be like Me-that we should strive to be holy, to emulate Hashem.

The great Chasidic Master, the **Oheiv Yisrael, Rebbe Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apt zy'a**, looks to another very perplexing *Maamar Chazal* to explain our verse. The Rebbe asks, how can we as mere human beings emulate Hashem in his infinite wisdom?

The *Gemara* in *Brachot* (*daf vav*) tells us that just as we are instructed to put on *Tefilin*, so too Hashem also dons *tefilin*. Our *tefilin* contain the verse:

Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad(Hear Israel, Hashem is our God, Hashem is One), while Hashem's *tefilin* contain the verse: *Mi K'Amcha Yisrael, goy echad 'Aaretz- Who is like you Israel, a unique people on Earth...*

The Rebbe explains, surely this teaching cannot be taken literally, that Hashem who is beyond any physical form or limitation actually dons *tefilin*! Rather there is an important message being communicated

via this parable. Just as our *tefilin* contain the verse of *Shema*, attesting to our unwavering devotion and love for Hashem, so too, Hashem's proverbial *tefilin* contains a verse showering praise, love and devotion upon the Jewish People!

The Rebbe explains that we learn from this beautiful teaching, that even if we view this and every *mitzva* as an opportunity to cling to God, to demonstrate our love and fidelity to the Master of the Universe, **that love and fidelity pales in comparison to the enduring love that Hashem feels for the Jewish People.**

The Rebbe's keen insight regarding this *mitzva* of *tefilin* really provides us with a new understanding of how we relate to each of the *mitzvot*.

Mitzvot are not solely an opportunity to cling to Hashem, to demonstrate our commitment and trust in the *Ribono Shel Olam*, but also to simultaneously experience Hashem's divine embrace, to realize that Hashem bestows his unending love upon all of *Klal Yisrael*.

May each of us be blessed not only to strive to emulate Hashem, to live lives of *Kedusha*, but also to feel and experience Hashem's divine embrace. ■

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Three Mitzvot of Sensitivity

Even before Hillel told the potential convert, standing on one leg, “Don’t do to others what you would not want done to you”, our religious authenticity as Jews has depended on the way we treat others. Interpersonal mitzvot are the foundation of a Torah life.

Take *tzniut* - the Torah’s perspective on personal dignity. Often an emotionally charged issue, *tzniut* is far deeper than a technical discussion of dress-codes and behavioral norms. It is clearly not a ‘mitzvah for women’, but one that men also need to take seriously. In fact, much of the trauma triggered by *tzniut* stems from a failure to treat others kindly and sensitively. Here are three relevant examples from our parasha.

The obligation of *Ahavat Re’im* is effectively a negative one - not to treat others inappropriately. Those who take *tzniut* seriously must never cross the line into rude or insensitive behavior toward those who may not act or dress according to halakhah or, as is often the case, not in line with the preferences or customs of another community. By the same token, visiting a community with a strongly-held objection to certain types of clothing or

behavior, and ignoring their preferences, also demonstrates a lack of sensitivity and consideration. Greater awareness on both sides of the mitzvah of *Ahavat Re’im* would defuse much of the tension surrounding *tzniut*.

The mitzvah of *Lo Tisna* commands us never to reject another Jew in our hearts and minds. The *Or Hachayim* warns that we breach this obligation every time we refuse to accept a fellow Jew as our sibling, but reject them as not coming from ‘my community’. Breach of this mitzvah is tragically rampant wherever people use religious, hashkafic or political disagreements to reject other people, and *tzniut* can become a measuring-stick for this type of rejection. We should treat every Jew as our sibling, irrespective of the way they dress.

Thirdly, the mitzvah of *Tochachah* commands us to rebuke others who have wronged us or who are behaving inappropriately. Again, issues of *tzniut* can become a flash-point for rebuke and recrimination, often without proper consideration. *Tochachah* is only valid where it will ultimately increase the love and acceptance between those involved; it is

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certainly unacceptable to embarrass someone publicly in the process. And just as there is a mitzvah to give *tochachah* when it will be heeded, there is a mitzvah to remain silent when it will not. This does not mean that we should drop our halakhic standards. But *tochachah* today clearly requires sensitive *chinuch* rather than rebuke.

Mishlei associates *tzniut* with wisdom. Our approach to long-term improvement must be built on *chochmah* and nuance. Above all, it must be grounded in the love, sensitivity and respect that our parasha requires us to show to every Jew.

Rabbi Manning is co-author of a new book: “*Reclaiming Dignity – A Guide to Tzniut for Men and Women*”, launching at the OU Israel Center on Sunday April 30. ■




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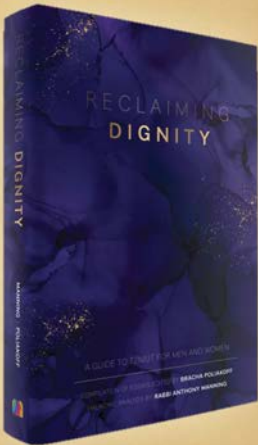
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The 3rd Kiddush Hashem

Hashem is infinite and His uncontainable presence spans the entire cosmos. Yet, His presence on this Earth is a function of human behavior. By empowering human beings with freedom of conscience and with free will, Hashem anchored His presence on Earth to human history.

In particular, Hashem entrusted His chosen people as His representatives to humanity. Actions which augment His presence constitute a kiddush Hashem and, sadly, actions which diminish His presence create a chilul Hashem. The commandment to generate a kiddush Hashem stems from the pasuk of **וְנִקְדַּשְׁתִּי בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל**, a phrase which underscores the relationship between Jewish history and kiddush Hashem.

Jewish Martyrdom

Bringing Hashem into our world hasn't always been easy. Ideally, we were meant to represent Him by living in His Land and modeling a godly lifestyle to an international audience. Namely, our kiddush Hashem agenda was meant to be peaceful and serene. Sadly, we wrecked that historical narrative and replaced it with a more

circuitous and violent arc, which would plunge us into two exiles and thrust us into thousands of years of homelessness.

During that long dreadful odyssey, we would be fiercely challenged to uphold Hashem's presence. The Jewish faith was viciously attacked and the rising popularity of Christianity and Islam certainly corroborated antagonistic claims that Hashem had replaced us with a different nation. We faced brutal religious persecution and fell under immense pressure, both physical and psychological, to convert. The cost for defiance was often death. Refusing to buckle to this ferocious pressure, we valiantly defended the divine presence with our own lives. The long trail of Jewish martyrdom is a fearsome but heroic story of a loyal nation doggedly upholding their commitments at Sinai.

The first public theological faceoff over the presence of Hashem occurred between Nevuchadnezar and three Jews who had been expatriated from Yerushalayim to Bavel. Resisting this indomitable tyrant's demand to worship his idol Chanania, Mishael, and Azaryah faced a fiery death sentence. Their defiant stand and their miraculous escape restored Hashem's presence to a gloomy world. As they were being hurled into the fire they shouted **לֹא לָנוּ ה' לֹא לָנוּ ה'** - they were conscious that their heroism was repairing Hashem's presence during a broken period of history.

Approximately 500 years later, Rebbe Akiva and his colleagues were mercilessly and savagely murdered as they resisted the mighty Roman empire and its colossal armies. Rebbe Akiva's repeated insistence upon teaching Torah, despite stiff Roman decrees, landed him in jail awaiting execution. As he was being crushed to death he recited *Shema Yisrael* and launched two thousand years of Jewish martyrdom. Over the next two millennia, we faced furious and relentless pressure to abandon our religion and abdicate our historical mission. Following in Rabbi Akiva's legacy we courageously defended Hashem's presence by sacrificing our own lives for an invisible G-d we literally loved more than ourselves.

Kiddush Hashem Through Life

Kiddush Hashem, however, isn't only expressed through a dramatic act of martyrdom. Jews don't have a death wish and we hope to represent Hashem through the lives we lead and through the values we display. Every page of Torah studied and every mitzvah performed increases Hashem's presence, even if that amplification isn't discernible to the naked eye. Additionally, in our day-to-day behavior we model the dignity and nobility of a life lived before Hashem, showcasing the value of commandments and of historical covenant.

Moreover, by infusing our lives with ethical spirit we hope to inspire the world to higher moral ground. The gemara documents Torah sages who behaved with extraordinary moral sensitivity to avoid any defilement of Hashem's spirit. These religious figures understood that as they were associated with Hashem their behavior would be heavily scrutinized. They



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voluntarily returned lost items to Gentiles, were careful about their eating habits, and promptly paid their bills. Alienation from religion often stems from the inability to reconcile religion with moral instinct. When religion appears to clash with moral sensibilities it is often discarded. Witnessing religious personalities acting inappropriately disillusion people from religion.

Religious Jews have, recently, become more visible in the public eye - both in Israel and even in the United States. As religious people enter the public realm, they must be extremely vigilant about their behavior and their speech. As public personalities associated with Judaism their behavior reflects the image of Hashem and they can raise His presence of, G-d forbid sabotage it.

The 3rd Kiddush Hashem

In addition to defending Hashem with our lives and to living a moral lifestyle of commandments, there is a third manner in which Hashem's presence is augmented. In perek 20, Yechezkel describes a narrative of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* which is starkly different from the story of sefer Shemot. In his portrayal, Hashem expected us to launch our own redemption by withdrawing from our pagan habits. Sadly, decades of slavery had eroded our faith and we had descended into pagan culture. Unfortunately, we lacked the courage and the imagination to take the first leap in response to Hashem's invitation.

Responding to our apathy Hashem "considered" annihilating us. Failing to fulfill historical expectations we had little right to be redeemed from slavery. This alternative narrative poses a thorny question which sefer Shemot ignores: why were we redeemed if we were undeserving?

The answer to that question is unambiguous: We were redeemed because our destruction would have reflected poorly upon Hakadosh Baruch Hu. As His chosen nation, we had been aligned with Him for the previous 400 years. To annihilate us at that delicate historical juncture would have caused a regression of the divine presence from our world. That level of Chilul Hashem could not be countenanced and, therefore, we were liberated and redeemed

even though we were undeserving of His intervention.

Yechezkel's outline of *Yetziat Mitzrayim* profiles a third dimension of kiddush and chilul Hashem. The general "state" or condition of the Jewish people reflects upon Hashem.

When we flourish, Hashem's presence is augmented. When our national condition declines, Hashem's presence regresses and a chilul Hashem follows. Sometimes we are redeemed to avoid an exacerbation of chilul Hashem.

The Holocaust was the darkest period in Jewish history since the destruction of the second Mikdash. The attempt to methodically eliminate anything and everything Jewish from the streets of Europe was an

Over the years since our
State was renewed, as
Israel has prospered,
Hashem's presence has
similarly increased.

assault not just on the Jewish people, but upon the presence of Hashem. For those five dark years Hashem's presence was dimmed by malicious and murderous human behavior. A chilul Hashem of that magnitude required a kiddush Hashem to restore the grandeur of Hashem.

That kiddush Hashem occurred a mere three years afterwards. Three years in the sweep of history is a passing hiccup. Our return to our Land and to historical relevance and even prominence reestablished His presence. Over the years since our State was renewed, as Israel has prospered, Hashem's presence has similarly increased. Hashem's presence is not only a product of dramatic theological religious faceoffs, or of Torah infused lives. Hashem is affected by the arc of Jewish destiny; when our national condition ascends, His presence is more deeply felt.

We are living in the third dimension of kiddush Hashem. We may not have deserved redemption, but history demanded it. Hashem 'had to' respond to the atrocity of the Holocaust. The State of Israel resuscitated Jewish pride and relieved Jewish suffering, but, most, importantly, renovated Hashem's glory in the world of Man. ■



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When the *plowman* shall meet the reaper
(Amos 9:14)

In a description of the overflowing bounty in the end of days, the Navi Amos describes the plowman meeting the reaper. When do these two people meet? The Malbim describes how the plowman coming to dig and prepare the earth in the spring will meet with the reaper who is still in the field cutting his crop from the previous year. Because there will be so much bounty to harvest, it will take months to reap the crops and thus two field workers will meet.

In a homiletic sense, these two people represent two sides of the life journey. As the plowman, we work in this world, *HaZorim B'Dima* - who plow in tears, and often do not experience the joy of seeing the results of our efforts. We toil in our homes,

workspaces and community but don't necessarily see the results of our actions. Often the outcomes of our input are not recognized until years later. As an example, only when children become adults do they appreciate the decisions of their parents. By contrast, as the reaper, we don't appreciate the efforts that go into our experiences. We consume in this world without noting and recognizing the labor that contributes to our bounty. The gifts that are bestowed upon us are often not fully appreciated.

Amos shares that in the future, the plowman will meet the reaper. In Messianic times, there will be a tangible connection between effort and result. We will be able to recognize input and output in a way that we can adequately express gratitude for the gifts that Hashem gives us. ■

Rebbeztzin Dr. Adina Shmidman is the founding director of the Orthodox Union Women's Initiative and the rebbeztzin of the Lower Merion Synagogue in Bala Cynwyd, PA.

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Yoni thanks Hashem for having the opportunity of having Tziporah in his life, to learn of her caring, patience and happiness, to overcome her challenges. May Tziporah's Neshama be a light onto the world, in a time of darkness, and may her Neshama shine to Gan Eden. Yoni misses Tziporah with tears in his eyes, as Hashem gave him a gift, a crown jewel, now he returns her to Hashem.

With thanks and Toda. Love, Yoni

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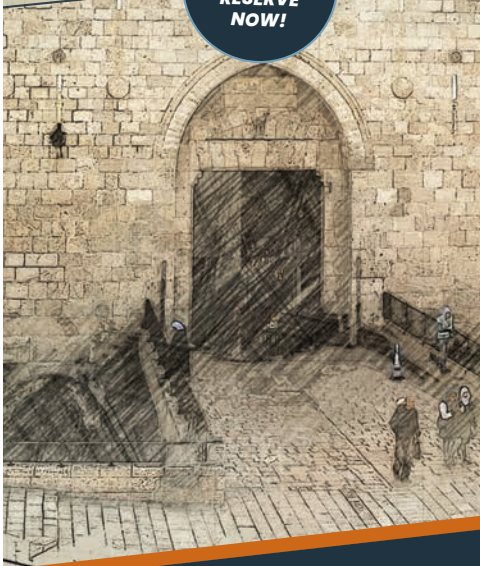
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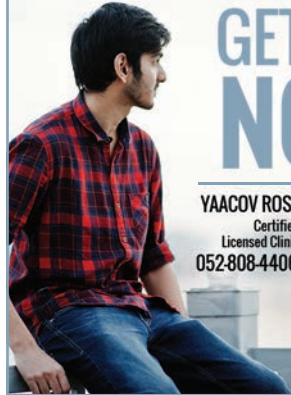
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Correcting a *Ba'al Korei*

Question: What are the rules about correcting a *ba'al korei*?

Answer: The Tur (Orach Chayim 142) seems to present a polar *machloket* on the matter. The Rambam (Tefilla 12:6) rules that if one made a mistake even on a single “*dikduk*” of a letter, we make him go back. Hamanhig (p. 160) prefers not correcting to embarrassing the *ba'al korei*. This is based on the *midrash* (cited by Tosafot, Avoda Zara 22b) that even if one reads the name “Aharon” as “Haron,” it is acceptable. The Shulchan Aruch (OC 142:1) *paskens* like the Rambam.

The Rama (ad loc., based on Terumat Hadeshen II:181) calls for corrections only when a mistake changes how the “matter” is understood. His contrasting cases are mistakes in *ta'amei hamikra* (*trop*) and *nikud* (vowels). The Mishna Berura (ad loc. 4) says that the real distinction is whether the meaning is changed, just that letters usually change the meaning (Aharon-Haron being an exception), and *nikud/trop* usually do not.

There may be indications that a mistake in a letter always warrants correction, whereas regarding *nikud* and *te'amim* changing meaning is the determinant (see B'er Moshe I:4). After all, the Rambam (ibid.) mentions letters, and the Yerushalmi's (Megilla 4:5) example of needing correction is between “*im*” and “*v'im*” (*vav* as a prefix is translated as “and” but often does not change the meaning at all (Shemot 21:9 is one of many cases)). The Aruch Hashulchan (OC 142:1) gives, as an example of changing words, “*keves*” and “*kesev*” – the same letters, inverted, both meaning a sheep. Perhaps, then, the Rama is only lenient by non-impactful mistakes not involving letters. In short, it is unclear how much of a *machloket* there is between Rambam/Shulchan Aruch and Terumat Hadeshen/Rama.

There is much complexity regarding being *yotzei b'dieved* with a mistake that changes the meaning. The Terumat Hadeshen thought it likely (not definite) that according to the Rambam, a mistake disqualifies the *mitzva*, whereas

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Hamanhig says one is *yotzei*. Others (see Beit Yosef, OC 142) reason that Hamanhig's *b'dieved* acceptance, based on the Aharon-Haron precedent, applies when the meaning is unchanged (Shut Beit Yaakov 76 posits that Haron is a different name than Aharon). There are different levels of *l'chatchila* and *b'dieved* (in order): 1. The *ba'al korei* should prepare for an exact reading (see Rama *ibid.*); 2. We correct right away, but not if the *ba'al korei* has "moved on." 3. The *aliya* has ended with its *beracha* (see Eshel Avraham (Butchach) 142:1). 4. The *sefer Torah* has been put away. There **might** be a difference between Shabbat, with its specific text quota (see Berachot 8a), and weekday *laining*, if without the *pasuk* of the mistake, there are three *p'sukim* in the *aliya* and ten *p'sukim* overall (Bi'ur Halacha 142:1).

Now we will over-generalize regarding guidance. A small percentage of *trop* mistakes change the meaning. The *minhag* is not to correct mistakes between letters with a *dagesh* and those without (even if we pronounce *vet* like *vav* and, in classic Ashkenazis, *tov* is pronounced like *tet*, and *sof* like *samech/sin*). The *shva na* / *shva nach*

distinction rarely changes the meaning, all the more so where people unfortunately do not distinguish with regularity (see Mishna Berura 128:120). Putting stress on the wrong syllable does not usually change the meaning, but one needs to know *dikduk* well to know when it does. *Trop* usually does not change the meaning, but again only an expert will have a good feel for when it does.

The above is less than the tip of the iceberg. Therefore, it is big *beracha* to have *ba'alei k'riya* who make few mistakes. Because it is important to avoid **both** under-correcting and over-correcting, it is crucial to have "correctors" who are excellent in Halacha and *dikduk*, and at appraising the *ba'al korei*'s sensitivity. (I also announce that my friend and colleague, Rabbi Menachem Jacobowitz, and I have embarked, *b'ezrat Hashem*, on writing a *sefer* that explores the *halachot* and *dikduk* behind these matters and provides recommendations for dozens of common mistakes per *parasha*.) ■



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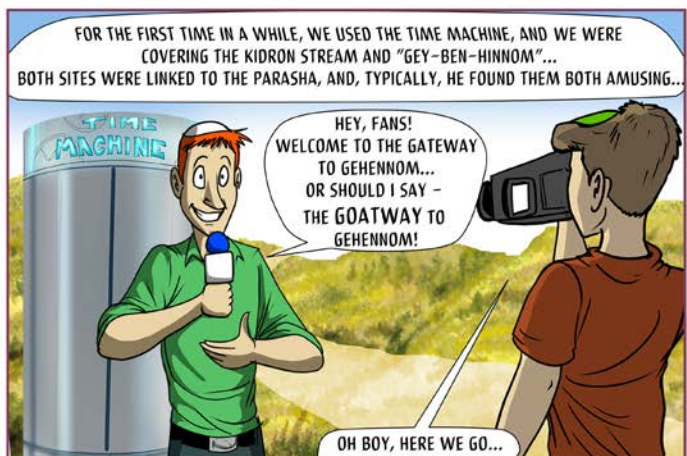
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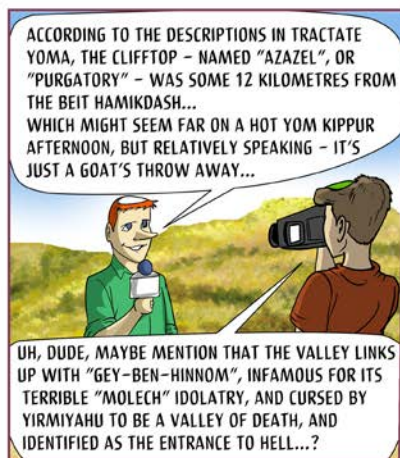
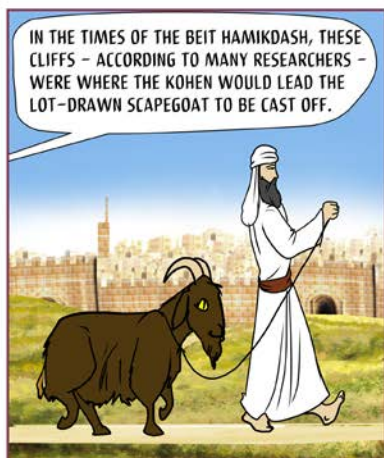
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The end of this week's sedra discusses forbidden relationships. The section with "Speak to all of the Jewish people, and tell them: I am G-d. Do not act like those in Egypt, where you lived, and do not act like those in Canaan where I am bringing you, and do not follow their laws. You shall follow my laws and keep my rules to follow them, I am G-d." (Vayikra 18:1-4)

We see an unusual repetition here, the book-ends of "I am G-d," surrounded by the even stranger warning of not emulating the Canaanites. They seem almost contradictory- later in the Torah, it's written that G-d took us out of Egypt to bring us to the Land of Israel to be our G-d, "I am G-d" (Bemidbar 15). Yet here, it almost seems as if coming to the Land of Israel would expose us to the corruption and immorality of the locals, which, as we see later on in the perek, are very problematic even by today's much lower standards- why would G-d even lead us to the Land of Israel and risk our spiritual and moral standing?

We can answer this by identifying as the newly formerly Egyptian Jews. Even though the Land of Egypt was far from a moral society, generations of Jews flourished there, thanks to the spiritual foundations and leadership of Yosef, Yehuda, Levi and

others. Even centuries of backbreaking slavery didn't break their spirit and connection, because of their mesorah and because of G-d's promise to be with them and of the Exodus. The thought of leaving that settled existence behind for another, equally if less moral settlement, must have been very scary.

While contemplating this transition, G-d reminds the Jewish people of what we read: "Go to the Land of Israel, follow the laws of morality brought forth here, and I will be your G-d and you will remain holy." As is later taught in the Babylonian Talmud quoting the same phrase, "For anyone who lives in Eretz Yisrael is like he has a G-d, and anyone who lives outside of Israel is as if he has no G-d, for it says 'To give you Eretz Canaan, to be a G-d for you'" (Ketubot 13b). Better to be in the Promised Land, with its spiritual corruption yet with G-d and immoral surroundings, than anywhere else, even with perceived higher spirituality, without Him.

As we celebrate Yom Ha'atzma'ut this week and commemorate 75 years of Medinat Yisrael, we have a lot to be thankful for. Unlike the Jews of the Exodus, previous generations have settled the Land and prepared the spiritual groundwork for our G-d-fearing existence here. While many of our brethren still live elsewhere, including many religious leaders, it is no longer a contradiction to live in Israel and be G-d fearing, something which directly affected our decisions to move

our lives here.

Let us thank G-d for our mesorah, our morals and our connection to our Promised Land- may we merit the complete redemption very, very soon! ■

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We Will All Be Holy

Parshat Kedoshim begins with powerful words: Hashem told Moshe to command Bnei Yisrael - "קדושים תהיו". This phrase is often mis-translated as "you must be holy," when in fact it literally means "you will be holy."

Rabbi Hezkel Shraga explains that these words are not only a command, but also a promise to the people of Israel. No matter where they are, what they are doing, or how far they may have strayed, God promises that they will ultimately return and be holy. This promise is rooted in the fact that every Jew is inherently holy, with the potential to uncover that holiness through teshuva. While we may not always feel holy when we look at ourselves, we know that God has promised us that we are holy and can access that holiness whenever we choose to do so. These words were said in Hakel, in the presence of all of Bnei Yisrael. But why did all of Bnei Yisrael have to hear these words? Moshe could have spoken to some of Bnei Yisrael and they could have taught the others. Why did all of Bnei Yisrael have to hear these words together? Rashi says, based on the midrash:

היה מפני שרוב גופי תורה תלויים בה -since so many fundamental teachings of the Torah are dependent on it. What does that mean?

Perhaps one can suggest that so much of the Torah is based on us knowing and internalizing the fact that we are all holy, that you are not the only person around who's holy. I'm not the only person who knows how to serve God. We are 'Behakhel'. We are all holy, each one of us. People who act like me, and people who don't act like me. People who dress like me, and people who don't dress like me, etcetera, etcetera. רוב גופי תורה - most of the Torah is based on this understanding.



Raphael Roshwalb
11th grade, Raanana
Spiritual Spending

"ונמאת עדת בני ישראל יקח שני שעירי עזים לחטאת"

There is a very interesting question that the Gemara (Yoma 62a) seems to gloss over: the he-goat for Azazel, which was to be thrown over the cliff, and the one offered in the Beit Hamikdash to Hashem were (preferably) to be identical in color, height, and value.

Why should Jews have to spend extra sums of money on a he-goat that will anyhow be thrown over a cliff? The money we spend during our lifetime can be divided

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into two parts. One part goes to spiritual matters such as tzedakah, mitzvot, and tuition, and the other to physical necessities and personal pleasures. Unfortunately, many people who are blessed with affluence spend freely on personal amenities yet plead poverty when it comes to spending money on spiritual matters. In retrospect, we often feel that money spent on pleasures has been wasted. However, money spent on the spiritual has an everlasting effect.

The two he-goats can also serve as metaphors for these above-mentioned two categories of expenses. And the instruction of our sages that they should be of equal value, conveys an important lesson.

Hashem requests that at least an equal amount of money be spent on spiritual matters. If one has money for “Azazeil” — to throw over the cliff — one should not

plead poverty when it comes to spending for Hashem. As a teenager, I think the lesson from the Gemara about the he-goats being of equal value is a reminder that we should prioritize spending, not just money but time on spiritual matters alongside personal pleasures. It's important to find a balance and not neglect our spiritual responsibilities while indulging in material desires. Shabbat Shalom ■

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FEATURING:



Dr. Yael Ziegler

Rivers and Rain: Gan Eden and the Land of Israel

Dr. Yael Ziegler is Rosh Batei Midrash of Matan and a senior lecturer in Tanakh at Herzog College. She received her BA from Stern College and an MA and Ph.D. at Bar Ilan University. Dr. Ziegler has lectured widely on various Tanakh topics in Israel, the United States, South Africa, Australia, and Europe and has authored multiple books on Tanach.



Rabbi Chanoch Waxman

First Things First: The Ceremony of the Stones

An alumnus of Har Etzion, Rabbi Chanoch Waxman currently teaches at Yeshivat Har Etzion. He received Semicha from Yeshiva University and also holds an M.A. in Jewish Philosophy from Yeshiva University as well as an M.A. in General Philosophy from City University of New York. In Israel, Rabbi Waxman teaches at Yeshivat Har Etzion and has taught in many Midrashot and Yeshivot around the country. Rabbi Waxman is featured speaker and writer for Yeshivat Har Etzion's Virtual Beit Midrash.



Rabbi Michael Hattin

*Jordan River is Deep and Wide:
Overcoming the Past to Embrace the Future*

An alumnus of Har Etzion, Rav Hattin teaches Tanakh and Halakha at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and serves as the Coordinator of the Beit Midrash for the Pardes Center for Jewish Educators. He studied for semicha at Yeshivat Har Etzion and holds a professional degree in architecture from the University of Toronto. Rabbi Hattin is the author of several books on Tanach.



Tuesday, May 2, 2023



SNAC



9:00am Light Breakfast



**5 Kehillat Tzfat,
Netanya**



9:30am-12:15pm Program



Click Link to RSVP

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