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Sicha for Shabbat from the Roshei Yeshiva Yeshivat Har Etzion

PARASHAT KEDOSHIM

SICHA OF HARAV AHARON LICHTENSTEIN

"For Most of the Essentials of the Torah Depend Upon It"

Summarized by Matan Glidai Translated by Kaeren Fish

"Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel' - This teaches that this parasha was uttered at 'hak'heil' (a gathering of the entire nation), for most of the essentials of the Torah depend upon it." (Rashi on Vayikra 19:1, quoting the midrash)

What Rashi means to say is that this short parasha contains a relatively large number of commandments. But the uniqueness of the parasha seems to lie not only in the number of its mitzvot, but also in their great variety. The parasha contains mitzvot of every sort: interpersonal mitzvot and mitzvot between man and God are intertwined, for example, "Each person shall fear his mother and his father, and observe My Shabbatot" (verse 3). In between the verse teaching "You shall not steal..." and the prohibition "You shall not oppress your neighbor, nor shall you steal," we find the command relating to desecration of God's Name: "You shall not swear falsely by My Name" (see Rambam, Hilkhos Shevuot 12:1-2). Chukkim and mishpatim sit side by side: "You shall not take revenge, nor shall you bear a grudge... You shall love

your neighbor as yourself... You shall observe My statutes - you shall not interbreed your cattle..." (verses 18-19). Alongside general mitzvot pertaining to the fundamentals of faith, such as Shabbat and idolatry, we find others that concern details of ritual actions - such as left-over meat of sacrifices (piggul and notar). Even on the linguistic level, the parasha is likewise a mixture of singular and plural.

It would appear that in bringing all these different mitzvot together in one parasha, the Torah is conveying a message: "The Torah of God is perfect; it restores the soul." The Torah must be treated as a single entity; it is not a collection of unrelated details.

"At the time when God said, 'I am the Lord your God...' and 'You shall not have any other gods...', the nations of the world said: 'He (God) demands this for His own glory.' When God reached the fifth commandment, 'Honor your father and your mother,' they revised their view of the first commandments.

Rabba taught: 'The beginning of Your Word is truth' - Does this imply, then, that only the beginning of God's word is truth, but not the end? Obviously not; rather, at the end of His word it becomes clear that 'the beginning of Your Word is truth.'" (Kiddushin 31a)

There is a connection between interpersonal mitzvot and mitzvot between man and God: each type has an influence on the other, and all are part of the same whole. A person who does not fulfill the commandments guiding his relationships with others is defective also in his observance of the mitzvot involving religious ritual. The same applies to the spheres of singular and plural: a person must fulfill both the individual, private mitzvot and those that are communal and public; he must take care of his own individual welfare and, at the same time, also be concerned for the welfare of all of Am Yisrael, with the understanding that these concerns are intertwined. Rashi quotes the Midrash as teaching not that "Most of the essentials of the Torah are included in it," but rather that "Most of the essentials of the Torah depend upon it" - the mitzvot depend upon and influence each other.

Ramban's well-known teaching on the beginning of the parasha is that "You shall be holy" is a general command, requiring us to sanctify ourselves and refrain from gluttonous eating habits and from foul language - not to be "scoundrels within the bounds of Torah." This is, in fact, a command to attain a certain moral level, beyond the fulfillment of the details of the commandments. This, too, is related to what we have said above. On the one hand, a person must take care with the details of the mitzvot, never disregarding a single directive in the Shulchan Arukh. On the other hand, he must also maintain the values towards which the Torah as a whole guides us, and build his personality in accordance with Torah requirements.

"And you shall observe My statutes (chukkotai) and My judgments (mishpatai), which a person shall perform...' (18:5) - this is intended to teach that both observance and performance (shemira va-asiyya) are required for the statutes, and both observance and performance are required for the judgments." (Rashi, quoting the Torat Kohanim)

The Rambam comments on this as follows:

"The meaning of 'performance' is known - this refers to performance of the statutes. And 'observance' means that one should take care with them, never imagining them to be of lesser value than the judgments." (Hilkhos Me'ila 8:8)

Both chukkim (statutes), rituals which are not readily understood, and mishpatim (judgments), must be fulfilled in all their details. However, extra care must be taken to treat the statutes with the proper respect and to appreciate their value. At the beginning of the parasha we find the general command, "You shall be holy," and at the end we are commanded, "You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy" (20:7), which Chazal explain as follows:

"You shall sanctify yourselves' - this refers to washing hands before the meal, 'and you shall be holy' - this refers to washing after the meal." (Berakhot 53b)

We may add that our parasha also addresses all spheres of life, emphasizing the fact that the Torah is connected to all stages of a person's life and to all his activities. It must therefore be treated as a whole entity, guiding us in every place and at every time as to how to mold our path and our selves.

(This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat parashat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim 5756 [1996].)

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From: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org>

shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Thu, Apr 30, 2015 at 5:54 PM

The Scapegoat: Shame and Guilt

Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

The strangest and most dramatic element of the service on Yom Kippur, set out in Acharei Mot (Lev. 16: 7-22), was the ritual of the two goats, one offered as a sacrifice, the other sent away into the desert "to Azazel." They were to all intents and purposes indistinguishable from one another: they were chosen to be as similar as possible in size and appearance. They were brought before the High Priest and lots were drawn, one bearing the words "To the Lord," the other, "To Azazel." The one on which the lot "To the Lord" fell was offered as a sacrifice. Over the other the High Priest confessed the sins of the nation and it was then taken away into the desert hills outside Jerusalem where it plunged to its death. Tradition tells us that a red thread would be attached to its horns, half of which was removed before the animal was sent away. If the rite had been effective, the red thread would turn to white.

Much is puzzling about the ritual. First, what is the meaning of "to Azazel," to which the second goat was sent? It appears nowhere else in Scripture.

Three major theories emerged as to its meaning. According to the sages and Rashi it meant "a steep, rocky or hard place," in other words a description of its destination. According to the Torah the goat was sent "to a desolate area" (el erez gezerah, Lev. 16: 22). According to the sages it was taken to a steep ravine where it fell to its death. That, according to the first explanation, is the meaning of Azazel.

The second, suggested cryptically by Ibn Ezra and explicitly by Nahmanides, is that Azazel was the name of a spirit or demon, one of the fallen angels referred to in Genesis 6:2, similar to the goat-spirit called Pan in Greek mythology, Faunus in Latin. This is a difficult idea, which is why Ibn Ezra alluded to it, as he did in similar cases, by way of a riddle, a puzzle, that only the wise would be able to decipher. He writes: "I will reveal to you part of the secret by hint: when you reach thirty-three you will know it." Nahmanides reveals the secret. Thirty three verses later on, the Torah commands: "They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols [seirim] after whom they go astray" (Lev. 17: 7).

Azazel, on this reading, is the name of a demon or hostile force, sometimes called Satan or Samael. The Israelites were categorically forbidden to worship such a force. Indeed the belief that there are powers at work in the universe distinct from, or even hostile to, God, is incompatible with Judaic monotheism. Nonetheless, some sages did believe that there were negative forces that were part of the heavenly retinue, like Satan, who brought accusations against humans or tempted them into sin. The goat sent into the wilderness to Azazel was a way of conciliating or propitiating such forces so that the prayers of Israel could rise to heaven without, as it were, any dissenting voices. This way of understanding the rite is similar to the saying

on the part of the sages that we blow shofar in a double cycle on Rosh Hashanah "to confuse Satan." [1]

The third interpretation and the simplest is that Azazel is a compound noun meaning "the goat [ez] that was sent away [azal]." This led to the addition of a new word to the English language. In 1530 William Tyndale produced the first English translation of the Hebrew Bible, an act then illegal and for which he paid with his life. Seeking to translate Azazel into English, he called it "the escapegoat," i.e. the goat that was sent away and released. In the course of time the first letter was dropped, and the word "scapegoat" was born.

The real question though is: what was the ritual actually about? It was unique. Sin and guilt offerings are familiar features of the Torah and a normal part of the service of the Temple. The service of Yom Kippur was different in one salient respect. In every other case the sin was confessed over the animal that was sacrificed. On Yom Kippur, the High Priest confessed the sins of the people over the animal that was not sacrificed, the scapegoat that was sent away, "carrying on it all their iniquities" (Lev. 16: 21-22).

The simplest and most compelling answer was given by Maimonides in The Guide for the Perplexed:

There is no doubt that sins cannot be carried like a burden, and taken off the shoulder of one being to be laid on that of another being. But these ceremonies are of a symbolic character, and serve to impress people with a certain idea, and to induce them to repent – as if to say, we have freed ourselves of our previous deeds, have cast them behind our backs, and removed them from us as far as possible. [2] Expiation demands a ritual, some dramatic representation of the removal of sin and the wiping-clean of the past. That is clear. Yet Maimonides does not explain why Yom Kippur demanded a rite not used on other days of the year when sin or guilt offerings were brought. Why was the first goat, the one of which the lot "To the Lord" fell and which was offered as a sin offering (Lev. 16: 9) not sufficient?

The answer lies in the dual character of the day. The Torah states:

This shall be an eternal law for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must fast and not do any work ... This is because on this day you shall have all your sins atoned [yechaper], so that you will be cleansed [le-taher]. Before God you will be cleansed of all your sins. (Lev. 16: 29-30) Two quite distinct processes were involved on Yom Kippur. First there was kapparah, atonement. This is the normal function of a sin offering. Second, there was teharah, purification, something normally done in a different context altogether, namely the removal of tumah, ritual defilement, which could arise from a number of different causes, among them contact with a dead body, skin disease, or nocturnal discharge. Atonement has to do with guilt. Purification has to do with contamination or pollution. These are usually [3] two separate worlds. On Yom Kippur they were brought together. Why?

We owe to anthropologists like Ruth Benedict [4] the distinction between shame cultures and guilt cultures. Shame is a social phenomenon. It is what we feel when our wrongdoing is exposed to others. It may even be something we feel when we merely imagine other people knowing or seeing what we have done. Shame is the feeling of being found out, and our first instinct is to hide. That is what Adam and Eve did in the garden of Eden after they had eaten the forbidden fruit. They were ashamed of their nakedness and they hid.

Guilt is a personal phenomenon. It has nothing to do with what others might say if they knew what we have done, and everything to do with what we say to ourselves. Guilt is the voice of conscience, and it is inescapable. You may be able to avoid shame by hiding or not being found out, but you cannot avoid guilt. Guilt is self-knowledge.

There is another difference, which explains why Judaism is overwhelmingly a guilt rather than a shame culture. Shame attaches to the person. Guilt attaches to the act. It is almost impossible to remove shame once you have

been publicly disgraced. It is like an indelible stain on your skin. Shakespeare has Lady Macbeth say, after her crime, "Will these hands ne'er be clean?" In shame cultures, wrongdoers tend either to go into exile, where no one knows their past, or to commit suicide. Playwrights have them die.

Guilt makes a clear distinction between the act of wrongdoing and the person of the wrongdoer. The act was wrong, but the agent remains, in principle, intact. That is why guilt can be removed, "atoned for," by confession, remorse and restitution. "Hate not the sinner but the sin," is the basic axiom of a guilt culture.

Normally sin and guilt offerings, as their names imply, are about guilt. They atone. But Yom Kippur deals not only with our sins as individuals. It also confronts our sins as a community bound by mutual responsibility. It deals, in other words, with the social as well as the personal dimension of wrongdoing. Yom Kippur is about shame as well as guilt. Hence there has to be purification (the removal of the stain) as well as atonement.

The psychology of shame is quite different to that of guilt. We can discharge guilt by achieving forgiveness – and forgiveness can only be granted by the object of our wrongdoing, which is why Yom Kippur only atones for sins against God. Even God cannot – logically cannot – forgive sins committed against our fellow humans until they themselves have forgiven us.

Shame cannot be removed by forgiveness. The victim of our crime may have forgiven us, but we still feel defiled by the knowledge that our name has been disgraced, our reputation harmed, our standing damaged. We still feel the stigma, the dishonour, the degradation. That is why an immensely powerful and dramatic ceremony had to take place during which people could feel and symbolically see their sins carried away to the desert, to no-man's-land. A similar ceremony took place when a leper was cleansed. The priest took two birds, killed one, and released the other to fly away across the open fields (Lev. 14: 4-7). Again the act was one of cleansing, not atoning, and had to do with shame, not guilt.

Judaism is a religion of hope, and its great rituals of repentance and atonement are part of that hope. We are not condemned to live endlessly with the mistakes and errors of our past. That is the great difference between a guilt culture and a shame culture. But Judaism also acknowledges the existence of shame. Hence the elaborate ritual of the scapegoat that seemed to carry away the tumah, the defilement that is the mark of shame. It could only be done on Yom Kippur because that was the one day of the year in which everyone shared at least vicariously in the process of confession, repentance, atonement and purification. When a whole society confesses its guilt, individuals can be redeemed from shame.

[1] Rosh Hashanah 16b.

[2] The Guide for the Perplexed, III: 46.

[3] There were exceptions. A leper – or more precisely someone suffering from the skin disease known in the torah as tsara'at – had to bring a guilt offering [asham] in addition to undergoing rites of purification (Lev. 14: 12-20).

[4] Ruth Benedict, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, London, Secker & Warburg, 1947.

TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org> 8:53 PM (2 hours ago)

Rabbi Mayer Twersky Penitential Pains

Shabbos Shabboson he lochem v'inisem es nafshoseichem chukas olam - It is a Sabbath of complete rest for you, and you shall afflict yourselves; an eternal decree (Vayikra 16:31, Artscroll translation) Inui nefesh, affliction, according to the Torah she'b'al peh, refers to fasting. Abarbanel suggests a remarkable additional interpretation. Yom Hakipurim is, of course, a day devoted to teshuva. There is nothing casual about teshuva. Cheit represents betrayal, failure, hypocrisy, hubris, foolishness and rebelliousness. Cheit signifies the opportunities of life squandered. Teshuva involves recognition of cheit and its magnitude. And thus the self-awareness induced by teshuva

is excruciating. Ultimately, teshuva culminates in the joy and elation of kapara and rapprochement with Hakadosh Baruch Hu. But the path is paved with anguish.

When the Torah commands inui nefesh on Yom Hakipurim it speaks of this penitential, existential anguish as well.

Abarbanel's beautiful interpretation with its sensitive depiction of teshuva provides us with a means to monitor our teshuva efforts. If we are coasting along, singing ashmenu and "klapping" al cheit but not feeling anguish, we have yet to hit the mark. "Aval hacharata u'shevira ha'lev v'ha'bechi zeh nachutz me'od v'ha'marbeh b'bechi b'mistarim meshubach - but [feeling] remorse, [having] a broken heart and crying are necessary. And one whom in private, cries effusively is praiseworthy" (Nodah B'Yehuda, Mahadura Kamma, Orach Chaim 35.)

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from: Rabbi Yissocher Frand <ryfrand@torah.org> date: Thu, Apr 30, 2015
subject: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshios Acharei Mos & Kedoshim**

A Kal V'Chomer From Kisuy haDam / Wait For 3 Years To Correct Adam's Sin Of Not Waiting 3 Hours These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 898 – Paying The Plumber and Babysitter. Good Shabbos!

A Kal V'Chomer From Kisuy haDam

Parshas Achrei Mos contains the Biblical command of covering the blood after slaughtering a bird or 'chayah' [non-domesticated animal]. This Halacha, known as 'Kisuy haDam', requires that at least part of the blood of a slaughtered bird or 'chayah' be covered with dirt. The Talmud [Chulin 87a] derives from the Torah's wording juxtaposing the verb for slaughtering with the verb for covering that just as the bird is slaughtered with one's hand, so too the blood is covered with one's hand. This excludes covering the blood by kicking dirt upon it with one's foot (which might be the most convenient way to accomplish the covering). The reason given is so that the commandments not become shamed for him (shelo yehei mitzvos bezuyos alav). It is disrespectful to perform a biblical mitzvah with one's foot when it can be performed with one's hand. Whenever we do a mitzvah, we should do it in the most respectful manner possible.

Although Kisui haDam is the paradigm for all such concepts, the same concept is applied elsewhere as well. For example, throughout Succos, an Esrog must be treated with respect – since it is used in the performance of a mitzvah. It takes on the status of a "cheftza d'mitzvah". Likewise, the boards used for the Succah during the holiday have the "Name of Heaven" declared upon them and need to be treated respectfully. The day after Succos, they are just boards again and they can be used for whatever purpose one desires.

The Beis haLevi says a very interesting concept in Parshas Terumah. When a poor person approaches in shul and asks for money, at that moment he is a "cheftza d'mitzvah" through which one fulfills the mitzvah of charity. If the Torah tells us we need to treat the blood of a slaughtered chicken with respect "so that mitzvos not be treated shamefully" how much more so should we treat a human being who has feelings respectfully when we are performing a mitzvah with him!

Due to the overwhelming needs of our people, we are all often bombarded – in our homes and in our businesses – with requests from needy people for charity. These requests come at all times of day and night and some time he is a "just get out of my way!" It is important to keep the "kal v'chomer" of the Beis haLevi in mind: If we must cover the blood with dirt using our hands rather than our feet, so that we do not treat mitzvos in a callous fashion, how much more so do we need to be extremely sensitive when dealing with alive, breathing, and feeling, human beings.

Wait For 3 Years To Correct Adam's Sin Of Not Waiting 3 Hours

In Parshas Kedoshim, the Torah introduces the mitzvah of "Orlah" for the first time. "When you come to the Land and plant any food tree, you shall treat its fruit as orlah; for three years it shall be orlah to you, they shall not be

eaten." [Vayikra 19:23] The halacha is that if one plants a tree and the tree produces fruit during the first three years of its growth, those fruits are forbidden to be eaten. They are known as "orlah".

A rationale for this mitzvah is suggested by the Rambam in his Guide to the Perplexed [Moreh Nevuchim]. As the Rambam notes in explaining the rationale for many mitzvos, the Rambam comments that in Biblical times, it was common for sorcerers and priests to come and bless newly planted trees so that they should produce good and bountiful fruit. The first fruits produced were in turn offered to idols as an expression of thanks to the gods for a successful crop. The Rambam writes -- to preempt such pagan practices, the Torah says that for the first 3 years, we are not even allowed to use these fruits.

The Ramban, in his Biblical commentary, writes that the reason for the mitzvah of Orlah becomes evident in light of the companion mitzvah of Neta Revai – the growth of the plantings on the fourth year. The halacha is that following the three years of forbidden Orlah fruit, the fruit of the fourth year is taken to Jerusalem and eaten there. Only in the fifth year and beyond is the farmer allowed to consume his fruits himself at home.

The Ramban explains that typically it takes a while for a newly planted fruit tree to produce robust fruit. For the first three years, more often than not, the fruit – if any – that grows on trees is of inferior quality. Since the Torah wants the first fruits which are eaten in Jerusalem (with the sanctity of 'Neta Revai') to be good and delicious fruits, in order to give those fourth year fruits the status of "first fruits," it is necessary to forbid the produce of the first three years.

The Medrash offers an entirely different reason, like neither that of the Rambam or the Ramban. The Medrash notes that immediately following the prohibition of Orlah (and the related laws of the fourth and fifth year fruits) [Vayikra 19:23-25], is another prohibition - that of "Eating upon blood" [ibid. 19:26].

Literally, the words "Lo Sochlu al haDam" mean, "do not eat on the blood" but there are actually a variety of different prohibitions that are learned out from this pasuk. One such prohibition that Rashi brings is that we are not allowed to eat from an animal until its blood is completely drained out. What is the significance of the juxtaposition of the laws of Orlah and the law of "Lo Sochlu al haDam"?

The Medrash states that the mitzvah of Orlah is trying to teach us something that is very important in life – patience. Sometimes we are chomping at the bit to do something. We want it right away. This is the significance of the prohibition of "Lo Sochlu al haDam". It is addressed to those people who cannot even wait until all the blood is drained out before wanting to eat the meat. The Torah tells them to slow down – do not consume the meat while there still is blood within it.

In order to instill in us this concept that we need to be patient and that we cannot always get what we want as soon as we want it, the Torah writes the prohibition of Orlah here. The Ohr HaChaim haKodosh – both in this Parsha and in Sefer Bereshis – makes note of the Almighty's command to Adam: You may eat of any tree in the Garden. But then the Torah says that Adam was not allowed to eat from the Tree of Knowledge (Eitz haDaas). How does that fit with the explicit permission to eat "from any tree of the Garden"?

The Ohr HaChaim (based on the Medrash) says an amazing thing. Adam COULD have eaten from the Tree of Knowledge as well. However, the permission to eat from that tree was only on Shabbos. In fact, the Ohr HaChaim says he was supposed to go ahead and make Kiddush on Shabbos from the wine made from the grapes of the Eitz haDaas. His sin was merely that he jumped the gun. The world changed forever and ever because of that hastiness on his part.

A student of the Ari z"l points out that the prohibition to eat from the Tree of Knowledge was given on the ninth hour of the Sixth Day of Creation. Rather than waiting just 3 more hours, Adam ate from it right away. The Kabbalistic works explain this is why Orlah is prohibited the first 3 years.

Since the first man could not wait three more hours, the Torah gives us a lesson in waiting – 3 years to atone for the sin of Adam not waiting 3 hours!

The Chasam Sofer asks, "What was his rush?" More to the point, if in fact on Shabbos, this same tree would have been permitted, how could it be so terrible if he ate it a couple of hours earlier? The Chasam Sofer explains that when Adam was created, he did not have an Evil Inclination (Yetzer haRah). There was no "fight". There was no struggle with conscience. Adam just naturally did that which was good. He knew that when he would eat from the Eitz haDaas, life would change: "You would be like Elo-him who knows good and evil." He would have free choice and could choose good or evil, which is ultimately the purpose of human beings in this world – to choose the good.

Adam's attitude was "I so much want to do the Will of G-d out of my own free choice that I cannot wait for this opportunity." However, the Almighty Knew better. He knew that in order to choose the right decisions and to choose good rather than evil, Adam still needed another element – that was the sanctity of Shabbos. Had Adam waited those three extra hours and had gone into Shabbos suffused with the sanctity that Shabbos provides, he would have been able to withstand the temptations of life. This is what the Almighty wanted. That is why the Tree of Life suddenly became permitted on Shabbos.

We asked, "What changed (after those 3 hours would have passed)?" What changed is that Adam still needed a component – Kedushas Shabbos. He did not have that yet. He was not strong enough to resist.

By analogy, when one pours concrete to set a beam that will hold up a building, one must wait until the concrete dries and hardens in order to rely on its strength. If one starts putting weight on the beam before the concrete settles, the structure will collapse. This is just an example, but it helps us understand the situation with Adam at that moment. He was almost perfect. The Almighty wanted to be able to give him Bechirah Chofshis [Free Choice] to choose good over bad, but he needed for the concrete of his personality to set. Adam needed to become stronger and that strength was going to be given to him through Kedushas Shabbos. However, Adam could not wait. It was for the best of reasons, but he did not wait. He ate from the tree prematurely and unfortunately, the world changed forever for the worse.

As a 'tikun' [correction] for that, as a way to learn the lesson of "A thing in its proper time – how good" [Mishlei 15:23], the Torah gives us a prohibition called Orlah. For three years, WAIT. The lesson of Orlah and the lesson of "Lo Sochal al haDam" is WAIT. Not everything needs to be enjoyed or taken as soon as it is physically available. As a 'tikun' for Adam, for the three hours he could not wait, we keep the mitzvah of Orlah for three years.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com
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Description: **Drinking From the Kiddush Cup**

The Shulhan Aruch rules that one must drink a “Melo Lugmav” – a cheekful – of the wine in the Kiddush cup. This is equivalent to the majority of a Rebi’it (3.2 ounces), or approximately 1.7 ounces.

According to the Shulhan Aruch, the Mekadesh – the person who recited Kiddush – should be the one to drink the wine. The Geonim were of the opinion that if the Mekadesh does not drink the Kiddush wine, then nobody who heard Kiddush fulfills the obligation. Out of concern for this opinion, the Mekadesh should be the one to drink. Therefore, people who are together for Kiddush should ensure to appoint for Kiddush somebody who is able to drink the wine. Sometimes, people want to give this honor to an elderly man who cannot drink wine. This should not be done, as the Mekadesh should drink the wine.

If, however, for whatever reason, the person who recited Kiddush is unable to drink, then the cup should be given to somebody else to drink. If nobody is able to drink the required amount of wine, then it suffices if everybody drinks a small amount, as long as between everybody the required amount is drunk. This is the ruling of Rabbi Moshe Ha’levi (Israel, 1961-2001), in his Menuhat Ahaba, and of Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998). They add, however, that if the people know from the outset that nobody can drink the complete amount, they should recite Kiddush over bread rather than recite Kiddush on wine and have everybody take a small sip.

There is a debate among the Halachic authorities as to whether the Misva is fulfilled if the wine is drunk by somebody who was not participating in the Kiddush – such as if he had already recited Kiddush earlier – but happens to be present. The Shulhan Aruch writes that “Ehad Min Ha’mesubin” (“one of the people at the meal”) may drink the wine, and the Mishna Berura (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933) understood this to refer only to those who heard Kiddush to fulfill their obligation. If somebody who did not hear Kiddush to fulfill the Misva drinks the wine, the Misva is not fulfilled. Hacham Bension Abba Shaul, however, disagrees, and maintains that it suffices for anybody to drink the wine, even a person who did not hear the Kiddush to fulfill his obligation.

The person who recites Kiddush should hold the cup with his right hand. Hacham Bension Abba Shaul maintained that even a left-handed person should hold the cup with his right hand, if he can without spilling, in accordance with the position of the Arizal (Rav Yishak Luria of Safed, 1534-1572). This is also the view of Hacham Ovadia Yosef, who noted that the Shulhan Aruch’s position on this matter is unclear, and therefore a left-handed person should follow the Arizal’s view and hold the Kiddush cup in his right hand.

Although the Misva is fulfilled even if just one person drinks a “Melo Lugmav” of the Kiddush wine, nevertheless, it is a Misva for everyone to drink some wine from the Kiddush cup.

Summary: Kiddush should be recited by somebody who is able to drink the minimum required amount (1.7 ounces). Nevertheless, if the person who recited Kiddush is unable to drink this amount, somebody else can drink this amount. If nobody present is able to drink this amount, Kiddush should be recited over bread. If, however, Kiddush was recited over wine and nobody can drink the required amount, it suffices if they all drink a small amount such that between all of them they drink the required amount. The one who recites Kiddush should hold the cup in his right hand during the recitation, even if he is left-handed. It is a Misva for everyone to drink some wine from the Kiddush cup.

Description: **Passing the Kiddush Cup Around the Table After Kiddush**
After reciting Kiddush, the Mekadesh (person who recites Kiddush) should drink at least a “Melo Lugmav” – or approximately 1.7 ounces – of wine from the cup. If he cannot drink, then he may give the cup to somebody else to drink. Once this quantity of wine has been drunk from the cup, everyone who heard Kiddush has fulfilled their obligation, even if nobody else drank.

Nevertheless, the Shulhan Aruch rules that there is a “Misva Min Ha’mubhar” – an added Misva, beyond the strict obligation – for everyone to

take a sip from the Kiddush cup. Therefore, many people have the custom to pass the Kiddush around the table after Kiddush so everyone can take a sip, in fulfillment of this special Misva. (Our custom is to pass the cup around in age order.) It goes without saying that if a person does not wish to drink, he is not required to, and he has fulfilled his obligation of Kiddush despite not drinking any wine, as long as he heard Kiddush and somebody drank the minimum required amount.

The question arises, however, as to whether it is indeed proper for everyone to drink from the same cup. The Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim, end of 271) writes that one should not drink from a cup that is “Pagum” (literally, “blemished”), meaning, a cup from which somebody else has drunk. Once a person puts his lips onto the cup and drinks, it is considered inappropriate for another person to then drink from that cup. Seemingly, then, it would be improper to pass the Kiddush cup around the table for people to drink after the Mekadesh has drunk from the wine. How, then, do we fulfill the Misva Min Ha’mubhar to drink from the Kiddush cup?

Several answers have been given to this question. The Hafetz Haim (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933), in Sha’ar Ha’siyun (271), answers, very simply, that the rule of “Pagum” does not apply to the “Kos Shel Beracha” – the cup upon which a Beracha was recited. This cup is special, and it is therefore a Misva to drink from it even after somebody had drunk from it previously. The Hafetz Haim makes this point also in Mishna Berura (182) in regard to the cup over which one recites Birkat Ha’mazon. That cup, too, is customarily passed around after the one who led the Zimun drinks from it. The Mishna Berura writes that as this cup is a “Kos Shel Beracha,” it is not subject to the law of “Pagum.”

Rav Haim Palagi (Turkey, 1788-1869), however, proposes a solution to avoid this problem. He writes that once one adds more wine to the cup, it is no longer considered “Pagum.” Therefore, he advises that the Mekadesh should pour wine from the bottle into the cup, and then pour the wine into other cups for the people around the table. Rav Palagi adds that the Mekadesh should preferably have in mind that his Beracha should cover all the wine on the table, and not merely the wine in the Kiddush cup. This way, all the wine on the table is considered the Kiddush wine, and so even if the original Kiddush wine is finished before everyone drinks from it, they can take wine from the bottle on the table to fulfill this Misva.

Another option, which is indeed customary in many homes, is for everyone at the table to have a cup of wine in front of them during the recitation of Kiddush. Since the Mekadesh presumably has this wine in mind as he recites the Beracha, all these cups have the status of “Kos Shel Beracha,” and the people at the table can fulfill the Misva by drinking their cups.

Unfortunately, many people make the mistake of pouring from the Kiddush cup into other cups after drinking from it. As we have seen, the people at the table can drink from the Kiddush cup even though others had drunk from it, but if the wine is “Pagum” and then poured into another cup, drinking from that cup does not fulfill the Misva. Therefore, one of the aforementioned solutions should be followed, namely, everyone should drink from the original Kiddush cup, wine should be added to the Kiddush cup after the Mekadesh drinks, or everyone should have a cup of wine in front of them for Kiddush.

Hacham Bension Abba Shaul (Israel, 1923-1998) addresses the question of whether a cup becomes “Pagum” if somebody drank from it using a straw. He concludes that one should not drink from the cup in such a case, unless the person sucked wine into the straw and then took the straw out of the wine before drinking it. Hacham Bension also writes that if somebody drank directly from a bottle, the bottle is considered “Pagum” even if his mouth did not touch the bottle and he poured the water out of the bottle into his mouth.

Summary: Although it is not obligatory for everyone to drink from the Kiddush wine, there is a special Misva to do so. Generally, one should not drink from a cup after somebody else had drunk from it, but nevertheless, the Kiddush cup may be passed around the table so everybody can drink from it. Some require adding more wine to the cup after the Mekadesh drinks from it,

and then distributing the wine. If everybody has a cup of wine in front of them during Kiddush, they may drink that wine instead of drinking from the Kiddush cup. One should not, however, pour from the Kiddush cup into other cups for the others to drink from, unless he first adds wine to the Kiddush cup.

From: Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com> to: Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com> date: Thu, Apr 30, 2015 at 6:54 PM subject: **Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum** - Parshas Achrei Mos-Kedoshim

PARASHAS ACHREI MOS

Do not perform the practice of the land of Egypt in which you dwelled; and do not perform the practice of the land of Canaan to which I bring you. (18:3)

Canaan and Egypt were the two most morally depraved lands in the world. Furthermore, both the area in which the Jewish People lived in Egypt and the area in which they were destined to settle in Canaan were the worst parts of these degenerate countries. The influence of these decadent cultures can be overwhelming. Thus, the Torah warns us to be alert to the dangers which lure the unknowing into an abyss of decadence and immorality. The Ksav Sofer distinguishes between the evil perpetrated by the Egyptians and the degeneracy which was the way of life in Canaan.

The Egyptians were a cruel people. With utmost brutality they slaughtered Jewish children for their blood. They had no qualms about substituting Jewish infants to take the place of bricks. The Egyptian represented cruelty at its nadir. The Canaanites were not as evil. Perhaps they did not murder babies, but they were morally degenerate. Chazal (Bava Metzia 83b) say that when we notice someone who is an unusual mechutzaf, audacious, it is an indication that his pedigree is flawed and that he is a mamzer, illegitimate child, the product of an immoral union. This teaches us that moral degeneracy produces chutzpah, temerity, brazenness, and cruelty.

This is the Torah's message: Do not perform the practice of the Egyptians. Do not act cruelly as did the Egyptians. How does one prevent the cruelty "gene" from becoming a part of his family's DNA? Do not act immorally like the Canaanites. Immorality begets audacity which is the basis for cruelty.

This Torah thought is especially insightful in contemporary times, when society's moral compass has made an about-face and is hurdling south on a collision course. Morality must be defined by a Higher Authority, a Supreme Being, not given to the allures and temptations of a society in which decadence reigns supreme and degeneracy is as common as "apple pie." Morality determines what is right and what is wrong, what is appropriate and what is improper. As noted, however, a compass denotes direction; a moral compass is an indication of the direction to which morality must point. In contemporary society we are being bombarded and influenced by individuals whose compass has changed direction. Today, people act immorally and do so with impunity. Immorality begets chutzpah, and chutzpah is the godfather of cruelty. In a generation where arayos - immorality and forbidden relationships - have become the norm and are acceptable, and, by some, even championed, is there any question why there is so much unusual brutality, acts of cruelty that had been unheard of since the dark ages? It is Canaan all over again - and it will beget another Mitzrayim.

How does one protect himself from the temptations of the outside world? What does one do to overcome the fearsome power of the yetzer hora, evil inclination? Torah study - and more Torah study. Nothing else gives one the strength and the ability to deal with the wiles of the yetzer hora. Incidentally, one should never think that he has succeeded, because this, in itself, can be the greatest mistake and ultimate downfall. The following episode underscores this idea.

The Yehudi HaKadosh m'Peshischa was a chasid, follower of the Chozeh, zl, m'Lublin. This all came to an abrupt end one day when another distinguished follower of the Chozeh, an individual whom the Chozeh held in high esteem, slandered the Yehudi. The Chozeh, for some reason,

accepted this chasid's unkind remarks concerning the Yehudi, and, in response, severed his relationship with the Yehudi. No explaining could mitigate the slander. The damage was done, and it seemed irreparable. The Chozeh refused to accept the Yehudi into his court.

The Kotzker Rebbe, zl, who was a disciple of the Peshischa, remarked that one can marvel at the power of the yetzer hora, who had invested sixty years of building up that slanderous chasid, to the point that he became unquestionably believed by the holy Chozeh. Imagine all of the man's mitzvos, good deeds, prayers and Torah study - all sponsored by the yetzer hora for one purpose - to use him as a vehicle to catalyze machlokes, controversy, between two holy people. He maintained the pristine nature of that chasid's reputation, so that he could make him appear as the paragon of virtue and ethicality. All this was to destroy a relationship between two giants of Torah.

Horav Yechezkel Levinstein, zl, echoes these sentiments. The venerable Mashgiach posits that, if someone presents a deficient middah, character defect, even at an advanced age - a middah which had heretofore never surfaced from this person - it has been with him throughout his entire life. It just never has had the opportunity to rear its ugly head - until now.

Bad middos are innate. A person is born with them and, unless he fights to expunge them, they will fester and germinate until one day they end their dormancy with a vicious appearance. That moment is not an aberration of one's otherwise fine middos and upstanding virtues. On the contrary, it is an indication of his innate hostility, middos raos, deficient character traits, that had never been extirpated from within him.

PARSHAS KEDOSHIM

You shall be holy, for holy am I. (19:2)

Regardless of how we translate kedushah, holiness, it clearly represents a state of being which is above and beyond the usual. One may be good - wonderful - virtuous, whatever other adjective that comes to mind, but it does not mean that he is holy. It represents the next step. Once one has achieved all of the other appellations which define upstanding behavior - then there is kedushah, holiness. Interestingly, Kedoshim tiheyu, "You shall be holy," is a mitzvah which is addressed to all of Klal Yisrael - not just a select few. Every Jew is enjoined to achieve a level of holiness - not just good - but holy! How are we to define the concept of kedushah which applies to all Jews?

To understand the concept of holiness, we must address its Source. Hashem says Kedoshim tiheyu ki kadosh Ani - "Be holy, because I am holy." Hashem is the Source of kedushah. Thus, when one connects with Hashem, the closer he becomes to the Source of kedushah, he becomes holy. Having said this, we deduce that holiness is a state of spiritual or transcendent goodness, in which one who has achieved the requisite levels of virtue and uprightness is now unrestricted by the limitations imposed by the physical dimension. His goodness soars beyond the here and now. He is on a completely different plane. Perhaps this is why so much of our religious activity is focused on its transmission to the next generation. We believe in perpetuation, because our relationship is with Hashem, Who is eternal. We do not think only in terms of the present, we are focused on the future, because our religion is holy, and holiness is forever.

The Jewish People have always understood that it is not enough to be good - one must be holy. Holiness means unrestricted goodness, unlimited by time and place, and given to perpetuation. Thus, parents have sacrificed to inculcate Jewish values and tradition into the minds and hearts of their children, for if there is no future, then there is no present. The following episode, quoted by Rav Moshe Toledano, underscores this idea.

One night, in the summer of 2011, a funeral took place in Yerushalayim. An elderly Jew, who, for the last decade of his life had lived with excruciating pain, had passed away. Among the participants was Horav Yechiel Michel Stern, Shlita, Rav of Shechunos Ezras Torah, in Yerushalayim. In his eulogy he related the following story. In 1924, the great leader of European Jewry, Rav of Kovno, and author of the celebrated Dvar

Avraham, Horav Avraham Duber Kahane Shapiro, zl, visited America. During his stay, a young couple came before him with a domestic "dispute." Obviously, this couple felt that the issue over which they were divided was important enough to take up this great gaon's time. The Kovner Rav was an undisputed scholar whose Torah erudition was unparalleled. Every minute of his day was meticulously devoted to Torah study and affairs of the klal, general community. Yet, this couple felt that their dispute was worthy of his input and mediation.

What was the point of contention between them? The husband claimed that his wife fasted every Monday and Thursday - a fast which is reserved for the most righteous. While he was impressed with his wife's piety, he was concerned that the fasting would be detrimental to her health. The wife did not deny his allegations. She fasted twice weekly, and she would continue to do so. Her rationale was: At present, she was in the fifth month of her pregnancy. She felt that raising a child in the spiritually deficient environment of America of those days was very difficult. She felt that she needed every bit of protection that she could garner for her unborn child.

The Kovner Rav was greatly impressed by the piety and spiritual innocence of this woman. He said, "Granted, your concerns are far from baseless. Yet, a pregnant woman must eat." Fasting may be detrimental to her health and to the health of her baby. He encouraged her to put an end to her self-deprivation. The woman listened respectfully to the Rav, then said that, while she understood that, as a Rav, he was correct in his decision, as the future mother of a child to be raised in America, she would follow her prerogative of fasting to protect her child. The Kovner Rav listened to what she had to say and was greatly impressed with her devotion. He, therefore, offered a compromise: She should cease fasting, and he would bless the unborn infant that, in his mother's merit, he would grow up to be an observant, committed Jew, who would be a nachas, spiritual satisfaction, to his parents. The parents were overjoyed with the Rav's assurance, and they left with the hope that their child would be a credit to his people.

Rav Stern concluded his eulogy with the following: "Eighty six and one half years have passed since that fateful day that the Kovner Rav gave his blessing to that young couple. Before us lies the deceased, Rav Yisrael Shimon Stern, who was the child born of that blessing. This child was born and raised in America in an era when it was not much more than a spiritual wasteland. It was the blessing of the gadol hador to a mother who was willing to sacrifice her very health so that her child would grow up a ben Torah.

Rav Yisrael Shimon was a close neighbor and confidante of Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach. His father, Rav David Zussman, was the Menahel Ruchani, spiritual guide, of Mesivta Torah Vodaath. His entire life was devoted to Torah and chesed. He established a glorious Torah home that exemplifies his devotion to Torah and mitzvos. The last decade of his life was filled with excruciating pain. His legs could not carry him, and the open wounds were a constant source of infection. Yet, he never raised his voice in complaint. His face manifested a perpetual smile, because he felt that it was forbidden to complain. Whatever Hashem doles out to a person, he must accept with gratitude and joy. This was the product of America!

I think his mother's concern for the future, her anxiety concerning the future, exemplified the meaning of holiness. It was not enough for her alone to be observant. Her son had to be observant! For her present to have any meaning, her future and the future of her progeny had to be assured.

You shall love your fellow as yourself. (19:18)

Rabbi Akiva declares that the mitzvah of ahavas Yisrael, to love one's fellow as himself, is the fundamental rule of the Torah. Hillel paraphrased this mitzvah, Man d'alach sani l'chaveircha lo saavid, "What is hateful to you, do not do unto others." When a gentile came to Hillel and asked to be converted "while I stand on one leg," he responded with the above rule. The question is asked why Hillel did not use the pasuk, V'ahavata l'reiacha kamocho, to respond to the gentile. The Chidushei HaRim explains that, since the fellow was still a gentile, he was unable to grasp the positive aspect

of the mitzvah - to love a Jewish person constantly and proactively. In his non-Jewish state, he could only grasp the negative - not to do something to another person which he would not want done to himself. This is a powerful statement which underscores the deep chasm that exists between the nature of a ben Yisrael and one who is not.

In his Shemen HaTov, Horav Zev Weinberger, Shlita, quotes the Bais Yosef who offers a similar statement. The Torah (Bereishis 21:33) writes, "He (Avraham Avinu) planted an eshel (either an orchard or an inn for lodging) in Beer Sheva, and there he proclaimed the Name of Hashem." In the Talmud Sotah 10b, Rashi explains how Avraham utilized the eshel as a vehicle for engendering spiritual ascendancy. After wayfarers had enjoyed a refreshing repast, he would say to them, "You should bless the One from Whose food you have eaten. You think that you have eaten from mine? No! It all belongs to the One Who brought the world into being." The Bais Yosef wonders why Avraham asked them to make a brachah acharonah, after-blessing, following their meal. Why not a brachah rishonah, blessing prior to partaking the food? The Talmud in Berachos 35a, posits that one can derive the obligation to bless before one eats through a kal v'chomer, a priori logic. If one blesses after he is satiated, certainly he should bless when he is hungry! Why did Avraham not encourage them to bless Hashem before they ate? The Bais Yosef explains that, since they were still pagans, it would be sufficient that they bless once they had received pleasure. To ask them to bless before they even received the "gift" would be too much to expect. Once again, we note two aspects concerning loving one's fellow - positive and negative. To act affirmatively with sincerity, to be progressive in one's attitude to his fellow man, is, for some, a challenge. This is why one must work on himself to overcome the obstacles that stand in his way of achieving ahavas Yisrael - on the Jewish level. To refrain from harming another Jew is something that even a gentile understands!

One aspect of the love that one must manifest for his fellow is always to judge him favorably. There is no dearth of stories which highlight this quality. I recently heard a story concerning the Bobover Rebbe, Horav Shlomo, zl, that was enthralling. The Rebbe was known as the modern-day Aharon HaKohen, who exemplified the trait of Ohaiv shalom v'rodef shalom, one who loves peace and pursues peace. He sought every opportunity to accentuate the positive when it concerned a Jew - regardless of his actions or religious affiliation. He abhorred controversy in any shape or form. His smile manifested the deep and boundless love that he had for all Jews.

When Bobov first established itself on American soil following the Holocaust, their center of activities was on New York's West side. It was a small community, comprised of a handful of broken people who had experienced horrors that defied description. The glue that kept them together was the hope fomented by the Rebbe. His love was fatherly. He never questioned; he only encouraged - with a smile. For some, this was the difference between life and death - between religious observance and spiritual extinction.

One of the shul's members was a Polish Jew who had survived the war and followed the Rebbe to the West side. He would attend the services and participate in all of the Rebbe's activities. As he did with all of the others, the Rebbe took him under his wing, giving him a place of distinction among his small cadre of followers. One Friday night, he did not show up for davening, so the Rebbe asked his son, Horav Naftali, zl, to go look for him. Setting out for the man's apartment, Rav Naftali took a shortcut through Central Park. One can imagine the young man's (who was successor to his father's throne) shock when he noticed the man sitting on a park bench - smoking a cigarette - on Shabbos! Rav Naftali made an immediate about-face and returned home to tell his father the sad news.

The Rebbe listened to his son and replied, "He was not smoking; it was the Nazis who were smoking!" The subject was closed; the conversation had ended; there was no room for discussion. The Rebbe implied that what his son had seen, was an aberration attributed to the harmful influence that resulted from the tragedy of the Holocaust.

Two weeks later, the man returned to Friday night davening. The Rebbe honored him with leading the Shabbos zemiros. Later that evening, Rav Naftali was incredulous. "Tatte! He smoked on Shabbos! How could he lead the davening?" The Rebbe replied, "I told you before that he did not smoke on Shabbos; the Nazis smoked on Shabbos!"

Fast forward decades later, when the Rebbe asked Rav Naftali to accompany him to a sheva brachos, the festive meal honoring a nuptial ceremony. When they walked in, they were greeted by a scene that brought tears of joy to the heart. The man who had years earlier been standing on shaky spiritual ground was now surrounded by a family of Chassidic-bred, fully-observant children. He was resplendent in his Chassidic garb of shtreimel and bekeshes. The Rebbe looked at Rav Naftali and remarked, "I told you that he was not smoking; it was the accursed Nazis who were smoking."

The Rebbe's boundless love for a fellow Jew gave him the forbearance and insight to look deeper and see beyond appearances that belied the true essence of the Jew.

Sponsored by Dr. Yacob Massuda In loving memory of the two most important women in my life. My mother, Rachel Massuda Rachel bas Baruch Yitzchak a"h My wife, Helen Massuda Rachel bas Avraham a"h Peninim mailing list Peninim@shemaisrael.com shemaisrael.com/mailman/listinfo/peninim_shemaisrael.com

Rabbi Berel Wein <info@jewishdestiny.com> reply-to: info@jewishdestiny.com to: date: Wed, Apr 29, 2015 at 3:58 PM subject: Parshat Achrei-Kedoshim/ Emor 5775- Rabbi Berel Wein

Home In My Opinion **ZEITGEIST Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog ZEITGEIST**

There is no way that anyone can completely shut the door of one's religious Jewish home to exclude the influences of prevailing culture from entering our living quarters and influencing our families. The zeitgeist – the prevailing culture of the time and place -has always been a powerful and sometime detrimental force in Jewish history. It was the existing zeitgeist of rampant and universal paganism that explains for us the sins and punishment of Israel and Judah during First Temple times. It was the dazzle of Greek culture and Roman technology that brought Hellenism and a rebirth of paganism to the Jewish society of Second Temple times. It was the messianic zeitgeist present in Jewish society immediately preceding the destruction of the Second Temple that gave rise to sectarian asceticism and eventually to the creation of Christianity. It was the zeitgeist of Islamic philosophy in the Middle Ages that helped foster the philosophical works of such great Torah scholars as Saadia Gaon, Rambam and Rabbi Yehuda Halevi. The spirit of the time in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – Enlightenment, Reformation, Marxism, etc. - created Reform, secularism and a very powerful Jewish Left, originating in Germany and Eastern Europe and then spreading throughout the Jewish world. From all of the above it is obvious how important the general zeitgeist is in any meaningful understanding of Jewish life past and present. In Yiddish there exists this phrase that says it all: "Vi est kristilt zich azoy yidilt zich" - whatever is current in the non-Jewish world becomes current in the Jewish world as well. This innate recognition of the influence of zeitgeist is important for us to appreciate in responding to the current challenges to the State of Israel, the Jewish people and Judaism itself. The current zeitgeist that is prevalent in Western civilization is one of unchecked liberalism and moral equivalency. No longer are concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, aggression and justified armed response relevant. Many decades ago there was a famous book entitled "I'm Okay, You're Okay" that preached a completely nonjudgmental world where anything goes and somehow everything sorts itself out. This philosophy has become prevalent and dominant in our current world. It is no wonder that the cause of the Arab Palestinians is the main cause of political liberalism today. No amount of facts regarding a century of aggression against the Jews, the countless

number of terrorist attacks, the tens of thousands of Jews killed in the name of Arab nationalism will alter the thinking of the liberals today. The zeitgeist demands no judgment of right or wrong and no consideration of the moral realities of the situation. There are thousands of people, especially on university campuses throughout the Western world, who identify with the cause of the Palestinians without any knowledge of the complexities of the situation and of the history that has brought us to this day. It is the cool and accepted thing to do – to criticize and delegitimize the State of Israel at every opportunity, almost in a mindless fashion and in a knee-jerk, robotic jargon.

The zeitgeist today is anti-Jewish in a moral and practical sense. It condones, if not even promotes, gay marriage, lower standards of education, avoidance of marriage and commitment, and promotes dependence upon others and upon the government for sustenance and accomplishment. Judaism is built upon family, upon tradition, upon permanent moral values and about concern for others. Tragically, these ideas and values do not resonate in today's zeitgeist. It is very difficult, even in the most observant and sheltered of families, to raise children today that will uphold these traditional Jewish values in their lives. The zeitgeist has spawned a technology unmatched in all of human history. That very technology itself has become addictive to the extent that it has overtaken the lives of many of our youth and made them oblivious to the real problems of life and to the world that surrounds them. Easy drug use is rampant and is approaching legal acceptance - no longer just for medicinal purposes. Perhaps the old traditional methods of education will no longer be successful in dealing with the aggressive and wantonness of the current zeitgeist. In a culture of constant texting, a musical world of wildly violent melody and lyrics, of high expectations requiring only minimal effort, anything moral or traditional automatically appears to be anachronistic. The moral right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel means nothing in a culture which does not recognize any moral rights. This is the struggle that faces us. It will not easily be won but we cannot afford to lose. Shabbat shalom Berel Wein

from: Rabbi Berel Wein <genesis@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: rabbiwein@torah.org date: Thu, Apr 23, 2015 at 5:05 PM subject: Rabbi Wein - Parshas Kedoshim

Parshas Kedoshim Kedoshim: Morality in Daily Life Although the entire gamut of Torah commandments is discussed in this week's Torah reading, it is obvious that the major emphasis is on the subject of sexual morality. It is almost impossible to discuss this subject in the current climate of politically correct Western liberalism. Even a discussion of this situation brings upon one the approbation of being bigoted and intolerant.

Yet in the long run of human history, the current acceptance of unrestricted sexual freedom has had many precedents. The power of the sexual drive in human beings is not a recent phenomenon. Psychiatrists and psychologists all recognize it as being one of the primary physical drives of all human behavior.

The Torah certainly recognized the primacy of this physical drive in our lives. In fact, the Torah devoted much detail and instruction in this matter in order to achieve a balanced and positive channeling of this drive, as it is the one that preserves human continuity and generational existence. The Talmud points out to us that without the existence of this drive, in nature generally, no hen would lay an egg and life as we know it would disappear.

Judaism never denied or even denigrated the necessary existence of the sexual drive in nature. It never preached celibacy; on the contrary it always promoted the concept of marriage and physical union between spouses. What it did oppose, and still opposes is the wanton "everything goes" attitude toward sexual behavior. Eventually all of society pays a heavy price for unrestricted sexual behavior.

The Torah speaks to us in terms of being kedoshim. This word is usually translated and used as a term for holiness. This is undoubtedly correct. But like most Hebrew words, the word also conveys a different and perhaps more subtle meaning. It also means "dedicated." In fact, one can say that the primary thrust of Judaism is that one should live a life dedicated to service of God and man, with vision and appreciation of the true meaning of life and its gifts.

Being dedicated in terms of Jewish life means valuing the concept of family, the necessity of the continuity of generations and the primacy of proper behavior regarding others particularly and in society generally. It is the dedication to these goals that

translates itself into the idea of holiness. The lack of any code of sexual morality makes any such dedication impossible.

Unfortunately we live in an age where holiness is at best a curiosity and certainly not the goal of most people. But the Torah in its eternal vision demands from us holiness in all ages and societies. The ancient classical world of Persia, Egypt, Greece and Rome, mighty as these empires were, nevertheless disappeared because of their inability to maintain a society based on paganism and sexual freedom.

No high sounding slogans about tolerance and acceptance of everything will eventually save Western society from such a fate as well. The Torah cautioned us regarding this inevitable rule of human society and we are bidden to maintain the traditional standards of Jewish behavior in this matter... no matter what.

Shabbat shalom

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Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 122 Slade Avenue, Suite 250

Baltimore, MD 21208 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

FAX: (410) 510-1053

Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>

to Potpourri Parshas Acharei Mos-Kedoshim - Vol. 10, Issue 28 Compiled by Oizer Alport

Vay'dabeir Hashem el Moshe acharei mos shnei b'nei Aharon b'kirvasam lifnei Hashem vayamusu (16:1) In commanding Aharon not to enter the Kodosh Kodashim without permission, the Torah invokes the death of Aharon's sons who approached Hashem improperly. Rashi compares this to the case of a sick person who needed to be warned not to eat cold food or sleep in a damp place. One doctor simply gave him the instructions, while a second doctor added, "Unless you do so, you will die like so-and-so died." Because the warning of the second doctor is much more effective, Hashem similarly told Moshe to convey the mitzvah to Aharon in this manner. The Darkei Mussar points out that it is astonishing to realize that we are discussing somebody as righteous as Aharon, who certainly would have followed Hashem's instructions even without the implied threat of punishment. From the fact that even somebody on the level of Aharon, who was considered equal to Moshe in his spiritual accomplishments (Rashi Shemos 6:26), still needed additional warnings to reinforce his adherence to the mitzvos, we can appreciate how much we on our levels need to study mussar to strengthen our commitment to the Torah.

Unfortunately, intellectual knowledge of what a person is supposed to do is insufficient, as we see from Hashem's interaction with Aharon. Until that cerebral awareness is able to be impressed upon the heart, it won't be strong enough to guide and direct a person's actions and decisions. The Alter of Kelm commented that just as Reuven's knowledge has no impact on the actions of Shimon, so too the information that somebody possesses in his mind is unable to influence the choices of his heart, as the distance between the mind and the heart is effectively the same as the distance separating two different people. The only proven and effective means to transfer intellectual knowledge to the heart is through the passionate study of mussar, just as Hashem used to help Aharon internalize this mitzvah. For this reason, the Torah requires us to recite Shema twice daily, as our mental awareness of the mitzvah to love Hashem is insufficient unless we repeatedly transfer this knowledge to our hearts.

Rav Yisroel Salanter's three most well-known students were the Alter of Kelm, Rav Itzele Blazer, and Rav Naftoli Amsterdam. The Alter of Kelm was renowned for his mussar study. Rav Itzele Blazer was famous for his brilliant Torah insights. Rav Naftoli Amsterdam was known for his diligent Torah study, to the point that he had a fixed subject to study whenever he was going to get a drink of water.

Once, on a long and cold Friday night in the winter, they sat and studied together until their candle went out. At that point, Rav Naftoli Amsterdam announced that he was tired and went to sleep. Rav Itzele Blazer continued his in-depth study of a complicated section of the Gemora in Bava Basra (26b). The Alter of Kelm rested himself on a lectern and proceeded to spend the entire night repeating to himself the verses (Tehillim 118:19-21) "Pischu li sha'arei tzedek avo vam odeh K-ah zeh ha'shaar l'Hashem tzaddikim yavo'u vo od'cha ki anisani, explaining that when a person asks Hashem to open for him the gates of righteousness so that he can ascend and come close to Hashem and thank Him, Hashem replies that the key to reaching these heights is the ability to thank Hashem for causing him to suffer in order to atone for his sins. The Alter understood that the key to internalizing lessons so that they guide our decisions is the repeated and intense study of mussar until they enter the heart, and he therefore remained awake in the dark for the entire night repeating and internalizing this lesson.

Vayomer Hashem el Moshe dabeir el Aharon achicha v'al yavo b'chol eis el haKodesh (16:2) Rav Yonason Eibeshutz was once collecting tzedakah for a poverty-stricken family. He approached one of the wealthy men in his town for a donation. The man attempted to excuse himself by quoting the Gemora in Kesuvos (50a), which discusses

the verse in Tehillim (106:3) Ashrei shomrei mishpat oseh tzedaka b'chol eis - Praised are those who guard justice and do acts of righteousness at every moment. The Gemora questions how it is possible to do tzedakah every second, and answers that the verse is referring to a person who sustains his own young children.

The man claimed that he had no need to contribute to the Rav's cause, as through his children, he was already considered by the Gemora as somebody who gives tzedakah b'chol eis - at every moment. To this argument, the quick-witted Rav Yonason responded by quoting the verse in Parshas Acharei Mos in which Aharon was forbidden to enter the Holy of Holies at any time that he desired. However, Rav Yonason creatively interpreted it as saying v'al yavo b'chol eis el haKodesh - A person who only gives tzedakah based on the Gemora's interpretation of the words b'chol eis will not be permitted to enter into Holy places!

V'haysa zos lachem l'chukas olam l'chaper al B'nei Yisroel mikol chatosam achas ba'shana (16:34) Before the beginning of the emotional Neilah prayers on Yom Kippur in 1959, Rav Eliyahu Lopian rose to address those gathered to pray in his yeshiva in Kfar Chassidim in Israel. With tremendous emotion and a steady flow of tears, he commented that some righteous people are able with their deaths to atone for their entire families, others for their entire cities, and there are a few unique individuals in the world with the capacity to effect atonement for the entire generation through their deaths.

With this introduction, Rav Lopian cryptically continued, "We may understand why our verse mentions that Yom Kippur shall occur once annually, something which should be obvious and isn't explicitly written in reference to any of the other Yomim Tovim. If the generation is lax and immoral, Hashem will have no choice but to take the righteous, whose death atones like Yom Kippur, throughout the year in order to bring them forgiveness. The Torah therefore emphasizes that the decree is that there should be only one Yom Kippur each year, and we pray for no more."

Those in attendance had difficulty understanding Rav Lopian's intentions until they heard at the end of Yom Kippur that just after Kol Nidrei on the evening before, the great Brisker Rav had passed away. His son Rav Berel Soloveitchik related that a few days earlier, the Brisker Rav had cryptically commented, "This year there will be two consecutive days of Yom Kippur, one beginning just as the other ends," the intent of which was tragically clarified a few days later.

Mipnei seiva takum v'hadarta p'nei zakein (19:32) In Parshas Kedoshim, the Torah commands us to rise in the presence of a zakein - elderly person - in order to show him honor. The Gemora (Kiddushin 32b) teaches that this obligation is not limited to an aged individual, as the word zakein can also be read as a contraction of the words zeh kanah - he who has acquired, which the Gemora elucidates as referring to zeh she'kana chochma - a sage who has acquired wisdom. In other words, in addition to the literal requirement to rise and show respect to an elderly person, we are also commanded to do so in the presence of a Torah scholar. Why does the contraction state only zeh kanah without clarifying to what acquisition we are referring, namely the wisdom of Torah study?

Based on the teachings of Rav Avrohom, the brother of the Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Chaim Zvi Senter explains that although there are many objects and possessions that seem to be acquirable, in reality the only true acquisition that a person can own in this world is Torah scholarship, which is permanent and can never be taken away from him. Therefore, there was no need for the Torah to clarify which acquisition it is alluding to, as it is self-evident. Rabbi Senter adds that while the society around us tempts us to spend much of our time pursuing the "acquisition" of mundane and ephemeral objectives, we must not lose sight of the fact that acquiring Torah knowledge is not only our mission and purpose in this world, but it is also the only enduring acquisition and accomplishment.