

To: Parsha@YahooGroups.com
From: crshulman@aol.com

B'S'D'

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON ACHREI - KEDOSHIM - 5761

To receive this parsha sheet in Word and/or Text format, send a blank e-mail to parsha-subscribe@yahoogroups.com, or go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/join>. Please also copy me at crshulman@aol.com. For archives of old parsha sheets see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/messages>. For Torah links see <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/parsha/links>.

From: Don't Forget[SMTP:sefira@torah.org] To: Counting The Omer Reminder List Subject: Day 27 / 3 weeks and 6 days Tonight, the evening of Friday, May 4, will be day 27, which is 3 weeks and 6 days of the omer. Sefira - the Counting The Omer Reminder Mailing List Copyright © 2001 Project Genesis, Inc.

From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [SMTP:ryfrand@torah.org]
Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Acharei Mos-Kedoshim
Dedicated This Year Le'eluy Nishmas Chaya Bracha Bas R.
Yissocher Dov - In memory of Mrs. Adele Frand
A Haunting Thought About Jumping To Conclusions
This week's Parsha contains a positive Biblical commandment, which we often do not think about as such. The Talmud [Shavuot 30a] gives two different interpretations of the verse [pasuk], "With Justice you shall judge your fellow man" [Vayikra 19:15]. According to one opinion, this verse is giving direction to Judges. When a person comes to a Din Torah [Judgment in a civil case according to Torah law] the judge must treat the litigants equally. He is not allowed to have one litigant stand and the other one sit, one speak at length and the other urged to speak briefly, and so forth. However, according to a second interpretation in the Gemara, the verse is directed at every Jew. Its intent is that we must judge our fellow man favorably, always giving him the benefit of the doubt.

In other words, "Give your friend the benefit of the doubt" is not "merely" a teaching from Ethics of the Fathers, it is an explicit verse in the Torah! If we see a person doing something that apparently seems to be an act that he should not be doing, there is a full-fledged Biblical command to give him the benefit of the doubt. This is something which is codified by the Rambam, by Rabbeinu Yonah, and by the Chofetz Chaim: A person who we know to otherwise be outstanding and upright must be given the benefit of the doubt. This is not just so that we can be considered "charitable". This is a positive Torah commandment.

In addition, there is a practical advantage that a person accrues by judging his fellow man positively. The way in which a person treats and judges his friend is the way that he will be judged in Heaven. The Mishneh [Avos 3:16] teaches that "Nifrain min ha'Adam m'daato v'shelo m'daato" a person receives his punishment in ways that he knows about and in ways that he does not know about. The Ba'al Shem Tov (1698-1760) explains the idea that a person will be punished without his knowledge (shelo m'daato) as follows: If a person witnesses an incident involving his fellow man and jumps to the conclusion that his friend is a thief, a liar, a wicked person - the "witness" will be judged similarly in the World of Truth.

Rav Pam cites a famous story of Dovid HaMelech [King David], who took Bas Sheva as his wife. Bas Sheva had previously been the wife of Uriah the Chittie. (Uriah was in the army of Dovid, where the practice

was that soldiers going out to battle would first divorce their wives.) Despite the fact that she was technically not a married woman, our Sages note that this was an unbecoming act on the part of Dovid HaMelech.

Nosson HaNovi [Nathan the Prophet] came to Dovid and told him a hypothetical story of a rich man and a poor man. The poor man had only one little sheep, while the rich man had everything. The rich man, however, came and took this sole possession of the poor man away from him. Nosson asked the King for a ruling in this situation. "Dovid became very angry and said 'As G-d Lives, this man who did this is deserving of death!'" [Samuel II 12:5]. The prophet then responded "You are that man." He declared that Dovid would be judged according to his decree in the hypothetical case. "The very same sword that you proclaimed upon him will come back to haunt you and your household."

The Baal Shem Tov says that this dialogue between Dovid HaMelech and Nosson HaNovi is exactly how it will happen to each of us in the World of Truth. We will come before the Heavenly Court and we will be given a 'hypothetical case' to judge. We will be told "There was this person and he did such and such. He desecrated G-d's Name; He was not honest; and so forth. What is his fate?" We will show righteous indignation and offer all the appropriate condemnation of such a person. We will proclaim him deserving of harsh punishment. And then we will be shown that we, in fact, committed all of these sins and that we just declared our own fate.

That is the result of being unwilling to give people the benefit of the doubt. Such an attitude will eventually come back to haunt us. This is the meaning of the Mishneh that says that a person will be punished "without his knowledge". We would not have imagined that this particular trait of ours would come back to haunt us and seal our own fates.

The Gemara [Shabbath 127b] records that "One who judges his fellow man favorably, will in turn be judged favorably". This is more than "measure for measure"; this is just the way it happens. The way we 'rule' (pasken) about others - the same words, the same approach - is the way that we will be judged.

The next time that we have a doubt about someone, let us not immediately jump to conclusions. It is well known that people often like to jump to conclusions, specifically regarding the more distinguished members of the community - the Rabbis, the Torah Scholars, the leaders of the community. The "bigger" one is, the more people are apt to jump to the opposite conclusion rather than giving them the benefit of the doubt. However, one day this tendency will, Heaven forbid, come back to haunt us.

Every Stoning Has A Silver Lining

The last words of Parshas Kedoshim are "And any man or woman who becomes involved with Ov and Yeedoni [people who attempt to bring back the spirits of the dead] shall be put to death. They shall pelt them with stones, their blood is upon themselves (demeihem bam)" [Vayikra 20:27].

What happened to the generally accepted principle that a Torah Portion does not end on a negative topic? We usually do not even end an Aliyah [individual section of Torah reading] on a sour note. However, Parshas Kedoshim, which begins with the glorious words "You shall be holy...", ends with the stoning of people involved in this form of witchcraft - demeihem bam!

The Imrei Shammai makes an interesting observation. He says that the words "demeihem bam" are in fact a positive note. If a person is punished for his sins in this world - even via a violent death of stoning - at least he will then face the prospect of being eligible for Paradise in the World to Come, rather than facing the specter of having to experience Gehinnom. This should be considered positive. "Demeihem Bam" indicates he has achieved atonement in this world. His slate will be clean as he approaches the World of Truth.

The Imrei Shammai buttresses this idea with a verse from Melachim [Kings] and an amazing passage from the Jerusalem Talmud. When Dovid HaMelech was about to die, he instructed Shlomo [Solomon] to take care of all of his enemies. Yoav ben Tzeruya had been Dovid's Chief General. In the end, he rebelled against Dovid. Dovid instructed Shlomo, "Do not let him go to the grave peacefully" [Melachim I 2:6]. Rashi comments, "Do not allow him to die a natural death and thereby fall into Gehinnom." Dovid wanted him to be killed, not out of vengeance, but as a favor. He should die violently and thereby achieve atonement for his sins here, so that he will be eligible for reward in the World to Come.

Sometimes people suffer terribly before their death. It is extremely painful even to witness such suffering. We must bear in mind that sometimes this experience can be a 'favor' for the person. This is the lesson of the end of Parshas Kedoshim. 'Demeihem Bam' is not a sour note!

The Talmud Yerushalmi [at the end of Tractate Terumos] relates that Rav Imi was captured by bandits. Upon hearing this news, Rav Yochanan said, "Go purchase shrouds for him". However, Reish Lakish cut a deal with the bandits and freed Rav Imi. Reish Lakish then convinced the bandits to come see Rav Yochanan, who would pray on their behalf in appreciation for freeing Rav Imi.

Reish Lakish brought the bandits in to see Rav Yochanan. The bandits were expecting a tremendous 'Mi Shebeirach' [blessing]. Rav Yochanan told them that "Whatever you were planning to do to Rav Imi, should happen to you". They left Rav Yochanan and were killed on the way home.

What happened? Did Rav Yochanan and Reish Lakish double-cross them? No. Rav Yochanan gave these fellows a tremendous blessing. They ended their lives having just performed an act of kindness and they received atonement for all their sins. They were now eligible to go straight into Gan Eden. This is the correct interpretation of the Yerushalmi. Sometimes a blessing can be that, unfortunately, a person needs to die.

That is the way that our parsha ends. The Baal Ov and Yeedoni do have to die - but at least this execution will serve as an atonement and as their ticket into the World to Come.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Seattle, Washington
twersky@aol.com Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD
dhoffman@torah.org These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 280, Lo Sa'amod al Dam Re'echa Tapes or a complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Torah.org: The Judaism Site <http://www.torah.org/> 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B learn@torah.org Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350 FAX: 510-1053

From: RABBI BEREL WEIN [SMTP:rbwein@torah.org] Subject: Rabbi Wein - Parshas Acharei Mos/Kedoshim
ACHREI MOS - KEDOSHIM

Somehow it is fashionable in the current day Jewish world to associate holiness and spirituality with the mystic, the supernatural, the irrational, the unknown and the not understandable. The plethora of books being written and published about Kabbalah, most of them of dubious content and scholarship, is one manifestation of this current trend. Another example of this trend is the ascent of "holy men" who dispense blessings or amulets, and their popularity amongst the masses. With all due respect to those involved in this spiritual quest, I find the definition of holiness as expressed in the Torah reading of this week, to be incompatible with these mystical forays. The Torah defines holiness

in concrete, easily understood, human terms. The definition of holiness in Jewish life is always expressed in terms of self-discipline. Self-discipline, control of behavior, speech and actions are the ingredients of holiness as the Torah sees it. Now, I will admit that this is unexciting holiness. It is much more glamorous to receive a blessing from a holy man at three AM in the morning, or to engage in meditation, transcendental or otherwise, or to dance in the aisle during a prayer service or create a more spiritual prayer service than the tired, old-fashioned traditional fashion of prayer, than to refrain from slander, sexual promiscuity or dishonest monetary behavior.

It is obvious to all that people love "spooks." Life is so uncertain and things occur so unexpectedly and unpredictably that there is no complete rational answer for our problems. Yet, the Torah demanded of us a certain sense of rationality in our lives, behavior and beliefs. The famous axiom of Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon that one must investigate the Torah and Judaism to the limit of one's rational powers and only then begin to rely upon faith has been sorely neglected in our modern Jewish world. And even when faith is one's own only answer to life's difficulties, it not to be confused with irrational spirituality and the pursuit of holiness through non-Torah means. The study of kabbalah was always meant to be limited and secret and not public, popular and superficial. Everyone is into spirituality these days. But the Torah has only long lost lists of do's and don'ts of behavior, of commandments and moral principles as guideposts on its road to holiness. As the Talmud itself states in commenting upon the words of the prophet Yirmiyahu, who said: "They (the people of Israel) have forsaken Me (G-d)," "Would that they forsake Me (in their futile pursuit of theology, philosophy or spirituality) and simply observe the commandments of My Torah!" G-d Himself states: "Forsake Me!" do not pursue illusory spirituality, do not fall prey to supernaturalism, to unreality, to false messianism, to the ecstasy of chants and guitars, to all of the false mirages that have caused so much damage to our people in our past history. Holiness, spirituality, comes from Torah observance, from the self-restraint that was always been part of the nature of the Jew but that in our time has become 'passe' and outmoded.

The Torah places a great emphasis on honesty. Honesty in money matters is at the top of the list of the Torah's requirements for holiness. Current forms of spirituality do not deal with this hard practical matter. Unfortunately, we are currently witness to Jews here in Israel and in the United States who were found guilty of severe monetary crimes. The fact that the monies they stole were used to help Torah institutions survive and even prosper, should in no way mitigate their behavior. In fact, in my opinion, it makes the dishonesty even more culpable. Stealing for Torah places spirituality above the halacha, it assumes that man knows better than G-d what is right and good and what is not. It demeans Torah and everything that Torah stands for. One of the great problems of the pursuit of spirituality in our time is the arrogance of "holy" people in substituting their judgment and opinion for the explicit decisions of the Torah. The Torah reading of this week is very plain in its meaning and instructions as to the achievement of holiness. It needs no spiritual inflation or interpretation. It only requires obedience, discipline, patience, optimism and an abiding sense of reality and of the real world in which we all live. We are bidden to be a "holy nation." A holy nation must have a program of behavior, not of ecstatic feelings and feel-good faith. A careful reading of this week's Torah reading leads me to this unavoidable conclusion.

Shabat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

Rabbiwein, Copyright © 2001 by Rabbi Berel Wein and Project Genesis, Inc. Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway
learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B <http://www.torah.org/>
Baltimore, MD 21208

http://www.torahweb.org/torah/2000/parsha/rneu_achmos.html
[From last year]

RABBI YAAKOV NEUBURGER

Ma'aseh Eretz Mitzrayim ϕ Bad Culture or Bad Character

"Kema'aseh Eretz Mitzrayim asher yishavtem bo lo tha'asu..." The prohibition against adopting the "ma'aseh", the practices of the Egyptians (Acharei Mos, 18:3) refers according to many commentaries to the nature of their social interaction that we are supposed to study, learn to deplore, and distance ourselves from. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch explains that the word, "ma'aseh" in Torah indicates social conduct and ultimately "the attitude of a people towards justice and civic life". (see also Meor Vashemesh, Rav Nison Alpert) It is certainly reasonable that slave masters could start out as individuals whose entire world consisted of themselves and their needs. Perhaps that is why we are reminded in that pasuk that we must not emulate the Egyptians "amongst whom we lived". Apparently it is precisely because we have felt the awful sting of a society built on self focus that we should seek with great conviction to protect ourselves from the behaviors that could have contributed to the development of that culture.

The belief that our suffering at the hands of the Egyptians in fact began with behavioral and character flaws would help us understand a phrase that we have repeated many a time in the past few days. Our departure from Mitzrayim is described in Tehillim as "Beis Ya'akov Me'am lo'ez" - "The house of Ya'akov [leaving] a people of strange language". Why did Dovid Hamelech choose to describe our oppressors in such a non-descriptive term, a characteristic that could describe almost any nation? Certainly he could have found some expression that would more surely convey the flavor of the host power throughout our years in exile.

This question led the author of the Torah Temima, Rabbi Baruch Epstein, in his commentary to the sidur, Baruch Sheomar, to translate "me'am loez" in a novel way. He suggests that the Egyptians are referred to as an evil-tongued nation, not a foreign-tongued nation; as perpetrators of La'az - Loshan Horah, not as simply speakers of another tongue. Dovid Hamelech is identifying a tool used by the Egyptian leadership against us; one with which we have become all too familiar throughout our years of wandering. One need only review the opening parshiyos of Shemos, where Pharoh accuses us of harboring unfaithfulness to the very land to whom we had brought the economic stability and prosperity that they were then enjoying. According to the Ramban the Mitzriyim were in fact grateful to Yosef's family and had no ill feelings for them. Pharoh had to wear down those good feelings and convince his people that we were different; different enough to be disinterested in the survival of Egypt. Once the seeds of disenfranchisement were sown, one could easily ask for a tax from those foreigners who were using native resources. A few well placed words could feed into a society so wrapped up with itself that it was unable to integrate others and their needs, ultimately transforming them into treacherous taskmasters.

That is why Dovid Hamelech refers to the House of Ya'akov being extricated from the evil tongued Egyptian society. He comes to remind us that what may seem as a behavioral and moral flaw can eat away at the moral infrastructure of an entire people leaving them bereft of any compassion and standards by which to measure themselves. We are reminded through this Hallel passage that the House of Ya'akov, the Jewish home was redeemed from a surrounding that looked upon it with disapproval and distaste. Having lived through the results of that attitude, we are charged through this prohibition against adopting "ma'aseh Eretz Mitzrayim" and rather we are to use our insulated quarters to instill concern for others, a positive outlook and a focus far beyond oneself.

From: RABBI MORDECHAI KAMENETZKY
[SMTP:rmk@torah.org] Subject: Drasha - Parshas Acharei
Mos/Kedoshim - Sweet Revenge

A verse in his week's portion reminds me of a terse retort that American politician, Senator Henry Clay, made to his antagonist, Virginia's John Randolph, right before their infamous duel in April of 1826.

The two were walking toward each other on a narrow footpath, with little room to pass. One would have to give way. "I never make room for scoundrels," sneered Randolph.

"I always do," Clay smiled as he stepped off the paved path to let Randolph pass.

In commanding us not to revenge nor bear grudges, the Torah alludes to two distinct character flaws.

"You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your fellow as yourself -- I am Hashem" (Leviticus 19:18).

What does the Torah mean, "You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge," what is the difference?

Rashi explains: If Joe says to David "Lend me your sickle", and David replies, "No!", and the next day David says to Joe, "Lend me your hatchet", and Joe retorts, "I am not going to lend it to you, just as you refused to lend me your sickle" - this is avenging; and what is "bearing a grudge"? Rashi continues. "If Joe says to David, "Lend me your hatchet", and David replies "No!" and on the next day David says to Joe "Lend me your sickle", and Joe replies "Here it is; I am not like you, because you would not lend me" - this is called "bearing a grudge" because he retains enmity in his heart although he does not actually avenge himself."

In both cases, the avenger and the grudge bearer have committed a sin. They have transgressed a negative commandment of the Torah.

But what about the initial denial of the loan? What is the punishment for the men who initially refused to lend their sickles or hatchets? Neither punishment, nor even a warning is issued to them. Why is the grudgingly generous man treated worse than the outright denier of kindness and sharing?

A famous tale that circulates among disparate fund-raisers, goes as follows: The Rabbi came to the millionaire in search of a contribution for his Yeshiva. The man took him in warmly, but after the rabbi made his pitch, the man began a semi-tirade.

"Do you know that I have a brother that is in a wheelchair? His five children have no means of support!" The rabbi shook his head, apologetically. "And," continued the magnate, "Did you know that I have a nephew with 12 children in Israel?"

The rabbi began to stammer; he was unaware of all these obligations. The rich man cut him short. My mother is still alive in a nursing home that charges 1200 dollars a week! And my sister's home just burnt down and they have no place to live!

The rabbi began backing away sure that there was surely no funds left for his Yeshiva, but the broad grin on the man's face stopped him. "And, Rabbi," continued the mogul, "I don't give a penny for any one of them, so why in the world should I give something to you?"

The Chofetz Chaim explains: The Torah's objective in this mitzvah is to train us not to be hateful or spiteful. Cheap is cheap. And it's tough to do something about that. It is a character flaw, but it is not hatred. Some of the nicest most warm, friendly even loving people do not like to give or lend. They will offer you their ear, their home and their time. They just will not give something that they physically possess. The Torah, does not deal with them the same way as the person who would be generous, but for the animus in his heart, or the one who does give, but, his openhandedness is shrouded snide remarks, and a harbor of hate. That overbearing enmity, despite his tainted giving is worthy of a Torah transgression.

Though the Torah tries to get us to control our emotional responses,

it is more important for us to be kind, loving, and compassionate than generous with a hateful heart.

Good Shabbos 2001 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky
Dedicated by Dr. and Mrs. Keith Staiman -- L'Rfuah Shlaimah
Yehuda Boruch ben Sora Menucha

Drasha, Copyright 1 2001 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and
Torah.org. Drasha is the e-mail edition of FaxHomily, a Project of the
Henry and Myrtle Hirsch Foundation. Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is
the Associate Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore, <http://www.yoss.org/>
. Torah.org depends upon your support. Please visit
<http://torah.org/support/> or write to dedications@torah.org or
donations@torah.org. Thank you! Torah.org: The Judaism Site
<http://www.torah.org/> 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B learn@torah.org
Baltimore, MD 21208

From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@ohr.edu]

* TORAH WEEKLY * Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion
EAT, MY CHILD!

"Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to
them 'You shall be holy -- for Holy am I, Hashem, Your G-d.' " (19:2)

In "How I Became Fat," Alan Sherman recalls his mother urging him
to eat. "Eat! Eat!" she would say, "People are starving in Asia!" Thus,
as his patriotic duty to ease world hunger, he learned to clean his plate 4,
5, or 6 times a day...

How many Jewish jokes are there about eating! The caricature
Jewish mother complains continually that her offspring are dying of
hunger in spite of the fact that their daily calorie intake would support a
thoroughbred racehorse.

Behind every joke lies a truth, however distorted. Judaism is
unique in that it views the body neither as an enemy nor as a
bacchanalian banquet -- but as a resource. The body is not only capable
of spiritual elevation, but it is created for this purpose. The body's
deepest satisfaction comes from being correctly used in the service of the
soul.

To the secular mind, holiness means abstinence. The body is
incapable of spiritual elevation and must be mortified or transcended.

This week's parsha begins with G-d saying to Moshe: "Speak to the
entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them 'You shall be
holy -- for I am Holy, Hashem, Your G-d.' " Since G-d instructed
Moshe to speak to the entire assembly, we know that this commandment
was to be spoken in public to all the Jewish People together. Why?
What is it about the command to be holy that it needed to be
communicated in this fashion?

The holiness that the Torah seeks from us is not a holiness of
separation and denial, of monasticism and seclusion, rather it is a
holiness which is to be lived in an assembly; a holiness where the body
is elevated by the soul and where its greatest potential is only realized in
our interaction with our fellow beings.

Sources: * Chatam Sofer in Iturei Torah

HAFTARAH: Amos 9:7-9:15

This haftara is related to the Parsha of Acharei Mot where G-d
warned the people of Israel not to imitate the immoral ways of the
Canaanites lest the land regurgitate them into exile (Vayikra 18:28). The
prophet Amos warns them that they now resemble the Canaanites and
will soon be ejected from the Land. Yet, the prophet tells of the
redemption when G-d will return them to the bountiful Land and rebuild
the kingdom of David. Then, desolate cities will be rebuilt and the
populace prosperous and peaceful forever.

TOIL AND REWARD

Amos foresees the future golden age in Israel: "Days will come, says
Hashem, when the plowman will be reached by the reaper" (9:13).

The Maggid of Dubno explains this: Today, we see people who toil

and others who enjoy; not always does a person enjoy the fruit of his
labor. Especially in exile when the Jews are oppressed continuously, one
can toil in anticipation for the future but someone else steals the profits.
In the future utopia, the plowman who toils will be the reaper who
harvests the grain, as King David says, "Those who tearfully sow will
reap in glad song" (Psalms 126:5). Also, this will be the era when
everyone who toiled and suffered as a Jew will merit the Divine reward
and understand that nothing was in vain.

Written and compiled by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair To subscribe
to this list please e-mail weekly-subscribe@ohr.edu (C) 2001 Ohr
Somayach International - All rights reserved.

<http://www.enayim.org/>

Enayim L'Torah Published by the Student Organization of Yeshiva
May 05, 2001 β Parashas Acharei-MosφKedoshimβ 12 Iyar 5761
A Little Bit of Light

by RABBI BARUCH PESACH MENDELSON

The Mesilas Yesharim (Chapter 3) relates that there are two different
types of darkness: one that precludes the ability to see even directly in
front of you, and another which will cause one to confuse different
objects with each other. These two types of darkness pervade our lives as
well. At times, the world around us is spiritually dark, such that the
obstacles that inhibit are growth are hidden; the foolish one walks
confidently, only to fall flat on his face even before realizing the cause of
his fall. And at times, the darkness forebodes an even worse
consequence: one peers into the dark and senses evil in that which is
good, or sees something evil and grabs hold, mistaking it for good.
Consequently, one can continue to be mechazeik his evil ways φindeed
searching for and trying to prove the correctness of his path φall the
while traveling closer to the b'air shachas.

How can one avoid such a fate? In the beginning of his second
chapter, perhaps, the Mesilas Yesharim himself offers us a clue. He
states that one must think about and examine one's actions, and not to
blindly and idly follow one's habits, k'ivair b'afeila, a blind per-son in the
dark. At first blush, this phrase seems redundant; does it matter that a
blind man is also in a dark room? Upon further reflec-tion, however, one
realizes that a dark room offers light neither to the blind man nor to
anyone who could potentially guide him. In other words, Moshe Chaim
Luzzato is teaching us that one who does not learn from and introspect
his own actions, preferring to cling to the errors of his habits, is blind not
just of his own short-comings, but doesn't want help overcoming them
either.

Therefore, the only appropriate remedy to ensure that one does not
confuse good and evil is to find someone holding a strong, guiding light.
Instead of thinking that the little bit of knowledge that I have acquired,
or the little bit of light I possess will guide me, and subse-quently mix up
good and evil, one must realize that there are those that possess a great
deal more light, whom they should therefore turn to for assistance and
guidance φtheir Rebbeim.

No lesser people than Nadav and Avihu made this mistake. They had
a little bit of light; in fact, besides Moshe and Aharon, they were the
Gedolei HaDor. They clearly felt that al pi din, it was Ha-lakhically
proper to offer a strange fire onto the alter, and even felt permissible to
drink a little bit before doing so. Perhaps they felt they were being
mehadeir, enhancing the mitzvah. Nevertheless, the Ba'al HaTurim and
Da'as Zekeinim write φin the name of Chazal φthat they died only because
"She'horo halakha bifnei ra-banB they decided a matter of law in front of
their teachers." They impetuously acted without consulting their
Rebbi φMoshe Rabbe-inu φ and as such, were deserving of death. Acting
in such a fash-ion shows a fundamental lack of respect for a Rebbe,
because it sev-ers the link and the Mesorah of the Torah from generation
to gen-eration, allowing students to introduce innovations that only seem

correct under the shaded glare of a little bit of light. In the process, they see only enough to mistakenly falsify Judaism. The Gemara in Berachos (31b) therefore says Kol HaMoreh Halakha Bifnei Rabo Chayav Misahp̄e must die in order to ensure that his "Torah" dies with him. One must always, when able to do so, clarify the Torah's viewpoint with his Rebbeim.

Practically, one must then inquire as to the scope and extension of this idea. How far must one go to ask shailos to one's Rabbi? The Gemara in Eiruvim (62b) maintains that Rav Chisda would not pasken regarding even an egg eaten with a milkshake ϕ in which no basar v'chalav issue possibly arises ϕ s long as his Rabbi, Rav Huna, was still living. Apparently, even mundane and simple issues must be clarified with the closest link in the mesorah from Sinai. Of course, this principle can be changed with the Rabbi's permis-sion; as the Gemara in Sanhedrin (5b) relates, if the Rabbi deems his student ready and able to carry on the mesoras haTorah, as one who understands the Torah's teachings deeply and guards its laws scrupulously, the talmid can then, and only then, pasken on his own.

And yet, the Gemara in Avoda Zara (5b) tells us that one doesn't fully understand his Rabbi "Ad Arba'ah Shnin", for forty years, which some interpret as based on the Mishna in Pirkei Avos (5:21), which states that Ben Arbayim L'Bina, at forty one gains under-standing. Perhaps, then, even when granted permission by a Rabbi, one should defer from innovating chidushim until after the forty year mark. No less a Torah authority than Rav Elchonan Wasserman was perpetually asking advice from his Rebbeim, first from Rav Chaim Soloveitchik until his death, and then the Chafetz Chaim, and finally Rav Chaim Ozer. As one of our Roshei Yeshiva so succinctly exclaimed in a recent Sichas Mussar, "You [Tamidei HaYeshiva] come to Yeshiva to learn from your Rebbeim, not to tell the Rebbeim what to do." We should try to learn the lesson of the dangers of possessing only a "little bit of light", and allow our Rebbeim to lead us out of the darkness with a flame of blazing glory.

The staff wishes everyone a Shabbat Shalom. To submit questions or comments, for subscription and sponsorship information, or simcha announce-ments, please contact us at (917) 589-1716 or dyolkut@ymail.yu.edu. Mazal Tov to: and Cobi Robinson; on their recent engagements.

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office[SMTP:office@etzion.org.il]
Subject: SICHOT61 -27: Parashat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm)
Student Summaries of Sichot Delivered by the Roshei Yeshiva
PARASHOT ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM
SICHA OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT"A

In memory of Asaf Hershkowitz, Hy"d. HaMakom yenakhem etkhem betokh she'ar avelei Tzion veYerushalayim.

"He Shall Live by Them" Summarized by Matan Glidai Translated by Kaeren Fish

"And you shall observe My statutes and My judgments which if a man does them, he shall live by them." (Vayikra 18:5)

The Chassidic teachers draw a number of lessons from this verse:
1. Mitzvot are to be performed not with sadness or a sense of suffering, but rather with joy and vitality. 2. At the end of the

Midrash Tanchuma on the Torah we learn that an evil person is considered dead even during his lifetime, because "he sees the sun shining but does not recite the blessing 'BWho creates the lights;' he sees the sun set but does not recite the blessing 'BWho makes the evenings.'" The characteristic of a living being is that it reacts; it is not apathetic to what is happening around it. The same idea applies to our service of G-d: it should flow as a natural reaction to what is happening around us. We should feel as though we simply have to do

it, that we cannot exist without it. 3. Torah and mitzvot must be a person's main activity. A person may engage for most of the day in work that enables him to earn a living, and he may learn Torah for only one hour each day, but he must feel that that one hour is the important part of his day and of his life, and that all the rest is secondary. Rashi, commenting on the verse, "And you shall observe My statutes to walk in them" (Vayikra 18:4), teaches: "One should not say, 'I have studied the wisdom of Israel; now I shall go and study the wisdom of the nations.'" One may not compare the two spheres. One may indeed study secular disciplines and other cultures, but study of Torah remains in a class of its own and is always the most important. A person should feel that Torah is his life; everything else is subservient to that purpose.

According to these interpretations, "he shall live by them" means that our observance of mitzvot must be full of life, must be a natural part of our life, and must be the focus of our life.

There is another related verse I would like to address: "The ways of the land of Egypt where you dwelled you shall not imitate, nor shall you imitate the ways of the land of Canaan where I shall bring you, AND YOU SHALL NOT WALK IN THEIR STATUTES." (Vayikra 18:3)

The Rambam explains (Hilkhot Avodat Kokhavim 11:1): "We are not to follow the statutes of the idolaters, nor to imitate them either in dress nor in hairstyle. Rather, a Jew should be differentiated from them and should be recognizable by his dress and by his other actions, just as he is differentiated from them by his attitudes and his thinking. He should not wear clothing that is particular to them, nor grow the fringes of his head like the fringes of theirs, etc."

Commenting on this, the Kesef Mishneh writes:

"Our teacher [the Rambam] meant by this to prohibit only such dress that is particular to them, which Israelites avoid for reasons of modesty or some other reason. Since that way of dress is characteristic of them because of their immodesty and Israelites avoid it because of their religion, if they (the Israelites) were to wear it they would appear to be assenting to the idolaters and following in their ways. But if the style of dress is not particular to them in this manner, then a Jew is not obligated in this sphere to differentiate himself in any way from the idolaters."

If this is indeed what the Rambam meant, then we may ask why he did not state it explicitly. Why did he formulate his words in such a way as to imply that one should not be similar to people of other nations at all?

It would seem that although the prohibition of "walking in the ways of the nations" applies only to those customs that Jews specifically avoid, as the Kesef Mishneh explains, there nevertheless remains a principle of being different from the nations. A Jew should not spend his time trying to imitate them. He should always attempt to act differently from them, demonstrating in many different ways that he is a Jew. We should strive to show that we are not "just another nation," behaving like all the other nations and always following in their ways. We must follow our own path, guided by the service of G-d. It is this that the Rambam hints at in his words.

(This sicha was delivered at seuda shelishit, Shabbat Parashat Acharei Mot - Kedoshim 5754 [1994].)

From: Rabbi Riskin's Shabbat Shalom
List[SMTP:parsha@ohrtorahstone.org.il] Subject: Shabbat Shalom:
Parshiot Acharei Mot-Kedoshim BY RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN
Shabbat Shalom: Parshiot Acharei Mot - Kedoshim (Leviticus:
16:1-20:27)

"You shall be holy" (Leviticus 19:2) By Shlomo Riskin
Efrat, Israel - What does it mean, to be holy? First let us ask, what does it mean to be a Jew? Rav Yehezkel Abramsky, great Sage and

Judge of London and Jerusalem, maintains that it means that you belong to a special nation, that you belong to a special religion, and that you belong to a sacred community. Each of these three unique aspects of our ethnicity is expressed in a prayer recited each morning after we fall prostrate before our G-d. (Tahanun)

The prayer opens: "Guardian of Israel, guard over the remnant of Israel, and do not destroy Israel, those who recite 'Sh'ma Yisrael.' " The prayer speaks of Israel and not Jews, of our national heritage rather than of our religious faith. Israel is after all the name of our common grandfather Yisrael Sabba, it is the special term for our national homeland - and every family descendant responds to the familiar words Sh'ma Yisrael. We begin this prayer by entreating the Almighty to preserve even those Jews whose connection is merely an amorphous association with a family-state-nation, who have no real identification with a traditional code of conduct or a commitment to a particular faith or set of beliefs. It is enough that they are citizens of the State of Israel, or are even diaspora Jews who identify with the "Jewish family" in times of crisis. This is the covenant of Jewish peoplehood which G-d established with Abraham. After all, did not Hitler send even those "minimalistic" Jews into the gas chambers of Auschwitz and Treblinka?

The prayer continues: "Guardian of a unique people, guard over the remnant of a unique nation, and do not destroy a unique people, who declare Your Name one and unique, the Lord our G-d is one and unique". We are now seeking to preserve those who see themselves as Jews and not merely as Israelis, those who live a unique, traditional lifestyle of Sabbath, Festivals and Kashrut, those who are committed to faith in one G-d - ethical monotheism. These Jews express the covenant at Sinai, the special religious beliefs and way of life which make Jews a singular and unique people.

And the prayer concludes: "Guardian of a sacred people, guard over the remnant of a sacred nation, and do not destroy a sacred people, who triplicate with three sanctities before the Sacred One." Apparently this is the final and highest aspect of our ethnicity: in addition to our being a nation and a religion, Jews and Israelis, wound up together with a family-nation-state and committed to a system of traditions and beliefs, we must also strive to be sacred, holy. And indeed, that is the very first command of the second of double portion of this week's Torah reading: "You shall be holy." But we must still query, what does it mean to be holy?

If you wish to understand the true meaning of holiness, ponder over the following incident told to me by Rav Feuer, which occurred several decades ago at the marriage of Rav Yechiel Perr to Shoshanna Nekritz, granddaughter of Rav Joffen Zt"l, Spiritual Dean of the Nevardok Yeshiva. You can imagine that the wedding was attended by numerous Torah personalities and sages - and hence there was more than a little "competition" for the honor of reciting one of the seven blessings under the nuptial canopy. Understandably Rav Joffen organized the proceedings - and all of the audience was amazed when an individual whom no one seemed to know, not even the bride or groom, was called upon for one of the honors. After all, the number of blessings to be apportioned out are limited, and some truly great parsonages were perforce overlooked. Rav Joffen himself later refused to explain his choice - and it was left for the Rebbetzen Joffen to clear up the mystery after her husband was summoned to his eternal reward.

A number of years before their granddaughter's wedding, she explained, they received an invitation to a Rabbi's daughter's wedding - but as they neither knew the parents nor the young couple, they responded that they would not be attending. The rabbi called and entreated Rav Joffen with great intensity to grace his celebration - and so they agreed to come.

The ceremony was being held quite a distance from where they lived, but since they were not informed of any transportation arrangements, the elderly couple took two trains and a bus. When the rabbi-father of the

bride saw Rav Joffen he greeted him warmly - but the Sage was neither publicly recognized nor given any honor during the ceremony. After the celebration, Rav Joffen and his Rebbetzin went home on the bus and two trains.

The Rebbetzen was approaching the end of her explanation. You see, she explained, the mussar (ethicist) movement, of which Rav Joffen was a leading devotee, teaches that one must repay a slight with a favor, a slap with a kiss (tahat hakpada, hatava) - instead of taking revenge, act with graciousness. Hence, when Rav Joffen's own granddaughter was married, he invited the same unknown rabbi to attend - and bestowed upon him the honor of reciting a blessing under the nuptial canopy.

That's what it means to be holy!

Shabbat Shalom.

You can find Rabbi Riskin's parshiot on the web at:

<http://www.ohrtorahstone.org.il/parsha/index.htm>

Ohr Torah Stone Colleges and Graduate Programs Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, Chancellor Rabbi Chaim Brovender, Dean To subscribe, E-mail to: <Shabbat_Shalom-on@ohrtorahstone.org.il>

From: Yated-Usa[SMTP:yated-usa@ttec.com] Subject: Yated USA Columns I, 05/03/01

Halacha Discussion: BLOOD IN HALACHAH
BY RABBI DONIEL NEUSTADT

In several places the Torah warns against the ancient practice of eating the blood of animals, which was an integral part of demonolatry and other forms of idolatry (Explanation of Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim 3:46. See also Ramban's commentary to Kedoshim 19:26.). Today, when meat and poultry are already koshered before they arrive in our kitchens, most of us have virtually no contact with animal blood. There does exist, however, the possibility of transgressing the prohibition of eating blood even in this day and age. The following are cases in point:

Blood in eggs:

A blood spot in an egg is not kosher and could possibly render the entire egg not kosher. However, blood in an egg is not forbidden because of the prohibition against blood; rather, it is forbidden because it indicates the beginning of the formation of an embryo inside the egg, and we are forbidden to eat embryos(1).

The majority of eggs, however, do not contain blood. Accordingly, one is not required to inspect an egg to see if there is blood in it, since we can assume that this egg is like the majority of eggs, which are blood-free (Rama Y.D. 66:8.). Since, however, it is an age-old custom(2)-practiced throughout the entire Diaspora(3)-to inspect raw eggs before using them, we do inspect them(4). [It is permitted to eat hard-boiled eggs which were not checked before cooking and cannot be checked once they are cooked, since in this case we rely on the fact that the majority of eggs are blood-free(5).] B'dieved, if the eggs were not inspected, the food may be eaten(6).

Nowadays, there is an additional factor to consider. In the United States, Israel, and other countries, the vast majority of eggs are "battery eggs" from which chicks are not hatched. Thus any blood found in them does not prohibit their use. All that is required is to throw away the blood spot; the rest of the egg is permitted. Several contemporary poskim hold, therefore, that today we may be lenient with blood spots in eggs and permit eating the egg, the food with which it was mixed, and the utensils in which it was cooked(7).

Harav M. Feinstein takes a stricter approach(8). Although he, too, agrees that according to the basic halachah, battery eggs are permitted, he still advises that it is proper to be stringent and throw away the entire egg, since there is a minority of eggs on the market which are not battery eggs(9). Harav Feinstein reasons that the centuries-old custom of inspecting eggs and throwing out the bloody ones should not

be abandoned(10), particularly since eggs are relatively cheap and people do not consider throwing away a bloody egg to be an unjustifiable sacrifice(11). Based on this view, the following rules apply:

All eggs should be checked for a red or dark black spot. A brown spot is not a problem(12).

If a spot is found, the egg should preferably be thrown out. If a lot of blood is found [especially if it is found in different parts of the egg], it is strongly recommended that the entire egg be thrown out, since this is a marked indication that it may not be a battery egg(13).

If the egg was not checked and blood was found later when the egg was mixed together with other eggs or other food, the mixture does not have to be thrown out. The blood itself must be removed and discarded. Once the blood is mixed into the food and cannot be removed, the food is nevertheless permissible to eat. The dishes do not become non-kosher nor do they have to undergo a koshering process, although it is proper to wait 24 hours before using them again(14).

Human blood:

Although human blood is Biblically permitted(15), our Sages forbade it because it looks just like animal blood and it may seem to an onlooker that animal blood is being eaten(16). But the Rabbis forbade only human blood which is detached completely from the body, not blood which is still "within" the body. Therefore:

If one is eating a slice of bread and blood from his gums stains it, the blood-along with a sliver of bread(17)-should be removed from the bread(18). The bread may then be eaten. If the same happens when one is eating fruit, the fruit must be washed off well and then it may be eaten.

Bleeding gums may be sucked and the blood swallowed, since this blood is considered as if it has not become detached from the body(19).

A bleeding finger may be sucked but it is questionable if the blood may be swallowed(20). [Once the bleeding ceases, one should not stick the blood-stained finger into his mouth, since it appears as if one is sucking the blood(21).]

Human blood which inadvertently got mixed with food (such as blood from a cut that dripped into food) may be consumed as long as no bloody redness is visible. This is true even if there is more blood than food in the mixture. If redness is visible, then the food may not be eaten, even if the volume of the food is sixty times greater than that of the blood(22). If blood gets mixed into food, additional food may be added to the mixture in order to make the blood invisible(23).

Blood on Shabbos:

On Shabbos and Yom Tov, it is forbidden to suck or squeeze out blood from a wound(24).

On Shabbos and Yom Tov, it is forbidden to suck blood from one's gums(25).

It is permitted to peel off a scab on Shabbos and Yom Tov(26) if it will not result in blood oozing from the wound(27).

To stop minor bleeding [e.g., a nose bleed], it is preferable to use a paper napkin or tissue(28). If none is available, a cloth [preferably white or light-colored] may be used(29). To stop major bleeding, use whatever is at hand.

Rabbi Neustadt serves as Rav of Young Israel of Cleveland Heights. He may be reached at 216-321-4635.

Many of the articles which have appeared in Yated for the past several years are now being prepared to be published in book form. Dedication and sponsorship opportunities are available.

FOOTNOTES

1Talmud, Chullin 64b.

2Ibid. 3Aruch ha-Shulchan 66:32; Kaf ha-Chayim 66:41; Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:36. 4It is clearly forbidden to close one's eyes so as not to see if there is any blood in the egg (Ma'adanei ha-Shulchan 66:68). 5Y.D. 66:8. 6Aruch ha-Shulchan 66:32, who adds that if the blood is visible [as it is sometimes when egg yolk is smeared over unbaked challah as a glaze] it should be removed.

7Minchas Yitzchak 1:106; Yechaveh Da'as 3:57. 8See also Responsa Kinyan Torah 2:7 who takes a more stringent approach, but for different reasons, which do not apply on today's farms. 9Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:36. 10Harav Feinstein points out that according to the basic halachah, even "normal" eggs do not have to be checked, yet the long-standing custom contradicts that. We, too, should honor the custom. 11It seems clear, though, that in a place where eggs are expensive, one may rely on the basic halachah and permit using the egg; see Yechaveh Da'as, ibid. who makes this point. 12Darkei Teshuvah 66:23, quoting several poskim. 13Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:36. 14Igros Moshe O.C. 3:61. This stringency applies only if the bloody eggs were cooked or fried in a pot or pan, not if they merely came into cold contact. 15Talmud, Kerisus 20b. 16Rashi, Kesuvos 60a. 17Based on Yad Yehudah Y.D. 96:5. 18Y.D. 66:10. 19Ibid. 20See Darkei Teshuvah 66:68, who quotes a dispute among the poskim as to whether this blood may be swallowed or not. Darkei Teshuvah does not decide the issue, while Kaf ha-Chayim 66:47 rules leniently. 21Kaf ha-Chayim 66:48, quoting Ben Ish Chai. 22Yad Avraham, Y.D. 66:10; Darkei Teshuvah 66:71. 23Darkei Teshuvah 66:72. 24O.C. 328:48. 25Mishnah Berurah 328:147. See Magen Avraham 328:53 who suggests that this action may be Biblically prohibited. 26O.C. 328:22. 27Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 328:67. 28See Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 14:19. 29Mishnah Berurah 328:146.

From: RABBI JONATHAN SCHWART MTP:jschwartz@ymail.yu.edu] To: chaburah@hotmail.com Subject: Internet Chaburah--- Parshas Achrei Mos/Kedoshim

Prologue: Yom Kippur presents us with a very elongated list of sins we probably could not have committed if we tried. Still, we recite them as we recite the entire Vidui. A famous story is told of the fellow who entered the Shul for the first time on Yom Kippur. When he heard the shul's Rabbi recite the Vidui he left in disgust. Asked why he was so upset, he replied that he could not tolerate a community whose spiritual leader was such a sinner.

Funny as the anecdote appears, it is not by accident that the Vidui is written with an eye toward the plural. We atone for the entire Klal Yisroel on Yom Kippur. The individual is included among the masses. But why?

When the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, Nevuchadnezzar declared the Jewish nation to be a Seh Pizurah (Yir. 50:17). The Midrash notes that as a sheep is hurt in one place it affects the entire body, so too, Klal Yisroel hurts when one person hurts. We are a collective bunch, in hurt and in guilt.

The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 4:6) tells us that when a group of people travel on a boat and one person boars a hole under his seat, he cannot claim that it is only he who is affected. The same is true for the nation, Kol Yisroel Areivim Zeh LaZeh. Perhaps this will help us understand the great Klal Gadol Batorah of V'Ahavta L'Reiacha. When we have unity, we have it all. When we don't we fall. This week's Chaburah examines this concept in a slightly more directed manner. It is entitled:

REAL REACTIONS: WHEN REPENTING MIGHT WRECK RATHER THAN RESTORE

People err. It is in our nature. So much so, that there is a whole day dedicated to the realization of our sins and the restorative process of cleansing ourselves from them ("Kee BaYom Hazeh Yichaper Aleichem"). The process, when it is between us and Hashem, is clearly understood. We cannot hide from him nor can we hide our sins from him. Thus, he expects us to own up to our misgivings and to "take it like a man" recite the Vidui and change the ways. This process is known as Teshuvah (Rambam Hil. Teshuvah 1:1).

The difficulty is that man does not sin against his G-d alone. He can easily sin against his fellow man in the same manner that he sins against G-d. What follows then, is that there must be a restorative, Teshuvah process for transgressions a person might make toward his fellow man. The trouble is that any Vidui might do more harm than good. Should one tell his friend about a slight he might have done to him if informing the victim would only harm him more merely, for the sake of Teshuva?

Rabbeinu Yona (Shaarei Teshuva) notes that if a person tells Lashon Hara about his friend, and the other person does not know who spoke about him, then he must own up to his misgiving in order to achieve Teshuva. Rabbeinu Yona likens the situation to one who shoots an arrow from a distance where the arrow hits its target. The victim does not know who shot the arrow, but clearly he was hit. So too, with Lashon Hara, the source may be unclear but the damage certainly is.

Although one could suggest (Hadarom, 5743) that Rabbeinu Yona is merely trying to suggest that if a victim is aware that he was hurt by the transgression THEN he (the perpetrator) must reveal himself (and otherwise not).

Rav Shlomo Zalman MiVolozhin (Toldos Adam) disagrees with the

assumption. He maintains that Teshuva is a Chiyuv. Asking for forgiveness is part of the Chiyuv. If that is the case, despite the fact that the victim might be victimized again, the perpetrator must ask for Mechila. The Chofetz Chaim (Klal Heh:12) notes that this is the Halacha and the perpetrator must tell the victim what he did even if the victim does not know about it. In the Beer Mayim Chayim (48), he elaborates and notes that if the damage has not been done yet, but can potentially be done, it is unclear whether tesuvah needs to be asked. Still, he recommends that rectification be done in advance in order to avoid needing to ask for Teshuvah.

Rav Yisroel Salanter had great difficulty with this Psak. It is reported (Lev Eliyahu I:140) that he asked the Chofetz Chaim why he was so harsh with the Psak. The Chofetz Chaim reportedly blamed it on the position of Rabbeinu Yona cited above. Still, Rav Yisroel Salanter adopted a different position. He maintained that the whole issue should be dependent upon Sechel. If by asking Mechila, one would do more damage, it is better not to do so. One need not go into detail if the victim might get hurt by the details. It is this position that many of today's Poskim (Shut Az Nidbiru Vii:66; Moadim U'Zmanim I:54) adopt L"Halacha.

Battala news - Mazal tov to Rabbi and Mrs. Ezra Weiner and family upon the birth of a baby girl.

From: Young Israel Divrei Torah [SMTP:yitorah-owner@listbot.com]
Subject: Parshiyot Acharei Mot - Kedoshim Young Israel Divrei Torah -
http://www.youngisrael.org

12 Iyar 5761 Daf Yomi: Gittin 87

Guest Rabbi: RABBI EPHRAIM ZALTZMAN Young Israel of Brighton Beach, NY

Parshat Kedoshim, like every parsha, is most interesting. Starting with "Kedoshim tihiyu" - you shall be holy - there are 51 mitzvot in this parsha.

The Torah (VaYikra 19:16) tells us: "Lo taamod al dam re'echa Ani HaShem" - Do not stand (aside) upon your friend's blood (as it is being shed), I am your L-rd." Rashi explains that, if you see your friend about to die and you can save him - for instance if he is drowning, or being attacked by animals or bandits - you must do so.

The Rambam in Hilchot Rotzeach V'Shmirat Nefesh 1:14 codifies the obligation as a halacha. The Shulchan Aruch (Chosen Mishpat 426:1) says "one who sees his friend drowning in the sea, or that robbers are attacking him, or a wild animal is coming upon him and (the observer) has the ability to save him - either by himself or he can hire others to save the friend -and does not save him, or one hears that individuals are plotting to do evil... and did not reveal this... or he could have intervened... and did not do so, transgresses the obligation "Lo taamod al dam re'echa."

This obligation is even more far reaching. The Maharashdam in his responsa (Yoreh Deah 204) writes: "If to save the blood of one's friend, one must toil with all his physical and financial resources, how much more so one is obligated to do all that he can to save his friend's neshama (Jewish soul).

The Minchat Chinuch (Mitzva 239, Siman 4) and the Shala in his commentary on this parsha, both explain that one has an obligation to save another Jew from spiritual danger, just as there is an obligation to save him from physical danger.

The above mentioned sources talk so urgently to all of us. There was never a time in Jewish history when such a big bulk of our brothers and sisters were not practicing Judaism. There are millions of Jewish children, today in America, that receive no Jewish education at all. What percentage of these children will have Jewish spouses? I'm afraid not many, G-d forbid. I hope and pray that I am wrong.

In 1946 there were about 14 million Jews. In 2001, 55 years later, it's statistically about the same. What's going on? Assimilation is sky-rocketing.

The Torah demands all of us "Lo taamod al dam re'echa" - Do not stand aside upon your friend's blood. Rashi explains, "Do not stand aside to witness his death if you can save him." How can we look the other way when our friend's life is in danger and we can save him. With ahavat Yisrael and patience, it has been proven that very much can be accomplished to not lose a Jewish soul. It might be an invitation to an inspiring Shabbat table, or a weekly or monthly shiur that can ignite the pintele Yid (Jewish spark) into a flame of avodat HaShem (serving G-d).

98% of these Jews can not be blamed at all for their situation. They are the victims of the assimilation of their parents and grandparents. Thus, we have to reach out to them to put out the fire of assimilation.

(Partly adapted from a talk of the Lubavitcher Rebbe zt"l on Shabbat Parshat Kedoshim 1986).

Those who remember the "Kiruv" phenomenon that started about 60 years ago by a small group, remember that it met with a lot of criticism. Today, thank G-d, there are many organizations that do great work. We don't have to go too far."The Young Israel movement, founded in 1912, was originally created to combat the

wave of assimilation by providing a palatable synagogue experience that was user-friendly to new generations growing up in America." (From the leaflet "Benefits and Requirements of Young Israel Synagogue Affiliation). However, we have to understand that it is each of us that must act in this vital matter, not just the organizations. In this z'chut, may we merit our true and final redemption through Mashiah very soon, when "no Jew will be left behind."

From: Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@ohr.edu] Subject: The Weekly Daf - #377 Gittin 75 - 88 By Rabbi Mendel Weinbach, Dean, Ohr Somayach Institutions

WEEK HEART OF WEEK END If a man divorces his wife with a get on the condition that he will be away until after Shabbat, when is it considered that this condition has been fulfilled? This question was pondered by the sages against the background of a beraita. The beraita states that a condition to be away "until after shemita" (the seven-year agricultural cycle) is considered fulfilled only if he is still away for one entire year after shemita; that a condition to be away until "after a year" is fulfilled by being away for one month after the year; and being away until "after a month" means a week after the month. The resolution of this question is that the first three days of the week are called "after Shabbat," while the second set of three days are called "before (the next) Shabbat." This ruling in regard to the fulfillment of a time-oriented condition in divorce is applied by the gemara (Mesechta Pesachim 106a) to the law of havdala made at the conclusion of Shabbat. If one failed to make havdala then, says the gemara, he can do so during the following weekdays. In determining how late in the following week havdala can be made, reference is made to our gemara; according to the text we have, havdala can be made for the first three days after Shabbat. Other commentaries had a different text which concluded that havdala can only be made the first day of the week. Both opinions are cited by the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 299:6) but Rema rules that it can be done for three days. In regard to havdala after Yom Tov, however, Mishna Berura (ibid. 16) points out that this concept is inapplicable, and havdala can be done only the first day following the holiday. (There is a puzzle why Rashbam, in his commentary on Pesachim, gives a different example of the condition made regarding the divorce than the one cited in our gemara, even though the reference there is to our gemara. Readers are invited to offer their solutions.)

This idea of the six weekdays being divided between before and after Shabbat is a dramatic refutation of the characterization of Shabbat as the "weekend." Shabbat is not the end but the heart of the week around which all the other days revolve.

* Gittin 77a

AN UNWORTHY KINGDOM In Talmudic times the date written into the get document was in accordance with the year of the reign of the king in whose country it was written. This was instituted by our Sages as a way of maintaining good relations with the local government, which would certainly resent any other dating system. (Today, Tosefot points out this is no longer the dating system of nations, so we write the year from creation.) Should someone in Babylon write the date according to the years of the ruler of the "unworthy kingdom," says the mishna, the get is considered invalid because it is in violation of this rabbinical decree. The "unworthy kingdom" is identified by the gemara as the Roman Empire, so characterized because "it lacks its own script and language." Rashi explains that this is a reference to the eclectic nature of its national tongue. Tosefot (Mesechta Avoda Zara 10a) challenges this explanation based on the existence of nations such as the children of Yishmael and Ketura, the Ammonites and the Moabites. These nations came into being after Hashem introduced pluralistic language to the world as a means of dispersing the people who sought to rebel against Heaven by building the Tower of Babel. Since they were not around when the multiplicity of languages began, we must conclude that they, too, borrowed their languages from other nations. Why, then, is Rome singled out as "unworthy" for not having its own language? Tosefot therefore concludes that not having its own language is not the issue. What Rome was lacking was a special language which was reserved for royal use, such as we find "Greek wisdom" as a name for such an aristocratic form of expression. This, Tosefot points out, is what is meant in Mesechta Megilla (10b) when the prophet says that Hashem will punish the Babylonians for destroying the Beit Hamikdash by cutting off their language. Even though their language is Aramaic and they long continued to speak that tongue, they did lose the royal language they once used. * Gittin 80a

(C) 2001 Ohr Somayach International - All rights reserved.