



BS"D

To: parsha@parsha.net  
From: cshulman@gmail.com

## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON EMOR - 5771

In our 16th year! To receive this parsha sheet, go to <http://www.parsha.net> and click Subscribe or send a blank e-mail to [subscribe@parsha.net](mailto:subscribe@parsha.net). Please also copy me at [cshulman@gmail.com](mailto:cshulman@gmail.com). A complete archive of previous issues is now available at <http://www.parsha.net>. It is also fully searchable.

- Sponsored anonymously for a Refuah Shleimah for **Chaim Yissachor Ben Chaye Mushkit b'soch sha'ar cholei yisroel**
- Sponsored anonymously for a Refuah Shleimah for **Henna Sara bat Fayga Malya b'soch sha'ar cholei yisroel**

To sponsor a parsha sheet (proceeds to tzedaka) contact [cshulman@parsha.net](mailto:cshulman@parsha.net)

---

From [sefira@torah.org](mailto:sefira@torah.org)

This is a Sefira reminder for Friday evening, May 6.

The count is: 18

Today is the 18th day, which is 2 weeks and 4 days, of the omer.

Sefira, Copyright © 2011 by Torah.org.

The Counting The Omer Reminder Mailing List

---

[http://www.myjewishlearning.com/life/Life\\_Events/Death\\_and\\_Mourning/Burial\\_and\\_Mourning/Aninut/aninut.shtml](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/life/Life_Events/Death_and_Mourning/Burial_and_Mourning/Aninut/aninut.shtml)

### **Rav Soloveitchik on Aninut**

During aninut, the phase between death and burial, the despairing mourner is freed of ritual obligations.

By Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

Excerpted with permission from "The Halakhah of the First Day" in Jewish Reflections on Death, edited by Jack Riemer (Schocken Books).

There are two distinct phases in the process of mourning. The halakhah [Jewish law] has meticulously insisted upon their strict separation. The first phase begins with the death of the relative for whom one is obliged to mourn and ends with the burial. The second commences with burial and lasts seven, or with regard to some aspects, 30 days. The first we call aninut, the second aveilut.

Aninut represents the spontaneous human reaction to death. It is an outcry, a shout, or a howl of grisly horror and disgust. Man responds to his defeat at the hands of death with total resignation and with an all-consuming masochistic, self-devastating black despair. Beaten by the friend, his prayers rejected, enveloped by a hideous darkness, forsaken and lonely, man begins to question his own human singular reality. Doubt develops quickly into a cruel conviction, and doubting man turns

into mocking man.

At whom does man mock? At himself. He starts downgrading, denouncing himself. He dehumanizes himself. He arrives at the conclusion that man is not human, that he is just a living creature like the beasts in the field. In a word, man's initial response to death is saturated with malice and ridicule toward himself.

He tells himself: If death is the final destiny of all men, if everything human terminates in the narrow, dark grave, then why be a man at all? Then why make the pretense of being the choicest of all creatures? Then why lay claim to singularity and imago dei? Then why be committed, why carry the human-moral load? Are we not, the mourner continues to question himself, just a band of conceited and inflated day dreamers who somehow manage to convince themselves of some imaginary superiority over the brutes in the jungle?

The halakhah has displayed great compassion with perplexed, suffering man firmly held in the clutches of his arch enemy, death. The halakhah has never tried to gloss over the sorrowful, ugly spectacle of dying man. In spite of the fact that the halakhah has indomitable faith in eternal life, in immortality, and in a continued transcendental existence for all human beings, it did understand, like a loving, sympathetic mother, man's fright and confusion when confronted with death.

Therefore the halakhah has tolerated those "crazy," torturing thoughts and doubts. It did not command the mourner to disown them because they contradict the basic halakhic doctrine of man's election as the king of the universe. It permitted the mourner to have his way for a while and has ruled that the latter be relieved of all mitzvot [commandments].

"One whose dead relative lies before him is exempt from the recital of the Shema, and from prayer, and from tefillin [phylacteries], and from all the precepts laid down in the Torah." The Palestinian Talmud, quoted by Tosafot (Berakhot 17b), derives this law from the verse in Deuteronomy 16:3, "so that you may remember the day of your departure from the land of Egypt as long as you live." The commitment accepted in Egypt is applicable to man who is preoccupied with life and not to one who has encountered death.

What is the reason behind this law exempting the mourner from the performance of mitzvot? Because our commitment to God is rooted in the awareness of human dignity and sanctity. Once the perplexed, despairing individual begins to question whether or not such distinctiveness or choiceness exists, the whole commitment expires.

Man who has faith in himself, who is aware of his charisma, was chosen and burdened with obligations and commandments. Despairing, skeptical man was not elected. How can man pray and address himself to God if he doubts his very humanity, if speech is stripped by his doubts of its human characteristics and turned into mere physical sound? How can the mourner pronounce a benediction or say "amen" if he is "speechless"? He is still capable of producing sounds, but a benediction consists of spiritual words and not just of physical sounds.

In a word, the motto of aninut is to be found in the old pessimistic verse in the book of Ecclesiastes: "So that man has no preeminence over the beast, for all is vanity."

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik was one of the most important Orthodox thinkers of the 20th century. He delivered an annual lecture on repentance that was a highly anticipated event for Modern Orthodox Jews in America.

---

Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

### **The Omer and our Right to Eretz Yisrael**

#### **Rosh HaYeshiva HaRav Mordechai Greenberg, shlita**

"When you come to the land that I am giving you... you shall bring the first omer of your harvest to the kohen" (Vayikra 23:10). Chazal explain:

Through what merit did Yisrael merit to inherit the land? Through the merit of the mitzva of the omer, about which it says, “When you come to the land...”... The mitzva of the omer should never be light in your eyes, for it was through the mitzva of the omer that Avraham merited to inherit the land of Canaan. This is the meaning of the pasuk, “And I will give it to you and to your children after you” in order that “and you will observe my covenant.” Which [covenant]? This is the mitzva of the omer.<sup>1</sup>

The connection that this midrash makes between the mitzva of the omer and that of brit mila – the simple reference of the pasuk, “and you will observe my covenant” – is certainly interesting,<sup>2</sup> but we will focus on the midrash’s connection between the mitzva of the omer and our rights to Eretz Yisrael. It is notable that the right to this inheritance is not mentioned regarding any other mitzva ha-teluya ba-aretz. Why is the omer in particular connected to our right to the Land?

Entering Eretz Yisrael is likely to lead to a weakening in belief in Hashem and placement of man at the center of activity. The Torah repeatedly warns of this danger before the nation enters the Land:

When you say in your heart, “These nations are greater than me. How shall I conquer them?” Do not fear them. You shall surely remember what Hashem your God did to Pharaoh and to all of Egypt... For Hashem your God is in your midst, a great and awesome God... And He will give their kings into your hands... No man shall stand before you.<sup>3</sup>

Remember the path on which Hashem your God guided you for these forty years... And He afflicted you and made you hungry and fed you the mann... in order to teach you that man does not live on bread alone... For Hashem your God is bringing you to a good land, a land of streams of water... And you will eat and be satisfied, and you shall bless Hashem your God... Beware lest you forget Hashem your God and do not observe His mitzvot and his laws and his ordinances... Lest you eat and become satiated and you build good houses and settle in them... And your heart becomes haughty and you forget Hashem your God... And you say in your heart, “My strength and the power of my hand have brought me this success.” And you should remember Hashem your God, for He is the one who gives you strength to succeed.<sup>4</sup>

The Ran notes that the pasuk does not say that Hashem gives us success, but rather that He gives us the strength to succeed – “koach lasot chayil.”<sup>5</sup>

How do we remember that it is Hashem our God who gives us the strength to succeed? Through the korban ha-omer, the korban that expresses gratitude and acknowledges the Ribbono Shel Olam’s constant guidance and providence over Yisrael. Chazal teach us:

“And you shall bring the first omer of your harvest to the kohen”... Rav Yanai says: In the normal way of the world, when a person takes one litera of meat from the market, how hard he must work! How much labor he must endure until it is cooked [and ready to eat]. The creations sleep in their beds and Ha-Kadosh Baruch Hu blows the winds and raises the clouds and makes the plants sprout and makes the fruits sweet – and all we give him is the reward of the omer!<sup>6</sup>

Conquering Eretz Yisrael and ruling over it may cause us to lose sight of the message of Hashem’s guidance, the hand of Hashem behind all the processes that lead to victory. While we use our strength and power to conquer the land and govern it, we must always recall who gave us the koach to achieve this chayil. When we were in the desert, the mann fulfilled this role, as it taught us that “man does not live on bread alone, but man lives through the command of Hashem.”<sup>7</sup> In Eretz Yisrael, the omer took over this role. The Torah therefore stresses that upon entering the Land, “They ate from the crop of the Land on the day following the Pesach... and the mann ceased on the next day as they ate from the crop of the land, and there was no longer any mann for Bnei Yisrael.”<sup>8</sup> Rashi explains that “the day following the Pesach” refers to the day that the omer was offered. After entering Eretz Yisrael, Bnei Yisrael first offered the omer – and only then did the mann stop. Once

we have a korban omer to remind us to be grateful to Hashem, there was no longer any need for the mann.

---

Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

---

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein  
<info@jewishdestiny.com>  
Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

**Yom Ha’atzmaut**  
**Jerusalem Post :: Friday, May 6, 2011**  
**ISRAEL AT SIXTY-THREE :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

For us humans the number sixty-three describing our birthdays usually indicates the beginning of our retirement years. Our bodies no longer function with the vigor and efficiency that they did a few decades earlier. But in terms of historic longevity of nations and states, sixty-three years is not a long time at all.

So even though those of us who were alive and remember the day of the founding of the State of Israel are certainly aged and weaker than what we were then, the state itself is in its youth and exuberant stage of development. Much is made, and justifiably so, of the enormous challenges that our state faces. The external threat to its very survival has not diminished over these many decades since its founding. And there are plenty of instances of internal strife, shameful politicking and pettiness of purpose and action to keep our media and attention occupied.

But there are now over six million Jews living in our homeland and to me it is refreshing in the utmost to hear the figure of six million Jews used in a much happier context than its usual association with the tragedy of the Holocaust. The achievements of the state over its little more than six decades of existence are truly astounding. Much of the unreasoning hatred and vitriol directed against Israel stems simply from jealousy and niggardliness.

It certainly begets feelings of wonder when one merely stops to consider what other nations have accomplished or not accomplished in the same period of time. The prophets of Israel foretold that such wonders would occur in the guise of natural and human endeavor and accomplishment. It is one thing to be told about great events, it is another totally different experience to witness those great things first hand and personally.

How to mark such a birthday is always debatable. Many humans mark their birthdays with cakes, parties and merriment. Others prefer to ignore the passage of time in their lives. Still others wait for the passage of a magical number of years in order to commemorate a birthday.

The State of Israel has a ritualized form of commemoration of its birthday. But like all officially ordained modes of celebration, the spontaneity and enthusiasm associated with such a celebration is often lacking. Perhaps simply recognizing and internalizing the existence of this milestone in the life story of the Jewish people is in itself a sufficient commemoration of the event.

If the individual Jew alone does not feel the specialness of the occasion within one’s own consciousness then no official commemoration will fill that void. Basically put, Hillel stated this truth when he said: “If I am not for me then who or what will ever be for me!”

If the existence and success of the State of Israel is not felt on an emotional and spiritual level but merely on a visceral and objective level then, in my opinion, the whole point of the enterprise is missed. It is this short-sightedness more than anything else that fuels the attitudes and behavior of the anti-Israel Jewish Left. And no public ceremonies or ritualized commemorations can influence such wrongful convictions.

The prophet Yechezkel warned the Jewish people twenty-five hundred years ago against thinking themselves to be somehow like all other nations and peoples. Israel Independence Day is not the same as Bastille Day or Dominion Day or the Fourth of July. Once it is relegated to that exact status then it loses all emotional and spiritual meaning. And with it, the very existence of the State of Israel also becomes a “mistake,” a wrong turn, an ill conceived decision.

People have short memories and sixty-three years is a long time for most of us. The inability to teach the lessons of the past that created the State of Israel and saved the Jewish world from incurable depression after the Holocaust is one of the great failings of our society and its educational systems. And again, no public commemoration, no matter how impressive in presentation and extravagant in cost will help ameliorate this woeful situation.

Somehow education that can reach the Jewish heart and soul and not just the mind and eyes is necessary. For millennia such education was present and transmitted from generation to generation. It needs to be revived in our current world. On Israel Independence Day, Israel prizes are distributed to people accomplished in the arts and sciences, public welfare and communal leadership. However I believe that the true Israel Prize is to be given to the one who experiences Israel in one’s heart and spirit all of the days of the year.

Happy Yom Haatzmaut

---

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein  
<info@jewishdestiny.com>  
Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

### **Weekly Parsha :: EMOR :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

Part of the problem of leadership is that one who achieves position and prominence is always held to a higher standard of behavior and accomplishment than we ordinary humans. In this week’s parsha the Torah sets out special and stringent rules for the descendants of Aharon, the kohanim/priests of Israel.

Apparently with public privilege there are added responsibilities. Because of this, the Torah describes and demands specific personal and public behavior, actions and attitudes from kohanim. The prophet will later record for us that “the lips of the kohein will guard knowledge and the people will ask for Torah lessons from him for he is likened unto an angel of the Lord of hosts.”

To this verse the Talmud comments that “if he resembles an angel of the Lord of hosts then the people should ask of him to teach them Torah. However, if in his personal and public deportment he bears no resemblance whatsoever to an angel of the Lord of hosts then the people should abstain from asking him to teach them Torah.”

In the long history of the Jewish people, both in First and Second Temple times there were righteous High Priests who resembled angels and there were those who disgraced their exalted position by immoral and sinful behavior. There were Saducean High Priests who denied the very divinity of the office that they occupied. And there were righteous High Priests, such as Shimon HaTzadik, who proved to be the saviors of Israel in difficult and dangerous times. To a great extent, the entire situation of Israel, favorable or otherwise, depended on the High Priest and his attitudes and comportment.

It is interesting to note that the Torah in this week’s parsha lays down many rules about the actions and behavior of the kohanim regarding their own personal lives. Apparently, nowhere does the Torah deal with public policy issues and the national direction in which the kohanim are to lead the people of Israel.

The Torah assumes that people who behave in a holy and correct fashion in their own personal lives will benefit from Divine intuition and aid

when it comes to making vital decisions about public policy for the Jewish people. Shimon HaTzadik saved the Jewish commonwealth of his day from destruction by Alexander the Great through successful and clever negotiation. The Tzadik bested the Great in that encounter. That is why throughout Tanach we find the leaders of Israel being judged not so much by their public persona, policy decisions or by their wars and victories and reverses, as much as by their private behavior and interpersonal relationships and actions. In the blessings of the Haftarah reading we state that the Lord gave us “good prophets” – people of personal worth and integrity, of honesty and morality and correct Torah behavior.

Bad people are disqualified from being our true prophets. There are no perfect people so there cannot be any perfect leaders either. Yet, the Torah demands that the kohanim constantly strive for holiness and self-improvement. It therefore prescribes a regimen of behavior in personal life that will aid the kohein in that quest for holy self-fulfillment. Shabat shalom.

---

From Shema Yisrael Torah Network <shemalist@shemayisrael.com>  
To Peninim <peninim@shemayisrael.com>

Subject Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum  
**Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum**  
**Parshas Emor**

### **A leader among his people may not become defiled. (21:4)**

Kohanim are bnei Aharon HaKohen, descendants of Aharon, who is the father of Kehunah, the Priesthood. Aharon was famous for his love of all Jews, his unparalleled commitment to promoting peace and harmony among all. As the ohaiv shalom v’rodeif shalom, lover of peace and pursuer of peace, Aharon was the quintessential baal chesed, acting with loving-kindness to all. It is, therefore, surprising that he and his family are excluded from performing the ultimate act of chesed - chesed shel emes, true kindness, without expecting any recompense. The kindness one performs with the dead is chesed shel emes. There is no physical reward. This is in the Kohen's "bailiwick," something that he would want to do. The Torah, however, has other plans.

A worthy Jew has passed. Everyone in the community shares in his funeral. They all accompany his coffin to its final resting place. The Kohanim may not attend. They can only participate from a distance. Coming in contact with the corpse will defile them. They must remain pure and holy. Ramban and Sforno explain that, as leaders of the people, they may not defile themselves. This would lower their status in the eyes of the people. The Kohen is to lead, to understand and to teach. It is proper that an individual who occupies such a high station in life, whose function is significant and exalted, must conduct himself in a dignified and regal manner, so that when he speaks, people will listen. The Kohen is permitted to defile himself for his seven closest relatives, because their honor is his honor.

Let us view the situation from the perspective of the grieving family. They are in great pain, having just lost someone very close, whom they admired and loved. The void in their life is currently extremely significant. Clearly, the Kohen's presence would, in some way, ameliorate some of their pain, give them some level of comfort. In addition, it would be a considerable honor for the deceased to have someone of the Kohen's stature participate in the funeral, involve himself in the taharah, purification of the body, lend a hand during the interment. Yet, the dignity of the Kohen may not be impugned. The Torah feels that it would lessen his stature in the eyes of the people. We wonder: How much dignity will the Kohen lose by becoming ritually contaminated? Will people lose respect for him because he has become spiritually tainted in the course of performing a mitzvah and reaching out to a grieving family? Surely, even the most obtuse person will understand that it had been necessary for the Kohen to defile himself in order to

perform such a critical mitzvah. The impact on the people's receptivity to the teachings of the Kohen, due to a perceived lowering of his dignity, is, if anything, quite small. Should it make such a difference?

Horav A. Chenach Leibowitz, zl, derives a powerful lesson from this halachah. Yes, the negative effect on the dignity of the Kohen is insignificant. Yes, the significance of the mitzvah is substantial. One does not cancel out the other. The significance of this mitzvah does not abrogate the possible negative effect because it invokes Torah education and leadership which are paramount to the Jewish People. Any loss of effectiveness, regardless of how miniscule, is a loss too great to bear, too heavy to accept. The eternal nature of our People depends on the faithful transmission of Torah from one generation to the next. If the teaching ability of a Torah leader is impaired - even slightly - future generations will suffer in their inheritance of this priceless legacy. The Kohen is to accept and understand that this legacy is too important for our nation. One cannot tamper with it, because Torah education may not be compromised. One who comprehends the value of Torah education to our people understands that the Kohen's commitment to remain pure and holy takes precedence over everything.

Those who are charged with the privilege of impacting Torah values to others have enormous merit, but an equally awesome responsibility to reflect the Torah standards for moral and ethical behavior in their own personal lives. We are always "teaching" Torah, either actively or by example. Thus, we must always be on guard for any failing on our part that may convey the wrong message. Any lowering of our esteem in the eyes of others will ultimately distort and damage their receptivity to our Torah lessons. The converse is simple: When we act with the rectitude intrinsic to one who studies Torah, when we set an impeccable standard of devotion and adherence to Torah and mitzvos, the greater and more enduring will be the impact of our lessons. We must represent what we seek to convey - or - we fail. The stakes are high; the reward limitless. Nothing of infinite value comes easily. If we realize this, we have already achieved part of our goal.

**A widow and a divorcee...he shall not marry these; only a virgin of his people shall he take as a wife. (21:14)**

A Kohen Hedyot, ordinary Kohen, is prohibited from marrying a divorcee. The Kohen Gadol, High Priest, is further forbidden from marrying a widow. What distinction between the Kohen Gadol and the Kohen Hedyot effects the differential in their ability to marry? Does the Kohen Gadol's added kedushah, holiness, make such a difference?

The Moshav Zekeinim from the Baalei Tosfos asks this question in the name of the Chasid, a probable reference to Rabbi Yehudah HaChasid, who was the author of Sefer Chassidim and the leader of the Chasidei Ashkenaz, Pietist movement in Germany, during the thirteenth century. He explains that the Kohen Gadol was commanded to marry a besulah, virgin, because the Kohen Gadol pronounced the Shem Hashem, Divine Name, on Yom Kippur. It is remotely possible that the Kohen Gadol had cast his eye on a married woman, and, while he was pronouncing Hashem's Name, he did so with the subconscious intent that her husband would die, rendering her available to him for marriage. Therefore, the Torah forbids the Kohen Gadol from marrying a widow.

I am sure that anyone reading this is shocked. We are talking about the Kohen Gadol, the holiest Jew! Yet, he is suspected of having inappropriate thoughts at a time when he could effectively "do something" about these thoughts. To prevent this from ever occurring, the Torah demands that he marry a virgin. How are we to understand this?

Horav Meir Bergman, Shlita, explains that the workings of the heart of man are very complex, and only Hashem, its Creator, knows its foibles and capabilities. Man can learn the depths of his heart only from the Torah, which is the treasure trove of Hashem's wisdom. It is through the study of Tanach and Talmud that we are accorded but a glimpse into the secrets of the universe - man included. Thus, when Chazal intimate

something, even though it may not coincide with "our" line of thinking, it is an absolute reality. They know and understand the "score" much better than we ever will.

With the "aid" of Chazal, Rav Bergman explains what Rabbi Yehudah HaChasid is teaching us. Let us put the statement into perspective. On the holiest day of the year, the holiest Jew will enter the Holy of Holies, which is the holiest place on this earth. During this august day, a special moment, the holiest moment in some manner, occurs, when the Kohen Gadol will utter Hashem's Name. Can one imagine a more exalted moment than this? All of these "holies" integrate together during one awesome moment. Yet, specifically at this monumental moment, the Kohen Gadol might entertain thoughts of adultery, even thoughts of murder (in a sense) that would make a certain woman accessible to him. Can anyone imagine a more despicable case than this? Interestingly, it is the Chasid, a man known for his extreme piety, who paints this appalling picture!

Rav Bergman retorts to this with the notion that no one else but one who is the paragon of piety, could paint such a picture. A lesser person would have deluded himself concerning human nature, convincing himself that it could never be. Is that not what we are all guilty of, convincing ourselves that such a travesty could never happen? It is specifically someone of the caliber of Rabbi Yehudah HaChasid, an individual possessed of such unprecedented integrity and objectivity, who could look down to the bottom of man's heart to confront unflinchingly the reality of whatever is lurking down there. As scandalous as it may sound, this then must be the underlying reason for the Torah's prohibition of an almanah, widow, to a Kohen Gadol.

As usual, there is a flip-side. The Midrash depicts the greatness of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur in the most glowing terms. Equally astonishing is Chazal's depiction of the holiness of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur when the Ruach HaKodesh, Divine Inspiration, rests heavily upon him: "He burns with a Heavenly flame similar to that of the holy Seraphim that stand before the Kisei HaKavod, Throne of Glory." Indeed, on that holy day, the Kohen Gadol transcends the realm of humanity. He is no longer a human being. Imagine such greatness, such sanctity; yet, the Chasid feels him capable of the most abhorrent thoughts. How can we reconcile these two seemingly contradictory statements?

The Rosh Yeshivah explains that actually these two antitheses are, in fact, intimately connected. It is as a result of man's bestial, primitive human nature that on Yom Kippur the Torah demands of the Kohen Gadol the direct opposite: consummate holiness. In fact, if not for this lowly nature, the Kohen Gadol could not achieve such a sublime level of holiness, for he would not be able to shed from himself the name of "man" as he surged upward in holiness.

Let us approach this on a scale of zero to ten. Given that man - in his unimproved nature - is primitive, bestial and lowly, when he begins to ascend the ladder of spirituality his point of commencement is zero, since before he began he had been nothing. Now, if man in his primitive nature were to have some innate element of value, then his spiritual efforts would have a point of commencement that is one. Since man is "something," the level above that of his basic humanity is one. Thus, however far man may rise, however exalted his level of spirituality and holiness, the basis that he had at his point of commencement would always be present and would, therefore, form the foundation of his later distinction. To put it simply: if man is zero, then every bit of holiness that he acquires is pure sanctity with no humanity mixed in. If man is a one, then as great as he becomes, he always retains an element of humanity in the mix.

Thus, if being human means something, it always means something, regardless of how far and how high one has risen. Since man, at his point of initiation is - in spiritual terms - absolutely nothing, it is then

conceivable for him to rise to such a zenith that nothing is left of his original lowliness. How can this be?

The Torah in Iyov 11:12 proclaims: V'ayir pera adam yivaleid, "Let one who is (like) a wild donkey be reborn as a man." In other words, all that seems good about man at his start, before the purifying effect of Torah and mitzvos takes hold, is only a facade, a meretricious veneer concealing a core of raw animalism. We now understand how those who do not have the benefit of a Torah experience can be so base, so crude, so cruel and self-centered with absolutely no regard for anything or anyone. It is not that they are bad; rather, they are human! An unrefined human is an animal - at best! This is why even the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur can harbor thoughts of adultery and even murder in his heart, as he pronounces Hashem's Name. He is only human.

Having said this, we once again look at the flip-side. Since in his primeval state man is only a hollow shell, a great facade, he now has the ability to build himself anew from the bottom up. He can divest himself completely of his humanity and soar among the angels. As he studies Torah, he infuses himself with a new life that goes to the very core of his being. He can build a new edifice comprised totally of spirituality, infused with Ruach HaKodesh. The Kohen Gadol is the finished product. He stands on Yom Kippur as an angel, as a burning torch of holiness, ministering before the Almighty. He has completed the edifice in all its glory.

Two antitheses: A Kohen Gadol who has achieved Seraphim status; a Kohen Gadol who, on Yom Kippur, can contemplate adultery and murder without long and arduous labor to "build himself anew." Applying the bricks and mortar of Torah and mussar, ethical character refinement, the Kohen Gadol can stand in the Holy of Holies and contemplate the unthinkable. It is frightening - but also encouraging. It all depends on one's perspective.

#### **And I shall be sanctified among the Bnei Yisrael. (22:32)**

Certain people go through life triumphing over what many would consider insurmountable challenges; yet, they make it. It is almost as if they actually thrive on challenge and adversity. The individual who is prepared to sanctify Hashem's Name is a person who, despite undergoing a number of challenges to his faith, transcends it all and sanctifies Hashem by affirming his belief in Him. What makes this person tick? How does he do it? From where does he gather the strength, the courage, the resolution to ignore the pain, travail and adversity and declare his belief in Hashem? Some inner source of energy inspires these people to greatness. The truth of the matter is that the more these people are challenged, the greater the travail they experience, the stronger and more resolute they become. How is this to be understood?

The Baal Shem Tov presents the following analogy. A talmid, disciple, once asked him why the more he tries to get closer to Hashem, the more distant he feels himself to be. The reply came in the way of an example. A father who wishes to teach his son how to walk will first wait until the child matures and becomes strong and firm. Once the child's stability has been established, the father will place himself close to him, stretch out his arms and encourage the child to take steps towards him. While the child may be nervous about taking his first steps without his father's support, the encouraging, loving arms seem to do the trick. The child moves forward, at first haltingly, but then, with greater fortitude, he takes his first steps. As soon as he comes close to his father, his father immediately retreats and the child is no longer "home free." He must start over once again.

Understandably, the child is frustrated. After all, every time he reaches the goal, he is almost touching his father, he discovers that his father has altered the game plan. The playing field changes every time the child comes close to his father. What the child does not realize is that his goal is to reach his father. The father's goal is to teach his son how to walk, how to make it on his own. This can be achieved only if every time the child comes close, the father retreats. Actually allowing the child to

achieve his goal would be to undermine the father's goal of teaching the child to walk independently.

The Baal Shem Tov explained to his student, "Your situation is quite similar to the father and child. Your goal is to reach Hashem. Clearly, this is a highly commendable goal, but it does not coincide with Hashem's goal for you. Hashem wants you to search for Him, because the search catalyzes your spiritual growth. The more you seek Him, the stronger the yearning for closeness, the more admirable your spiritual achievements. In spirituality, growth is determined by how large and how intense is one's effort."

Some individuals understand this concept. Thus, the more they are "rebuffed," the greater and stronger becomes their love for Hashem. Deep down, they understand that Hashem is only testing them as a way of concretizing and strengthening their faith. Thus, they do not become frustrated every time He "retreats" from them. They return for "more." Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, relates an intriguing story which sheds light on this awesome faith in Hashem. Amidst the rubble of the Holocaust, an old siddur with a message written on its cover was discovered. The message was compelling, but what struck the reader the most was the "ink" in which it was written. It was blood! The individual who wrote his dying message, his last will and testament, wrote it with the only ink available: blood. Yes, the man took blood and wrote his last plea, a message that conveys a Jew's relationship with the Almighty - despite the travail that he had experienced. He was sanctifying Hashem's Name.

Moshe Kaminka, as he signed his name, wrote: Tatte in Himmel, nemt nekamah far mein klein tochter, Sara Leah, un mein tyereh froi, Sheindel. Nekom nikmas dam avadecha ha'shafuch. "My Father in Heaven, avenge the blood of my young daughter, Sara Leah, and of my wife, Sheindel. Avenge the spilled blood of Your servants."

The vengeance will demonstrate to the world that there is a G-d Who will judge those who spill innocent blood. The world is not feker, ownerless. One must account for his actions. On the cover of the siddur, the man signed his name: Moshe Kaminka; and his current address: Treblinka. The infamous death camp, in which the Nazi beasts brutally murdered 870,000 Jewish men, women and children, was Moshe Kaminka's last address. This man, like so many others, had sustained indescribable pain and suffering, and, before he died, he wanted to proclaim his faith in Hashem, his Father in Heaven, and plead with Him that He demonstrate to the world Who He is.

No one else but Jews would read or care what Moshe Kaminka had written. He scrawled his few letters in blood for us to see, for his Jewish brothers and sisters sixty, seventy years later, when he would be long gone. Why did he do it? What did he benefit from this deed? It was Kiddush Hashem b'soch Bnei Yisrael. He was sanctifying Hashem's Name among the Jewish People, so that we should know, we should remember, we should maintain our faith in Hashem.

#### **And I shall be sanctified among the Bnei Yisrael. (22:32)**

Kiddush Hashem, sanctifying Hashem's Name, does not have to be an earth shattering act. One does not have to be a martyr to achieve this sublime level. When we inspire others to act in a Torah way, to live a committed life of obedience to Torah and mitzvos, that is a Kiddush Hashem. When we act appropriately - as a Jew is supposed to act, when our moral and ethical rectitude coincides with the Torah's perspective of right and wrong, then we set a positive example of what Judaism teaches. This glorifies Hashem's Name. In other words, just acting properly in a Torah way can be a Kiddush Hashem, if it positively reflects on another Jew. Regrettably, we only hear about the negativity and scorn hurled at us by those who thrive on impugning Torah Judaism. A multitude of episodes accentuate the positive, indicate how the simple, daily actions of a Torah Jew impacted a secular family, so that they gladly - of their own free will - altered their lifestyle to become observant Jews.

A young Torah scholar was vacationing in Northern Eretz Yisrael with his family. It was bein ha'zemanim, intercession, at his Kollel. This would be a great time to do some sightseeing with his family. One morning, on their way to Miron, they stopped at a rest area on the grounds of a secular Moshav. As the man was parking his van, he moved too fast, and, as a result, nicked the right taillight of a car that was parked there. Understandably, the young man immediately left his vehicle to check on the damage. Assessing the damage as minimal, the young man proceeded to write down his name, address and phone number on a piece of paper and stuck it in between the door and chassis. He signed his name to the note, adding that he looked forward to the owner's visit when they would settle the claim. The young man had no desire to owe another Jew any money, fully aware of the Torah's exhortations against such behavior.

Four hours elapsed, and the young man heard a knock at the door of his hotel room. He opened the door to be greeted by a young, secular Jew, about thirty-five years old. As he swung open the door to allow the visitor to enter, the fellow took out a pocket camera and proceeded to take a snapshot of him. No conversation - no hello - no mention of the damage to his car - just a snapshot.

After this strange introduction, the man introduced himself as the man whose taillight was damaged. He explained that he wanted the picture to show others that there still existed ethical people in the world.

Apparently, he could not believe that, in today's day and age, individuals existed who would leave a note for a scratch on a car. He felt that he must take the man's picture and save it. Imagine, people respected the law and other people's property. G-d must truly rule the world. When the Torah scholar heard these comments, he decided to engage the man in further conversation. He said to him, "I am somewhat taken aback that you would suspect me - or anyone, for that matter - of leaving the scene of an accident without notifying the vehicle's owner of our identity. Just because one is unaware does not absolve him of blame. What about Hashem? The Almighty will surely demand my payment for the damage to your car. We answer to a Higher Authority."

"This is specifically why I wanted your picture," explained the other fellow. "I have lived my life in an entirely different milieu. In my environment, we do not volunteer information that could cost us money. Our primary concern is getting away and not getting caught. I never knew that observant people were like that. In fact, I never knew the meaning of observance."

The man whose car was damaged was so incredulous that he embraced the scholar and said, "Now I know that there is a Ribbono Shel Olam." They settled the claim and bid each other goodbye.

Four weeks later, during the month of Elul, the Torah scholar heard knocking at his apartment door. He opened the door to find the fellow whose car he had damaged, and with him was his wife. "After much soul-searching and family discussion, we have decided to alter our lifestyle completely. We are moving from the moshav and relocating to an Orthodox environment. We want to become observant. The conversation which we had a month ago started me thinking that I want to live a life which is guided by faith and belief in Hashem, a life in which ethics and morals play leading roles, a life of decency and sanctity. I want to be like you!"

The lesson of this story is obvious; repeating its message - superfluous.

**Hashem yimloch l'olam va'ed.**

**Hashem shall reign for all eternity.**

Veritably, Klal Yisrael's stay in the wilderness following their acceptance of the Torah should have lasted a mere eleven days. We all know that circumstances precluded their early arrival in the Promised Land. As Horav Shimon Schwab, zl, explains, the concluding verses of the Shirah set the stage and reflect the original plan following their exodus from Egypt. Something happened, however, which altered the course of history. This occurred when Klal Yisrael declared, Hashem

yimloch l'olam va'ed. The Mechilta states: "Had Yisrael exclaimed, Hashem Melech l'olam va'ed, Hashem is King forever, no nation would have had the power to dominate over there. Since they said only, 'Hashem will be King,' which is a reference to the future, they undermined their chances for redemption." At that moment, their conceptualization of Hashem was so great that it was expected of them to declare His Kingship at that time, rather than express their wish that he reign in the future. What happened? Rav Schwab explains that by proclaiming Hashem as Melech, Klal Yisrael would have gained immediate access to Eretz Yisrael, and the euphoric period of the Days of Moshiach would have been ushered in. This would have precluded their ability to choose between right and wrong. Bechirah is the ultimate gift which enables us to receive reward commensurate with the sacrifices we make to serve Hashem. If it would all be "clear" and easy, the opportunity for reward would be greatly diminished. Yes, we want to withstand the trials, overcome the challenges and transcend the obstacles, in order to be true ovdei Hashem, servants of the Almighty. We did not want the easy way out, in order to enable our success to garner greater reward.

l'ilui nishmas R' Chaim Tzvi ben Betzalel haCohen Katz zt"l niftar 5 Iyar 5738 t.n.tz.v.h. "Ohev Shalom v'Rodef Shalom Ohev es Habriyos u'mekorvan la'Torah" Sponsored in memory of my Rebbe by Charles & Debby Zuchowski and Family

---

From TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>  
To weeklydt@torahweb2.org

**Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky (TorahWeb)**  
**Mikra Kodesh**

All of the yomim Tovim are referred to in the Torah as "mikraei kodesh." This term is so fundamental that we incorporate it into our tefillah and Kiddush on yom tov. There are different interpretations as to precisely what mikra kodesh requires of us. Rashi (Vayikra 23:35) quotes Toras Kohanim that understands "mikra kodesh" as the source for treating yom tov as unique in a variety of ways. Special food and drink, clean clothing, and yom tov davening are all fulfillments of declaring the day as a mikra kodesh. The Ramban (Vayikra 23:2) interprets "mikra kodesh" as referring public gatherings for matters of kedusha; public tefillah and Hallel on yom tov are elevated to the status of mitzvos min haTorah as practical fulfillments of "mikra kodesh." In contrast to Rashi and the Ramban who interpret "mikra kodesh" as a requirement of positive action, Tosfos (Shevuos 13a) quote Rabbeinu Tam who equates "mikra kodesh" with refraining from melacha. The basic prohibition of melacha on yom tov is already mentioned explicitly. The additional dimension of "mikra kodesh" teaches us the mindset we must attain as we refrain from melacha. One who does not perform melacha on yom tov because he is lazy, and not specifically for the purpose of sanctifying the day, does not violate the prohibition of doing melacha but also does not fulfill the mitzvah of "mikra kodesh." Rav Soloveitchik zt"l expanded on this interpretation of Rabbeinu Tam that a person's motive for refraining from melacha is essential. Chazal (Berachos 20b) teach us that women are obligated to recite Kiddush on Shabbos according to the Torah. Notwithstanding Kiddush being a time bound positive mitzvah from which women are usually exempt, there is a halachic connection between Kiddush and the prohibition of melacha, in that whoever is forbidden to do melacha on Shabbos is obligated to recite Kiddush. This halacha is derived from the tradition that the terms "Shamor" and "Zachor" used in the Torah concerning Shabbos were recited simultaneously by Hashem. "Shamor" refers to the prohibition of melacha where "Zachor" is the source for the positive obligation to recite Kiddush. The connection between Kiddush and melacha is not only a technical one concerning who is obligated to perform the mitzvah of

Kiddush. Kiddush is linked to melacha because the purpose of Kiddush is to make a verbal declaration why we are refraining from melacha. Rather than merely taking a day off from work, we begin Shabbos with an affirmation, through our recitation of Kiddush, that Shabbos is a mikra kodesh. As such, refraining from melacha on both Shabbos and yom tov is only complete if accompanied by Kiddush. There is a second role that Kiddush plays on Shabbos and yom tov. Chazal (Pesachim 101a) teach us that Kiddush must be recited in the place one eats. The connection between Kiddush and seuda is similar to the link between Kiddush and melacha. As Rashi quoted from Toras Kohanim, one must eat and drink on Shabbos and yom tov in a manner that is consistent with mikra kodesh. Merely eating a special meal does not necessarily fulfill this obligation; the intention to eat as a way of sanctifying Shabbos and yom tov is necessary, and Kiddush is the verbalization of our intention. Eating a meal not preceded by Kiddush is as deficient as refraining from melacha without reciting Kiddush. Kiddush enables us to properly observe mikra kodesh in its multiple dimensions. As we refrain from melacha and partake of our seuda within the context created by Kiddush, our actions become a fulfillment of mikra kodesh.

Copyright © 2011 by The TorahWeb Foundation. All rights reserved.

---

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

**Orthodox Union / www.ou.org**  
**Rabbi Weinreb's Torah Column, Parshat Emor**  
**Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb**  
**Becoming a Kohen**

In every group, there is one person who stands out as special. In childhood, it is often the kid with the greatest athletic prowess. Later in life, different attributes begin to qualify a person to become the group's star.

In my post-high school peer group, many years ago on Manhattan's Lower East Side, we had one such towering figure. I use the word "towering" literally, because he was well over six feet tall. He had jet-black hair, which turned the heads of all the young ladies who passed him by. He had an outstanding academic record and seemed to earn his grades effortlessly.

As our group began to disperse with each of us going off to different colleges and yeshivot, he announced that he was accepted into a very prestigious university across the country. He was so distinctive and distinguished that, although he was not born into the priestly tribe, we called him "the Kohen".

In this week's Torah portion, Emor, we learn about the priests, or kohanim, and their special role in the Jewish nation. This is certainly not the first time that we have encountered them in our Torah readings. We already know that they stem from the tribe of Levi and descend from Aaron, brother of Moses. We have learned that they were charged with the performance of the sacrificial rites and other Temple practices. But this week, for the first time, we learn about the restrictions that are imposed upon them, especially with regard to their permission to come into contact with the dead.

We also learn that the rest of us, not born into the kohen's tribe, are required to "sanctify" them, and to treat them deferentially. "And you must treat them as holy..." (Leviticus 21:8) "To be first in every way, and to offer the first blessing at the meal." (Rashi, *ibid.*) They are to receive the honor of being first in many activities, especially in the ceremonies of leading Birkat HaMazon (Grace After Meals), and being called to the Torah.

Sociologists distinguish between two kinds of roles in society; those which are "ascribed" to us by others, and those which we "achieve"

ourselves by virtue of our own efforts and accomplishments. The kohen's role is clearly an ascribed one. Once a kohen, always a kohen, and unless he is guilty of truly egregious behaviors, he does not lose his status or forfeit his privileges.

One of the most remarkable features of our people is that we still have kohanim. So proud were the kohanim over all the generations that the "kohanic" identity has been passed from father to son for millennia.

Indeed, genetic evidence seems to confirm the validity of this verbal communication down the ages by isolating a "kohen gene".

But Judaism also recognizes other paths to privileged status that depend upon personal achievements and hard work, and are not ascribed at birth. These are statuses that must be earned and are not determined by one's genetic endowment. Indeed, the Talmud recognizes the equality, if not superiority, of the talmid chacham to the kohen gadol. Greater respect is shown for the person whose piety and erudition earned him his status than to one who gained the role of High Priest by virtue of his genealogy.

During the past few weeks, many of us have been transfixed by the events surrounding the wedding of a member of the British royal family; a perfect example of how prominence, grandeur, and glory redound to an individual whose position is "ascribed" by his lineage, and not achieved by his accomplishments. It would seem that even in our day and age, we are captivated by those who are born to their positions.

But how much more deserving of our reverence and respect is the "low-born" person who has achieved his prominence by virtue of his hard work. In this sense, all of us are potentially kohanim, even if our genealogy is not comprised of ancestors from the tribe of Levi and who are not descendent from Moses or Aaron.

As is often the case, it was Maimonides who said it best: "Not just the tribe of Levi, but every inhabitant of the world whose inspiration and intellect guide him to stand before the Almighty, to serve Him and to know Him... is elevated to sanctity and holiness... and deserves the same material privileges as the kohanim..." (Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Sabbatical Year and Jubilee, 13:13)

---

From Rabbi Yissocher Frand [ryfrand@torah.org](mailto:ryfrand@torah.org) & [genesis@torah.org](mailto:genesis@torah.org)  
To [ravfrand@torah.org](mailto:ravfrand@torah.org)  
Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

**Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Emor**  
**The Double Edged Sword of Mistaken Impressions**

The Shulchan Aruch rules [Even HaEzer 3:1] that if a stranger comes into shul claiming that he is a Kohain, we do not believe him unless he brings at least one witness to support his claim. The Rama notes that this ruling of Rav Yosef Karo "is not the custom in our communities" and states that since nowadays Kohanim do not eat Terumah, the whole problem of giving a non-Kohain the first aliyah is not significant. In former times, receiving the first aliyah would have been taken as a sign that the individual was entitled to Terumah, which would have been a monetary incentive for him to lie and which could lead to halachic problems. Nowadays, since there is no monetary incentive to lie, we believe him if he says that he is a Kohain. [The Be'er Heitiv raises the question that even nowadays, the Pidyon Haben entitlement is a monetary incentive to lie, but dismisses that question by saying that it is by no means certain that this "fraudulent Kohain" would receive Pidyon Haben money.]

The Chasam Sofer raises another interesting issue. The Torah contains a mitzvah for the Jewish people to single out the priests among them for honor [v'Kidashto]. That is precisely why we reserve the first aliyah for Kohanim. There are many Kohanim in shul who are known to us to certainly be Kohanim. How can we allow this Kohain of doubtful status

(in our minds) to take precedence over these "certain Kohanim" and take the first aliyah? A doubt should not preempt a certainty when it comes to fulfillment of the Biblical mitzvah of "v'kidashto" [sanctifying priests]! The Chasam Sofer answers that if we give this "new Kohain" an Aliyah, even if he is an imposter, we have still fulfilled the mitzvah of v'kidashto. Since we are giving him the aliyah because we think he is a Kohain, that itself — even if we are wrong about his true identity — is a fulfillment of the mitzvah of showing honor and giving precedent to Kohanim. The person who lied will need to face the punishment of Heaven; but the Jews who honor him thinking that he is telling the truth, are perfectly justified in doing so and indeed thereby fulfill the mitzvah of v'kidashto. Rav Pam, zt"l, said that this insight of the Chasam Sofer provides a source of comfort to Torah scholars who are held in higher esteem by the masses than they really deserve to be held. Deep in the heart of the Torah scholar, he may realize that he is not such a great or pious individual as they are giving him credit for being. However, he may at least take comfort in knowing that those Jews who give him that honor are indeed fulfilling the mitzvah of honoring a Talmid Chochom, just as those Jews who honor the Kohain will get a mitzvah for doing so, even though he is not a Kohain.

We may suspect that Rav Pam was making this comment about himself. He was in fact an outstanding Tzadik and an outstanding Talmid Chochom. However, in his humility, he felt that he people were giving him more honor than he deserved. Nevertheless, he said that he felt relieved by the opinion of the Chasam Sofer, knowing that the honor that he the masses were bestowing on him was at least a mitzvah on their part, even if he was not as great as they thought he was.

Unfortunately, this idea is a double-edged sword. If a Talmid Chochom is measured by the fact that people think he is a Torah scholar and relate to him as one relates to a Torah scholar, there can be a terrible downside as well. The Rambam writes [Yesodei HaTorah 5:11] "And there are other things included in the category of desecration of G-d's Name (Chilul haShem), namely, actions by a great man renowned for his piety which cause others to murmur about him. Even though they are not sins, such a person has desecrated G-d's Name."

People expect more from a Talmid Chochom. If the Talmid Chochom does not live up to those explanations, it is a Chilul HaShem, even if strictly speaking, he has not violated a Torah law. The Rambam cites several examples (based on the Gemara in Yoma 86a), such as a person who buys on credit and does not pay up when he is supposed to, or one who is overly frivolous, or one who fraternizes at parties with ignoramuses, or speaks curtly to his fellow man, or does not greet them with a nice smile. None of these practices is forbidden per se, however for a Talmid Chochom to do them still causes Chilul haShem.

A person might think or say, "I am not such a big Talmid Chochom. These standards, which the Rambam applies to a "great man of piety" do not apply to me! Here, the Chasam Sofer's insight works in the opposite direction. If people think that a person is a Talmid Chochom and expect behavior from that individual that is appropriate for a Talmid Chochom, then even if in reality, they are wrong and he is not a Talmid Chochom, he still may be in violation of Chilul haShem by not living up to their (mistaken) expectations.

The Rambam continues that conversely. If someone who is viewed as a Torah scholar is meticulous to speak nicely with his fellow man and greet everyone pleasantly and is faithful in all his business dealings, and conducts himself in a manner beyond reproach in all his actions, such that he earns praise and love of his fellow man, such a person has Sanctified G-d's Name and about him, Scripture writes, "You are My Servant Israel, through whom I will be glorified." [Yeshaya 49:3] I would like to share a true story related to this concept, involving Harold Willner, a member of the Baltimore community. It is a beautiful story illustrating how it is possible to make a Kiddush haShem in the most unlikely of circumstances.

Harold told me that he was flying from Boston to Vermont. As is required nowadays, Harold removed his shoes and put them in the container that goes through the metal detector. Harold then experienced the nightmare that everyone prays will not occur. Someone else at the other end of the conveyor belt mistakenly took Harold's shoes. Harold found a pair of shoes at the other side of the conveyor belt but the fellow who left those shoes was a size 7 and Mr. Willner could not fit into size 7 shoes. He was trying to catch a plane to Burlington Vermont without any shoes. He called over an agent from the TSA, who in turn called the head of security at the airport. They offered Harold a voucher for a new pair of shoes but he did not have time to look for a new pair of shoes. He would have missed his flight.

A woman who was also in the same line observed all that transpired. She saw a fellow with a suit and tie and no shoes. She told him that she felt very sorry for him and that she had a pair of slippers in her carry on which she offered to give to him. She took out a pair of pink slippers that were made to be worn with the slipper's tongue separating the big toe and the other toes of the foot. Harold Willner had no choice. He took the slippers and proceeded to walk through the airport with his suit, tie, yarmulke, and pink tongue slippers.

The plane was a commuter plane that required boarding by climbing up a set of portable steps. Harold's luck was that the slippers fell off his feet while ascending the staircase and fell to the ground. He had to go back down the staircase and put the slippers back on before climbing up the staircase again. Harold finally arrived at his seat on the plane feeling exasperated by the experience. A fellow who was on the plane with him and had witnessed the whole scene from the beginning told Harold, "I am amazed that throughout the whole ordeal you never lost your cool, you never became indignant, you never raised your voice. You acted with such civility that it astounds me! It is a credit to your religion." Come and see. One can be wearing a suit and tie and pink slippers and at that very moment, sanctify the Name of G-d by acting like a mensch.

People can be so uncivil, losing their temper and becoming abusive at the slightest occurrence, such that proper and appropriate behavior on our part stands out and makes a powerful impression, about which it can be said "You are My Servant Israel, through whom I will be glorified."

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

RavFrاند, Copyright © 2007 by Rabbi Yissocher Frand and Torah.org.

---

[www.matzav.com](http://www.matzav.com) or [www.torah.org/learning/drasha](http://www.torah.org/learning/drasha)  
Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

**Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky**  
**Parsha Parables - Stories & Anecdotes that Illuminate the Weekly Torah Portion and Holidays**  
**Parshas Emor - 25 Nisan 5771. Friday, April 29, 2011**

*Dedicated by Cindy and Yehuda Markovits in memory of Heshy Markovits R' Zvi ben R' Shmuel of blessed memory - 2 Iyar*

Just Execution

This week's Parshas Emor contains wide ranging content, from the sanctity of the (kehuna) priesthood to the joyous details of the laws of the (moadim) holidays. It concludes, however, on a gloomy note with the unprecedented story of a man, the product of a union between an Egyptian and a Jewish woman, who blasphemed G-d. The Torah tells us that "the son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name, and cursed (Hashem) and they brought him to Moses. And his mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri, of the tribe of Dan. And they put him in ward, that it might be declared unto them at the mouth of Hashem" (Leviticus 24:11). Rashi explains that Moshe knew

that the man had committed a capital crime; however he did not know how to exact the proper punishment.

But the Almighty does not just pronounce a verdict of death by stoning; He follows with a litany of laws regarding damages and assaults on life and property that are seemingly irrelevant to the case on hand, the cursing of G-d. "And if a man strikes down any human being he shall be put to death. And one who slays an animal shall pay for it [the value of] a life for the life [he took]. And a man who inflicts an injury upon his fellow man just as he did, so shall be done to him [namely, monetary value of a] fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. Just as he inflicted an injury upon a person, so shall it be inflicted upon him? And one who injures an animal shall pay for it. And one who strikes a person shall be put to death" (ibid 17-20).

How are these relatively mundane edicts relevant to the story of the blasphemer? Think about it. What is man vis-a-vis G-d? The difference between man and beast according to our sages is not eating, drinking or sleeping habits. It is the power of speech. The blasphemer used the greatest element of his constitution, speech, and used it to attack the Almighty. As G-d transcends any corporeal form, an attack on Him through speech should be considered a great act of revolution, perhaps even greater than idolatry. After all, idolatry may be an insult or a statement of non belief, but it is a statement of abandonment or unfaithfulness, not a direct assault on G-d. So the Torah is about to mete out a sentence for perhaps the greatest crime a mortal can commit against his Maker. Yet, before Hashem commands His nation to execute the blasphemer, He reviews the laws about human life and property. In explicating the punishment of the blasphemer, the Torah does not talk about the omnipotence of G-d nor does it even mention to us the gravity of the sin of cursing the Creator. Instead the Torah switches the topic and delineates the repercussions not only of inflicting damage upon the nefesh (soul) of a human but also against harming the nefesh of an animal. It exhorts the punishment for defiling property or causing bodily harm to any living thing. Why?

#### The Story

There is an apocryphal story told about the great Rav of Brisk, Lithuania, Rav Yehoshua Leib Diskin. It is said that every Friday evening, he had a custom. Before beginning his Shabbos meal he would review by heart the entire Tractate of Shabbos, the tome of the Talmud that contains 157 folios concerning the laws of Shabbos. Even for a genius like the great Rabbi, that took a bit of time, and one Shabbos when there were guests, it is said that his wife exhorted him, "The guest are hungry. It is not fair to make them wait while you review the entire Tractate. For this evening can you perhaps dispense with the custom?" The Rav agreed. However, he suddenly closed his eyes and his lips began to move; he was reviewing something quietly. "What are you doing?" asked the Rebbitzin.

Rav Diskin replied, "In order for me to dispense with the custom, I have to consider whether my observance of the custom was considered a vow. I am now reviewing Tractate Nedarim, the tome that deals with the laws of vows and undertakings!"

#### The Message

Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l explains: Hashem was about to direct His children to execute one of their own. The Torah cannot direct such a severe mission flippantly. Before the Torah tells Klal Yisrael to exact punishment, it reviews laws that will only enhance the value of the sanctity of life in the eyes of those charged with the mission of justice. Only after reviewing the laws that help us understand the value and sanctity of life can we end it. Only after hearing about the severity of harming a man or even an animal does the Torah direct capital punishment to the blasphemer.

Rav Feinstein notes that a dayan (judge) in a capital case has to have children, whereas an elderly judge who may have forgotten the pain of child rearing and the heartbreak of a child's loss is disqualified from ruling in a capital case!

In these turbulent times, it is important to note the sanctity of life, especially in the satisfaction of executing even what we may consider a just death.

© 2011 Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Yeshiva of South Shore | 1170 William Street | Hewlett | NY | 11557

---

From Rabbi Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com>  
reply-To rav-kook-list+owners@googlegroups.com  
To Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com>  
Subject [Rav Kook List]

#### Rav Kook List

#### Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

#### Emor: Agents of Holiness

The Talmud in Nedarim 32b describes the kohanim as sheluchei didan. The kohanim act as our agents or emissaries as they perform the Temple service.

Yet this idea - that the kohanim act as agents for the Jewish people - appears to violate the legal definition of the powers of a shaliach. An agent acts on behalf of the one sending him (the principal), executing his wishes. The agent cannot do that which the principal himself is incapable of doing. So how can the kohanim perform the Temple service on our behalf, when non-kohanim are not permitted to serve in the Beit HaMikdash?

#### Potential vs. Actual

The parashah opens with special directives for kohanim: "God spoke to Moses: Tell the kohanim, the sons of Aaron..." (Lev. 21:1). Yet the text appears repetitive - "the kohanim, the sons of Aaron." Do we not know that the kohanim are descended from Aaron?

These two terms - 'kohanim' and 'sons of Aaron' - indicate two different aspects of the special sanctity of kohanim. The first is an intrinsic holiness, passed down from father to son. The phrase "sons of Aaron" refers to this inherent sanctity.

The second aspect is an additional layer of holiness, one's actual functioning as a kohen. This aspect is designated by the term 'kohanim.' (The verb lechahein means 'to serve,' so the word 'kohanim' indicates their actual service.) Thus the term "sons of Aaron" refers to their inherited potential, while 'kohanim' refers to their realized state of priestly service.

#### The Chalal

Usually a kohen will have both potential and actual kohanic-holiness. Yet there are certain situations that allow us to distinguish between the two.

A kohen is forbidden to marry a divorced woman. Should he nonetheless marry a divorcee, his son falls under a special category. He is called a chalal, from the word chilul, 'to defile holiness.' Despite his lineage, a chalal may not serve in the Temple.

Yet if a chalal went ahead and offered a korban, his offerings are accepted after the fact (Maimonides, Hilchot Bi'at Mikdash 6:10). This is quite surprising. In general, a chalal has the legal status of a non-kohen. If a non-kohen brought an offering, his service would be disqualified. Yet the offerings of a chalal are accepted after the fact. Why is this? The distinction between potential and actual kohanic status, between "sons of Aaron" and 'kohanim,' allows us to understand the unusual status of a chalal. Due to the fact that he is the son of a divorcee, he has lost the realized sanctity of a functioning kohen. But he still retains the inherited sanctity of "sons of Aaron." This intrinsic sanctity cannot be

revoked. Therefore, while a chalal is not allowed to serve in the Temple, after the fact his offerings are accepted.

The Sages derived this ruling from Moses' blessing of the tribe of Levi: "May God bless his strength and favor the works of his hands" (Deut. 33:11). Even the works of those who are chulin, who have lost part of their kohanic-sanctity, are still acceptable to God (Kiddushin 66b). (That a chalal falls under the category of "the sons of Aaron" but not 'kohanim' is seen in the Midrash Halachah quoted by Rashi. "One might think that chalalim are included? Therefore it says, 'the kohanim'" - excluding chalalim from the special laws of kohanim.)

Our Agents

We may now understand the description of kohanim as sheluchei didan, 'our agents.' How can they be our emissaries in their Temple service when we ourselves are forbidden to perform this service?

In fact, the Torah speaks of the entire Jewish people as "a kingdom of kohanim" (Ex. 19:6). And Isaiah foresaw a future time in which "You will be called God's kohanim; they will speak of you as the ministers of our God" (Isaiah 61:6).

Non-kohanim may not serve in the Beit HaMikdash, for they lack the holiness of actual priesthood. Yet every Jew has a quality of potential kohanic-holiness. Because this inner holiness will be revealed in the future, the entire people of Israel are called 'God's kohanim.' And it is due to this potential holiness that the kohanim are able to serve as our agents in the Temple service.

Israel's Future Holiness

This understanding of the role of kohanim sheds a new light on the ceremony of birkat kohanim. The significance of their daily blessing is to awaken the latent kohanic-holiness that resides within the entire Jewish people. As the kohanim extend their arms to bless the people, they reach out to Israel's future state of holiness. Their outstretched arms - their zero'a netuyah - point to a future era, whose seeds ("zera") are planted in the present.

"Via the fixed sanctity of kohanim in the nation, the entire nation will come to be a complete 'kingdom of kohanim and a holy people'" (Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 61)

(Adapted from Shemuot HaRe'iyah, Emor (1930))

Comments and inquiries may be sent to: [mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com](mailto:mailto:RavKookList@gmail.com)

---

<http://www.torahinmotion.org>

A Thought for the Week with Rabbi Jay Kelman

### **A Thought for the Week with Rabbi Jay Kelman Parshat Emor - Diaspora Days**

"You shall count seven complete weeks after the day following the Shabbat from the day you brought the omer as a wave offering until the day after the seventh week when there will a total of fifty days" (23:15-16). The holiday of Shavuot marking the wheat harvest lacks its own independent date, its celebration being linked to Pesach. We tend to think of the linkage between the physical and spiritual freedom, the means and the end if you like. The purpose of the exodus was to receive the Torah and thus Shavuot is really the completion of Pesach. While this is undoubtedly true, nowhere is this to be found in the Torah itself. The Talmud was not even certain the exact date we received the Torah; it is really irrelevant anyway as that first covenant was broken with the building of the golden calf. The date we received the Torah that we observe today was Yom Kippur, not Shavuot. Shavuot in the Biblical text is purely an agricultural holiday, a one day pause in the middle of the busy summer season to express our gratitude to G-d.

The calendaric dependence of Shavuot on Pesach raises the question of why we in the Diaspora must observe a second day of Yom tov for Shavuot. As is well known the second day of Yom tov was instituted due

to the uncertainty over which day had been declared the first of the month (Rosh Chodesh). While it might have taken more than two weeks to find out this information - hence the need for an extra day of Pesach - seven weeks later all was known. In practice there was never any doubt as to which day was actually Shavuot and thus no need for a second day of Yom tov.

The whole notion of the second day of Yom tov in general has other anomalies. If we are going to be consistent we should have a second day of Yom Kippur as the Diaspora communities were, at the tenth of the month still unsure as to the exact day of Rosh Chodesh. And if Yom Kippur is only one day surely five days later there is no reason to have two days of Sukkot! Furthermore Rosh Hashanah is observed for two days even in Israel - it would be a misnomer to call it the "second day Yom-tov of the Diaspora". While individually we could perhaps offer answers to each one of these questions - it would be too difficult for two days of Yom Kippur for instance - the fact that there are more exceptions to the rule than the rule itself is quite strange. Surely the rule needs some re-examining. It should come as no surprise that one of the earliest innovations of the Reform movement was the abolishment of the second day of Yom -Tov. Why is it that the Halacha is so insistent on maintaining the second day?

Being in the midst of Yom Haatzmaut - we celebrated it on Thursday but the fifth of Iyar is not until Shabbat, a three day Yom Tov if you may - perhaps we can offer a "Zionistic" approach. When all is said and done what we have is the three pilgrim festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot having an extra day in the Diaspora whereas the Yamim Noraim - Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are celebrated on the same days both in Israel and abroad. It is Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot that celebrate our ties to the land of Israel . Chag haAviv, Chag HaKatzir and Chag HaAssif celebrate the agricultural cycle of the land of Israel . We perform the mitzvah of aliyah L'Regel , travelling to Jerusalem together with thousands of other Jews. They are the nationalistic holidays of Jewish people and as Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch points out they are the only ones mentioned in Sefer Devarim - the book about preparing to enter the land of Israel . It is as if Jews living in the Diaspora need an extra day to begin to appreciate the meaning of these days - because living outside of Israel we can not fully observe them. The extra day makes clear the qualitative distinction between life in Israel and life in exile.

The Yamim Noraim, on the other hand, are holidays that concentrate on our personal relationship to G-d, where we focus on self evaluation and improvement. In this need for Tehsuva there is no difference where we reside - Yom Kippur is Yom Kippur. While the Jewish people are one there is only one land of Israel . Shabbat Shalom .

Rabbi Kelman, in addition to his founder and leadership roles in Torah in Motion, teaches Ethics, Talmud and Rabbinics at the Community Hebrew Academy of Toronto.

---

From Jeffrey Gross <[jgross@torah.org](mailto:jgross@torah.org)>  
reply-To [neustadt@torah.org](mailto:neustadt@torah.org), [genesis@torah.org](mailto:genesis@torah.org)  
To [weekly-halacha@torah.org](mailto:weekly-halacha@torah.org)  
Subject Weekly Halacha - Parshas Terumah  
by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt ([dneustadt@cordetroit.com](mailto:dneustadt@cordetroit.com))  
Yoshev Rosh - Vaad HaRabanim of Detroit

**by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt**

**Emor Halachah**

*Being that this is a time of mourning for the talmidim of Rabbi Akiva who did not – on their level - show sufficient respect for each other,*

*this is the time of the year when we can all strengthen ourselves in this sensitive area. The following Discussion focuses on halachic issues of bein adam l'chaveiro:*

Question: What are the halachos regarding the mitzvah min ha-Torah of rising for an older person — mipnei seivah takum?

Discussion: The Torah commands that one give honor to any from Jew — man or woman<sup>1</sup> — over the age of seventy<sup>2</sup> by rising to one's full height when the older person comes within four amos (approximately 6-8 feet),<sup>3</sup> until the older person leaves the area of his four amos.<sup>4</sup> Although the older person is not necessarily a learned or distinguished person, we still recognize and pay tribute to him "because in his great number of years he has seen and recognized a bit of the workings of Hashem and His wonders, and he is thus worthy of honor."<sup>5</sup>

Although the halachah clearly obligates one to rise to his full height when honoring an older person, it is true that many people are not careful to fulfill this mitzvah properly and rise only slightly when an older person approaches. While some poskim attempt to justify this custom on halachic grounds,<sup>6</sup> it does not change the basic halachah that obligates one to stand fully in order to perform this mitzvah properly.

Question: Under which circumstances is one exempt from fulfilling the mitzvah of mipnei seivah takum?

Discussion: In the following cases the mitzvah of mipnei seivah takum, which requires one to rise to his full height, does not apply. Instead, the mitzvah is merely to show some measure of respect, such as rising slightly from one's seat:

\* When the "younger" person is also over seventy.<sup>7</sup>

\* When the younger person is a greater talmid chacham than the older person.<sup>8</sup>

\* When the younger person is an employee and standing up will require wasting his employer's time.<sup>9</sup>

\* When the older person specifically forgoes the honor that is due to him.<sup>10</sup>

\* When the younger person is in the middle of davening and standing will disturb his kavanah.<sup>11</sup>

\* When the younger person is ill, or a mourner during shivah.<sup>12</sup>

Question: How mandatory is Chazal's advisory that a guest should not change his customary lodging place?

Discussion: Rashi<sup>13</sup> explains that there are two reasons behind this advisory:

\* Switching lodgings discredits the guest, since he will be considered hard to please or disreputable in some way.

\* Switching lodgings harms the host's reputation, since it gives the impression that his lodgings were unsatisfactory.<sup>14</sup>

If a guest has a bona fide reason to change his lodging place, however, the halachah will not restrict him from doing so. For example, if a guest customarily lodged at a certain home, but came to town for a simchah and wants to stay at the home of the ba'al simchah, that would be permitted. If a guest customarily lodged at a certain home, but upon his return visit the original host was out of town or indisposed, or no longer had the space for guests, the halachic advisory would not apply and the guest could stay elsewhere.<sup>15</sup>

Question: Reuven, whose time is precious, asks Shimon for his opinion about a speaker whose lecture Reuven is thinking of attending. Is it permitted for Shimon, who has a negative opinion of the speaker's abilities, to advise Reuven that, in his opinion, he should not attend the lecture? If Reuven presses Shimon for a reason, may Shimon make specific remarks about the speaker, e.g., "he is boring," "he doesn't present any new ideas," etc.?

Discussion: The Chafetz Chayim rules that it is prohibited to ridicule a Torah lecture even if it is true that the delivery was poor or that the content was lacking depth. By ridiculing the lecture, serious harm can result to the reputation and effectiveness of the speaker. Sometimes a monetary

loss can result. This action, therefore, is prohibited and is considered lashon ha-ra.<sup>16</sup>

The Chafetz Chayim does not, however, discuss a situation such as the one described above. Reuven honestly needs to know if it is worth his time to attend the lecture. The information he is seeking from Shimon is pertinent to a decision he must make. Generally, the halachah is that one may, and should, speak the truth about another when beneficial information is requested. Since Reuven deems this information to be beneficial to him, it seems that it is permitted for Shimon to tell Reuven that, in his opinion, there is no good reason for Reuven to attend the lecture. Although Shimon would not be allowed to ridicule or belittle the speaker himself, he would be permitted to advise Reuven that it may not be beneficial for him to attend. We must, however, stress several points:

\* Although Shimon may be permitted to divulge this information, Reuven should not accept the information as the absolute truth. Reuven may only be suspicious enough to guard himself.

\* Shimon should remember that what may seem boring to him, may very well be interesting and enlightening to Reuven, etc.

\* Shimon should voice his opinion only if he has no ulterior motive, e.g., a grudge against the speaker, jealousy of the speaker, etc.

Question: Can one fulfill mitzvas nichum aveilim over the telephone?

Discussion: The Rambam<sup>17</sup> says that there are two facets to mitzvas nichum aveilim: The first is to comfort the mourners who are distraught over the death of their loved one, and this is done by expressing one's sympathies and condolences. A personal visit to a house of mourning is a show of respect and a source of comfort to the mourners in their time of sorrow.<sup>18</sup>

The second part of the mitzvah is for the sake of the deceased. By visiting the home of the deceased during the Shivah period and consoling the mourners who are sitting there, one is performing a chesed with the soul of the departed individual.<sup>19</sup> [It is possible that the text recited in the house of mourning is worded in the plural—ha-makom yenachem eschem—even when consoling a single mourner, because one is consoling the soul of the deceased as well as the mourner himself.<sup>20</sup>]

Rav M. Feinstein rules<sup>21</sup> that while it is possible to console a mourner over the telephone, it is not possible to do chesed with the soul of the deceased unless one actually comes to the house of mourning. Nor does one accord the full honor due a mourner through a mere phone call.<sup>22</sup> Thus, if one can, he must be menachem avel in person.<sup>23</sup> If, however, he truly cannot come in person, he should still call the mourner on the phone to console him and thereby fulfill at least part of the mitzvah.

The mourner may come to the phone and accept a caller's words of condolence. He may not, however, speak about other matters or ask about the welfare of the caller, even if the caller is a child or close relative.<sup>24</sup>

1 Sefer Chasidim 578, quoted by Beis Yehudah, vol. 1, Y.D. 28; Chida (Bris Olam on Sefer Chasidim); Minchas Chinuch 257:3. Yechaveh Da'as 3:72. See, however, Ben Ish Chai, Ki Seitzei 16, who quotes the Arizal who seems to hold that one need not rise for an older woman.

2 According to Kabbalah, the mitzvah begins at age 60, and several poskim rule that one should follow this opinion; see Sho'el u'Meishiv 3, 1-110; Minchas Chinuch 257:9 and Ben Ish Chai, Ki-Seitzei 12.

3 Y.D. 255:1 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 2, 4. When in doubt whether or not the individual is seventy years old, one should be stringent and rise; Tosafos Chayim on Chayei Adam 69:2; Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Mevakshei Torah, vol. 4, pg. 249).

4 Ruling of Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Mevakshei Torah, vol. 4, pg. 249).

5 Sefer ha-Chinuch 257.

6 See Meiri, Kiddushin 32b, s.v. zaken, who writes that the mitzvah of mipnei seivah takum (unlike standing up for a talmid chacham) does not require one to rise to his full height. See also Teshuvos Kenesses Yechezkel 7 and Aruch ha-Shulchan 244:10-12, who attempt to justify the prevalent custom.

- 7 Y.D. 244:8.  
 8 Y.D. 244:7.  
 9 Y.D. 244:5.  
 10 See Teshuvos Radvaz 8-167, who rules that even when the older person forgoes his honor, one should still respect him by rising slightly. Harav Y.S. Elyashiv, however, rules that this is unnecessary (Mevakshei Torah, vol. 4, pg. 249).  
 11 Harav Y.S. Elyashiv (Mevakshei Torah, vol. 4, pg. 250).  
 12 Rama, Y.D. 376:1. On Tishah b'Av, too, this mitzvah does not apply; Rav Akiva Eiger, ibid. See Badei ha-Shulchan, ibid.  
 13 Arachin 16b.  
 14 Accordingly, one should not change even from one Jewish-owned hotel to another ? unless he has a bona fide reason for doing so ? as it discredits the hotel where he stayed.  
 15 See Piskei Teshuvos 170:6, quoting Ohalecha b'Amisecha.  
 16 Chafetz Chayim, Lashon ha-Ra, 2:12.  
 17 Hilchos Avel 14:7.  
 18 Based on the Talmud (Moed Katan 21b) which quotes Rabbi Akiva's expression of gratitude to the multitudes of people who came to console him. See Ahavas Chesed 3:5.  
 19 Based on the concept brought in the Talmud (Shabbos 152a, quoted by Rambam Hilchos Avel 13:4) that ten people should sit shivah in the house of the deceased even if the deceased left no mourners behind. One explanation for this is given by the Shibulei ha-Leket, quoted in Badei ha-Shulchan, Y.D. 376:3, biurim, s.v. meis.  
 20 Divrei Sofrim, Y.D. 376, Eimek Davr 9).  
 21 Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:40-11.  
 22 It can be argued, however, that a phone call from an distinguished person can be considered as showing honor to the mourners.  
 23 See also Igros Pachad Yitzchak 33, for another reason why one does not fulfill the mitzvah of nichum aveilim properly through the telephone.  
 24 Igros Moshe, O.C. 4:40-11.

Weekly-Halacha, Weekly Halacha, Copyright © 2010 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org.  
 Rabbi Neustadt is the Yoshev Rosh of the Vaad Harabbonim of Detroit and the Av Beis Din of the Beis Din Tzedek of Detroit. He could be reached at [dneustadt@cordetroit.com](mailto:dneustadt@cordetroit.com)

From Yeshiva.org.il <subscribe@yeshiva.org.il>  
 reply-To subscribe@yeshiva.org.il  
 By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

### More on Shatnez Laws By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

In parshas Emor, we study about the unique role that the kohanim represented in Klal Yisrael. One of the unusual aspects of this role is that they wore the bigdei kehunah, which contained shatnez. Thus, that which otherwise would be prohibited, in this instance became a mitzvah. This provides an opportunity to continue our discussion of last week about the laws of shatnez, and yet still discuss a halachic theme related to the parsha.

Question #1:  
 Does wool felt sewn to linen present a shatnez concern?

Question #2:  
 What are reprocessed fibers, and do they present a shatnez problem?

Question #3:  
 Does a "sheepskin" blanket present a potential shatnez concern?

In the previous article, we discovered that the prohibition of shatnez exists only if the garment is made from a blend of sheep's wool and linen, but that wool of other species, such as camel, llama, rabbit, or goat

is not shatnez. Thus, a garment made of a blend of linen and either mohair or cashmere is not shatnez, since neither mohair nor cashmere are made from sheep's wool, but from the hair of goats!

At this point, I want to mention an e-mail I received in response: "You mentioned in the shatnez article that linen and non sheep wool such as cashmere or mohair are not an issue. "I would strongly qualify that such a statement is true halachically but is not accurate in today's textile world!! Sheep wool is much cheaper than cashmere and mohair and companies almost always blend them together. For advertising purposes, they often write ALL CASHMERE or ALL MOHAIR in big letters, but write "with wool" (in small letters) to fool consumers -- but it is usually mostly sheep wool and is shatnez! "Even if it would be a 100% cashmere coat, (which, by the way, costs over \$2000) it still needs checking because labels never include the ingredients of internal components which could be both wool and/or linen that are not botul!! "The consensus among the rabbonim in the vaad shatnez both here and in chutz L'aaretz is to tell people that cashmere, mohair, alpaca (camel) and angora (rabbit or goat) wool does require checking as this advice prevents mistakes. "Kol Tuv!"

Rav Yaakov Gurwitz  
 "Mishmeret Nosson" Shatnez Laboratories  
 Yerushalayim  
 rygur38@hotmail.com  
 Tel: 0526-334417

I now return to our article:  
 Another fact that we learned is that when a thread is spun from a mix of fibers, the halachic status is determined by what composes most of the fiber content, and ignores the existence of other fibers inside the thread. The minority is halachically bateil, or nullified, to the majority fiber content in the thread. Thus, threads spun from a mix of mostly cotton fiber with some linen fiber are considered cotton, and can be used lichatchilah in a woolen garment. Similarly, a garment consisting of threads made of a blend of mohair that is spun with some sheep's wool fiber, which is woven or sewn with linen threads, is not shatnez. However, a thread of linen that is woven or otherwise attached into a woolen garment renders the garment shatnez, and there is no bitul and vice versa, a single sheep's wool thread in a linen garment renders the entire garment shatnez.

And now for some new "material":

A thread is made of fiber that is combed and then spun. However, not all material is made this way. For example, wool felt, a material often used in shoulderpads, underarm material, the neck backing of suits, and other places that require sturdiness or strengthening, is made of combed wool that is pressed, but not spun into thread. Is there any difference in regard to the laws of shatnez between spun wool thread and pressed wool felt?

Many authorities contend that the Torah-level prohibition of shatnez applies only to spun threads, but not to fiber or material that was never spun (Tosafos, Niddah 61b s.v. Shu'a). Following this approach, wool felt sewn with linen thread is shatnez only miderabbanan (on a Rabbinic level).

The Shach (300:1) concludes that this approach is accepted by most authorities, and that, furthermore, this is prohibited only in the instance of soft material. Thus, he concludes that stiff material made of wool felt combined with linen is not shatnez, even miderabbanan.

According to the Shach, then, a non-wool suit with shoulderpads made of wool felt sewn with linen thread is shatnez, but only miderabbanan. One would still need to replace the linen thread, the shoulderpad, or both to remove the shatnez from the garment.

Another application of this halachah: An ornament on a garment that should be shatnez-free was attached to a linen fabric that was in turn attached to a wool felt backing. The ornament itself is shatnez, albeit according to the Shach only miderabbanan. The ornament can be removed or replaced and thereby make the garment shatnez-free.

Another interesting case in which a garment may contain tufts of wool and linen threads and not be shatnez is if one takes a sheepskin (occasionally used as a very warm blanket) containing sheep's hair, which is raw wool, and sews it with linen thread. It does not present a Torah-level prohibition of shatnez, because the wool has not been processed to the necessary stage to pose a problem.

#### Reprocessed Fibers

Many garments, particularly quilts and other bedding, contain "reprocessed fibers," which is a nice way of saying that used clothes (also known as shmattes) were chopped up and used as stuffing. One can never know for certain what material is included in the reprocessed fibers. Are they automatically prohibited because of shatnez?

This actually depends on two factors:

Are the "reprocessed fibers" actual threads?

Are they sewn or glued into the garment or simply pressed together and inserted.

If the reprocessed fibers are threads and are sewn or glued into the material, the entire garment may be shatnez, at least according to the Rambam, because the "reprocessed" material includes threads of wool and threads of linen that have both been sewn into the same garment. If there are linen and woolen threads sewn together at any point, it is shatnez according to all opinions. If the wool and linen does not touch, but are in different parts of the garment, then the garment is shatnez according to the Rambam, but not according to the Rash. Rav Chayim Kaniyevski quotes in the name of the Chazon Ish that one could permit this clothing on the basis of a sefek sefeika: It is possible that this garment does not contain both wool and linen, and even if it does contain both, the stitching may not have attached the wool to linen, in which case it is permitted according to most authorities (Derech Emunah, Hilchos Kilayim, 10:2 Biurei Halacha s.v. Levadim). Although he concludes that a G-d-fearing person should avoid use of this heter, he concludes that one may use a mattress stuffed with reprocessed fiber, since lying on shatnez is permitted min haTorah, and is prohibited miderabbanan only on soft items. The same rationale permits using baseball gloves, which are also usually stuffed with reprocessed fibers, since the rawhide surface of a baseball glove does not provide any warmth to the hand. Therefore, even yarei shamayim baseball players may continue to use their gloves.

We will continue our discussion on Shatnez in a future article.

---