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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON EMOR - 5772

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**Tonight - Friday night is the 35th day which is five weeks of the Omer.**

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From: owner-weeklydt@torahweb2.org on behalf of TorahWeb.org  
[torahweb@torahweb.org] Sent: Thursday, May 11, 2006 10:47 PM  
To: weeklydt@torahweb2.org Subject: Rabbi Mayer Twersky -  
Shabbos

### **Rabbi Mayer Twersky Shabbos**

Shabbos is generally translated and defined as [a day of] rest. It would appear, however, that Shabbos is more accurately rendered as [a day of] cessation. Thus the Torah employs the root shabbos in the causative construct to denote the destruction of chametz on the eve of Pesach. "ach bayom harishon tashbisu se'or mibatechem" (Shemos 12:15). Similarly the navi describes the cessation of the manna as "vayishbos haman" (Yehoshua 5:12). In light of these examples, the term cessation rather than rest accurately captures the meaning of Shabbos. And thus Shabbos should be understood as [a day of] cessation, not rest.

I do not mean to be pedantic about semantics. There is a crucial, substantive issue at stake. The English word rest conjures in our minds relaxation and vacation. Shabbos is thus seen as a vacation day from work, to relax and socialize. In a word, Shabbos is the Jewish weekend.

Cessation, on the other hand, does not trigger such associations. Shabbos as a day of cessation denotes not rest, but respite. Shabbos is a day of respite from mundane burdens and worries. "Six days you shall

work and accomplish all your labor -"when Shabbos arrives it should be in your eyes as though all labors were completed that you should not think about labor" (Rashi Shemos 20:9, quoting Mechilta). Shabbos is a time when we are relieved of the yoke of earning a livelihood (ol haparnosoh) to focus on Torah

"Shabbos and yomim tovim were given just for the study of Torah" (Yerushalmi Shabbos 15:3, quoted by Rav Kehati). Shabbos is a day of redemption [1] from the mundane in order to focus on kedusha. "As the verse says, 'six days you shall work and the seventh day is Shabbos that you should desist from your work and your preoccupation should be entirely for Hashem your God'" (Seforno Vayikra 23:2).

Too often we shortchange ourselves and view Shabbos as a day of rest and relaxation rather than respite and redemption. This erroneous mindset is reflected in our Shabbos attire. Dressing in casual attire on Shabbos is altogether too common. Such informality is totally consistent with rest and vacation (after all, a sweater and open collar are more comfortable than a suit and tie), but entirely inconsistent with kedushas Shabbos. The dignity of a wedding and bar mitzvah celebration demands dress attire. The importance of a business meeting often warrants the same. Do the dignity and importance of Shabbos demand any less?

Do we use or lose our time on Shabbos? Do we sanctify ourselves on this day of respite by singing zemiros and saying divrei Torah at the Shabbos table or do we amuse ourselves on a day of rest with hours of idle table talk? Is Shabbos for us truly a day of mikra kodesh (convocation of kedushah) when we come to shul thrice to daven (see Ramban Vayikra 23:2) and devote time to Talmud Torah or is it a day of relaxation when we engage in a slumberous marathon?

haRachaman hu yanchileinu yom shekulo Shabbos umenucha lechayey olamim.

[1] According to Chassidic custom, tefilas Mincha on erev Shabbos begins with chapter 107 in Tehillim which features the verse "yomru go-alei Hashem asher ge-alam miyad tzar" ("Those redeemed by Hashem, whom he has redeemed from the hands of an adversary ought to say..."). The reason for saying this chapter is because when Shabbos arrives we are all go-alei Hashem, redeemed by Hashem.

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### **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 Email this page Print this page  
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.

## **The Power of Speech Parashat Emor Rabbi Meir Goldwicht**

The Shiur was given on Iyar 5766 Written by the rabbi  
Dedicated to the memory of Yosef ben Yaakov

In parashat Emor, the Torah relates the incident of the mekalel. The mekalel was the son of an Egyptian father and a Jewish mother from the tribe of Dan, and as a result he wished to make his home in the camp of Dan, claiming that he was their fellow tribesman even though his father was Egyptian. The tribe of Dan responded that what determines one's tribe is one's father, as it says, "Ish al diglo l'veit avotam." When they came before Moshe Rabbeinu for a *din torah*, he ruled that the man had no connection to the tribe of Dan and therefore had no right to live there. Displeased with this ruling, the mekalel cursed Moshe Rabbeinu; unsure of the punishment for the mekalel, Moshe Rabbeinu had him imprisoned until Hashem would reveal to Moshe the proper punishment, *skilah*. Immediately after Hashem reveals the proper punishment, the Torah teaches the laws of damages – *ayin tachat ayin, shen tachat shen* – essentially repeating laws we already know from parashat Mishpatim. At the conclusion of these laws, the Torah repeats, "And Moshe told B'nei Yisrael to remove the mekalel from the camp and to stone him." Why does the Torah interrupt the parasha of the mekalel with the laws of damages, especially considering the fact that we already know these laws from parashat Mishpatim? We never find anything like this – in the middle of discussing one topic, the Torah "takes a break," only to return several *pesukim* later to the original topic! We must also question why the *din* of the mekalel appears in sefer VaYikra instead of in sefer BaMidbar, like all of the other incidents that took place over the forty years B'nei Yisrael traversed the desert. For example, the *mekoshesh eitzim*, which took place on the very first Shabbat after B'nei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, belongs in sefer Shemot, but because of the nature of sefer BaMidbar it was placed there instead. Why, then, does the mekalel appear at the end of VaYikra instead of BaMidbar?

To answer these questions, we must enter a very interesting *sugya*: the *sugya* of *dibbur*. *Dibbur* is not just movement of the lips that facilitates interpersonal communication. *Dibbur* is a reflection of one's thoughts. The Rambam rules in the third perek of *Hilchot Terumot* that if a person had intent to say *terumah* but said *ma'aser* instead, or *olah* but said *shelamim* instead, his words have no validity until his *dibbur* matches his thoughts. Shlomo HaMelech, in *Shir HaShirim*, refers to the *dibbur* of Knesset Yisrael as "*umidbarech naveh*," comparing it to a *midbar*. Through proper speech you can turn a *midbar* into a *yishuv*; conversely, through improper speech you can turn a *yishuv* into a *midbar*. In *Yechezkel* (20:35), the *galut* is referred to as "*midbar ha'amim*," because this is where HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to bring us to the *brit kerutah bisfatayim*, to teach us to use our *dibbur* properly. The power of *dibbur* is illustrated further by Chazal, who tell us that it is forbidden to "open one's mouth to the Satan," as we learn from Avraham Avinu – even though as far as he knew, he would be returning from the Akeidah alone, the Torah tells us that he said to his servants, "And we will bow and we will return," so as not to open his mouth to the Satan. The power of a *tzaddik's* speech is also demonstrated in the *mishnah* in *Berachot* 5:5: A *tzaddik* can tell who will live and who will die based on whether his *tefillah* for that person flowed smoothly. The *Sefer HaChinuch* writes that one who uses his speech improperly is worse than an animal, because it is the ability to speak and to express one's thoughts through speech that distinguishes us from the animals. The power of *dibbur* is tremendous in its ability to build and to save, but also to destroy.

Sefer VaYikra deals with all the different types of *kedushah* that exist: *kedushat ha'adam* (*tumah* and *taharah*); *kedushat hazman* (the *yomim tovim*); *kedushat ha'aretz* (*shemittah* and *yovel*). With the parasha of the mekalel, the Torah teaches us that the key to all *kedushah* is *kedushat hapeh*, proper *dibbur*. This is also the reason why the Torah reviews the laws of damages within the parasha of the mekalel, to teach us that the

destruction we can wreak with our mouths is no less than that which we can cause with a gun or a rock. As clear as it is that you can murder someone with a gun, it must be just as clear that you can murder someone with your dibbur as well. How amazing is it, then, that the Torah juxtaposes Moshe's punishment of not being able to enter Eretz Yisrael after hitting the rock instead of speaking to it to Moshe's request to pass through the land of Edom. The king of Edom refuses to let Moshe and B'nei Yisrael pass through his land, even threatening war. Why was he so opposed? Essentially, Moshe Rabbeinu was telling the king of Edom that the two of them represented Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov promised to meet Eisav in Seir (see Bereishit 33:14). Moshe wanted to fulfill the promise of Yaakov to Eisav. The king of Edom's response was that if Moshe really represented Yaakov, he would have used the power of Yaakov, of "hakol kol Yaakov," in dealing with the rock. Instead, Moshe used the power of Eisav, of "hayadayim y'dei Eisav." If so, the king of Edom was prepared to confront them in battle, since his power through Eisav was stronger than their power through Eisav. This is the connection between Moshe's hitting of the rock and the king of Edom's refusal to let B'nei Yisrael pass through his land. During these special days in which we find ourselves, one of the ways we must improve ourselves is by working on developing proper speech. We must become more conscious of how we speak with our parents, our wives, our children, and our friends. Through proper speech we can create worlds. It is not for no reason that Shlomo HaMelech teaches us, "Mavet v'chayim b'yad lashon" (Mishlei 18:21).

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

**Jerusalem Post :: Monday, May 7, 2012**  
**IT IS SOMEONE ELSE'S FAULT :: Rabbi Berel Wein**

The tendency to always blame someone else for one's own shortcomings is a well-known and well-practiced human trait. In our current society, where this trait has been taken to new heights of absurdity, the criminal is never guilty. Rather, it is the societal conditions that exist that force the criminal to behave as he or she does that is to blame. It is the abused and not the abuser that is held up to scrutiny and judgment.

In this Orwellian world the aggressor is to be reasoned with while the nation threatened by that aggressor is portrayed as the obstacle to world peace if it dares take preventative self-defensive action. It is especially true of the ideologues amongst us. They exploit every situation of their own making as reason to cast blame and fault upon others - especially on those who do not particularly agree with the ideals espoused by those who are truly to blame.

Hitler was able to blame all of Germany's inter-war ills on the Jews when much of the blame was the fault of the violence of his own thugs and party. The Soviet Union was expert in blaming the West and anyone else, including the Jews and the nascent Jewish state of Israel for all of the ills of the world while never really dealing with or admitting its own obvious murderous failures.

And the Arab world is the champion at blaming the mere existence of the State of Israel for all of the dysfunction, oppression, corruption and poverty that marks its societies and governments. And in the United States, all of the ills and problems of the "ninety-nine percent" are laid at

the doorstep of the "one-percent." It is wonderful to have someone else to blame for all of one's own shortcomings.

A woeful example of this tendency to blame others for one's own failings occurred here in Israel recently. At a Yom Hashoah program at an elite secular high school here, a Holocaust survivor was mocked and derided by a number of rowdy students present in the audience. This was truly a shocking and sad occurrence to take place at a Jewish school in the Jewish state.

However what made it really a disgusting event in my mind was that the principal of the school, a Peace Now fellow traveller, explained and justified the otherwise apparently inexcusable conduct of the students by declaring that they were driven to it by the policies of the present Israeli government in condoning the "occupation" and recognizing the legitimacy of the settlements built in Judea and Samaria over the past forty years. Talk about gall!

Instead of taking a hard look at the education being taught in his school and attempting to determine the fault inherent in a school that would allow its students to behave in such a woeful fashion, he plays the blame game. He espouses what the peaceniks in this country say, that all problems that exist in Israeli society are the fault of the settlements and the intransigence of all of the governments of Israel over the past decade to give in to all of the demands of the Palestinians - demands that would certainly spell the demise of the Jewish state. But that is the way the game is played - it is never my or our fault. It is always someone else's fault, especially when that someone does not agree with the political or religious wisdom and policies of the accuser, who is really the guilty party in the matter.

Sadly, this is true in the religious world where all of its problems and failures are always directed to outside forces - the secular government, Zionism itself, the Internet, etc. The rabbis of the Talmud always encouraged introspection as the first course of action when faced with a problem or a difficult situation. But in today's society, the automatic response to difficulties and failures is to look outside and blame others. There is a comfort in victimhood that allows this shirking of responsibility to become societally acceptable. The Palestinians have perfected this act and the religious Jewish world - at least mainly its Charedi element - is not far behind in its retention of cherished victimhood.

Many parents excuse the failures and meager educational accomplishments of their children to teachers and the school while the teachers and the school point the finger of blame at the home and the parents. There may be an element of truth in criticizing others for causing one's failures but that in no way allows one to look away from introspection and soul-searching.

Shabat shalom

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

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

We can all agree that the priestly family of Aharon has always had a special rank and position within the Jewish people. Having been chosen to represent God to the Jewish people and the Jewish people to God, so to speak, they had a decisive role of influence within Jewish life.

Because of this the Torah held them to a higher standard of pedigree and behavior than the rest of the Jewish people.

The prophet taught us that the priest was to resemble an angel of God in his knowledge and observance of Torah commandments and values.

Thus the special laws for the priests regarding marriage, divorce and pedigree that appear in this week's were also intended to influence the

rest of the Jewish people even though they, not being from the family of Aharon, were not bound by them.

The values of marriage, probity in personal relationships, pedigree and family were all indirectly strengthened throughout the Jewish nation by the special laws that were given to the priestly family. The priest was always meant to serve as an example, a role model for all of Israel. In essence this was his true spiritual role while his officiating at the Temple services was his day job, so to speak.

We can also understand why the individual priest spent relatively little time at the Temple throughout the year but was rather occupied as the teacher of other Jews, through actual educational methodology and, just as importantly, by personal example.

During both First and Second Temple times the priests were the pivotal force in Jewish life, perhaps even more so than the kings and rulers of the nation. The priestly clan saved the Jewish people from national and moral destruction a number of times. Yet, at other times they were the catalyst for the people's abandonment of Torah and Jewish tradition.

The Talmud lists for us the names of families from Second Temple times who were to be eternally remembered positively because of their Torah true behavior. And the names of those families of priests who were to be remembered negatively, due to their unseemly practices and behavior, were also recorded. Many of the laws and duties regarding the priests remained valid and in force even after the destruction of the Second Temple.

The Talmud ordained that the priests were to continue to receive special honors and recognition from the Jewish people. The priestly blessings became the focal point of the prayer services and the honors due the priest were constantly strengthened in the long night of our exile. The priest was seen as our living personal connection to our past Temple glories and to our future redemption.

In our current world there are a number of study groups throughout the Jewish world, especially here in Israel, which concentrate upon the study of the laws and procedures of the priestly duties vis-a-vis the Temple services. It is no wonder therefore that the priests of Israel are proudly zealous in preserving their lineage and the special place that they occupy in Jewish life, Shabat shalom

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from: Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org

reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org

subject: Parsha - Shabbat Shalom from the OU

**Orthodox Union / www.ou.org**

**Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

**Eternity and Mortality**

Our parsha begins with a restriction on the people for whom a cohen may become tamei, a word usually translated as "defiled, impure, ceremonially unclean." A priest may not touch or be under the same roof as a dead body. He must remain aloof from close contact with the dead, with the exception of a close relative, defined in our parsha as a wife, a mother or father, son or daughter, brother or unmarried sister. The law for the cohen gadol, High Priest, is stricter still. He may not allow himself to become ceremonially unclean even for a close relative, though both he and an ordinary priest may do so for a meit mitzvah, that is, one who has no one else to attend to his funeral. Here the basic requirement of human dignity overrides the priestly imperative of purity.

These laws, together with many others in Vayikra and Bemidbar – especially the rite of the Red Heifer, used to cleanse those who had come into contact with the dead – are hard for us to understand nowadays.

They already were in the days of the sages. Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai is famous for saying to his students, "It is not that death defiles nor that the waters [of the Red Heifer] purify. Rather, God says, I have ordained

a statute and issued a decree, and you have no permission to transgress it." The implication seems to be that the rules have no logic. They are simply Divine commands.

They are indeed perplexing. Death defiles. But so does childbirth (Lev. 12). The strange cluster of phenomena known as tsaraat, usually translated as leprosy, coincides with no known illness since it is a condition that can affect not only a person but also garments and the walls of a house (Lev. 13-14). We know of no medical condition to which this corresponds.

Then, in our parsha, there is the exclusion from service in the Sanctuary of a cohen who had a physical blemish – someone who was blind or lame, had a deformed nose or misshapen limb, a crippled leg or hand, a hunchback or a dwarf (Lev. 21: 16-21). Why so? Such an exclusion seems to fly in the face of the principle that "The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16: 7). Why should outward appearance affect whether you may or may not serve as a priest in the house of God? Yet these decrees do have an underlying logic. To understand them we have first to understand the concept of the holy.

God is beyond space and time, yet God created space and time as well as the physical entities that occupy space and time. God is therefore "concealed." The Hebrew word for universe, olam, comes from the same Hebrew root as ne'elam, "hidden." As the mystics put it: creation involved tzimtzum, divine self-effacement, for without it neither the universe nor we could exist. At every point, the infinite would obliterate the finite.

Yet if God was completely and permanently hidden from the physical world, it would be as if He were absent. From a human perspective there would be no difference between an unknowable God and a non-existent God. Therefore God established the holy as the point at which the Eternal enters time and the Infinite enters space. Holy time is Shabbat. Holy space was the Tabernacle, and later, the Temple.

God's eternity stands in the sharpest possible contrast to our mortality. All that lives will one day die. All that is physical will one day erode and cease to be. Even the sun, and the universe itself, will eventually become extinct. Hence the extreme delicacy and danger of the Tabernacle or Temple, the point at which That-which-is-beyond-time-and-space enters time and space. Like matter and anti-matter, the combination of the purely spiritual and the unmistakably physical is explosive and must be guarded against. Just as a highly sensitive experiment has to be conducted without the slightest contamination, so the holy space had to be kept free of conditions that bespoke mortality.

Tumah should therefore not be thought of as "defilement," as if there were something wrong or sinful about it. Tumah is about mortality. Death bespeaks mortality, but so too does birth. A skin disease like tsaraat makes us vividly aware of the body. So does an unusual physical attribute like a misshapen limb. Even mould on a garment or the wall of a house is a symptom of physical decay. There is nothing wrong about any of these things but they focus our attention on the physical and are therefore incompatible with the holy space of the Tabernacle, dedicated to the presence of the non-physical, the Eternal Infinite that never dies or decays.

There is a graphic example of this at the beginning of the book of Job. In a series of blows, Job loses everything: his flocks, his herds, his children. Yet his faith remains intact. Satan then proposes subjecting Job to an even greater trial, covering his body with sores (Job 1-2). The logic of this seems absurd. How can a skin disease be a greater trial of faith than losing your children? It isn't. But what the book is saying is that when your body is afflicted, it can be hard, even impossible, to focus on spirituality. This has nothing to do with ultimate truth and everything to do with the human mind. As Maimonides said, you cannot give your mind to meditating on truth when you are hungry or thirsty, homeless or sick (Guide for the Perplexed 3: 27).

The biblical scholar James Kugel recently published a book, *In the Valley of the Shadow*, about his experience of cancer. Told by the doctors that, in all probability, he had no more than two years of life left (thankfully, he was in fact cured), he describes the experience of suddenly learning of the imminence of death. He says, "the background music stopped." By "background music" he meant the sense of being part of the flow of life. We all know we will one day die, but for the most part we feel part of life and of time that will go on for ever (Plato famously described time as a moving image of eternity). It is consciousness of death that detaches us from this sense, separating us from the rest of life as if by a screen.

Kugel also writes, "Most people, when they see someone ravaged by chemotherapy, just tend to keep their distance." He quotes Psalm 38:12, "My friends and companions stand back at the sight of my affliction; even those closest to me keep their distance." Although the physical reactions to chemotherapy are quite different from a skin disease or a bodily abnormality, they tend to generate the same feeling in others, part of which has to do with the thought "This could happen to me." They remind us of the "thousand natural shocks that flesh is heir to."

This is the logic – if logic is the right word – of Tumah. It has nothing to do with rationality and everything to do with emotion (Recall Pascal's remark that "the heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing"). Tumah does not mean defilement. It means that which distracts from eternity and infinity by making us forcibly aware of mortality, of the fact that we are physical beings in a physical world.

What the Tabernacle represented in space and Shabbat in time was quite radical. It was not rare in the ancient world, nor in some religions today, to believe that here on earth everything is mortal. Only in Heaven or the afterlife will we encounter immortality. Hence many religions in both East and West have been other-worldly. In Judaism holiness exists within this world, despite the fact that it is bounded by space and time. But holiness, like anti-matter, must be carefully insulated. Hence the stringency of the laws of Shabbat on the one hand, the Temple and its priesthood on the other.

The holy is the point at which heaven and earth meet, where, by intense focus and a complete absence of earthly concerns, we open up space and time to the sensed presence of God who is beyond space and time. It is an intimation of eternity in the midst of life, allowing us at our holiest moments to feel part of something that does not die. The holy is the space within which we redeem our existence from mere contingency and know that we are held within the "everlasting arms" (Deut. 33: 27) of God.

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From Rabbi Yissocher Frand ryfrand@torah.org & genesis@torah.org  
To ravfrand@torah.org  
Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

**Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Emor**

### **The Poor Takes Only What Belongs To Him Already**

In the middle of the detailing the Jewish Holidays of the calendar year, the Torah gives us the commandments of Peah and Leket: "When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not remove completely the corners of your field as you reap and you shall not gather the gleanings of your harvest; for the poor and the proselyte shall you leave them; I am Hashem Your G-d." [Vayikra 23:22]. We are commanded to leave over certain parts of our harvest to the impoverished and the stranger in our midst. A Jew must leave a corner of his field for the poor. Likewise, if he forgets to pick up certain parts of the harvest, these too become "Gifts for the Poor".

We are approaching Shavuos. We know the story of Rus. Rus was penniless. Her mother-in-law Naomi had no money. Rus met Boaz. How did she meet him? She met him in his field when she was collecting

"Gifts for the Poor" (Matnos Aniyim) that he and his workers left over in fulfillment of the Biblical commands of Leket, Shikcha, and Peah.

Rashi quotes the Mishna in Peah regarding the words "For the poor and the strangers you shall leave them over": "Leave it for them and they will pick it up themselves; you may not assist any of them in their gathering." If we were to take a poll whether or not it would be preferable for a field owner to help the poor people collect their gifts from his field or make them do it themselves, I am sure that the overwhelming response would have been that the field owner should be a nice guy and lend a sickle or offer a helping hand to the poor who came to his field to receive the "Matnos Aniyim". However, as strange as it seems, the Torah rules to the contrary. "Tazaov Osam" -- "Leave it for them." Do not be a nice guy. Do not help them! The pasuk concludes with the words "I am the L-rd". Rashi says that the intent is a promise: "If you leave them alone and allow them to pick it up themselves, I am the L-rd who will give you your reward."

This is totally counter-intuitive. What is the interpretation of this Mishna and these words of Rashi? I saw an interesting answer in a Sefer called *Otzros haTorah*: When the poor person comes to a field to collect the Peah and the owner makes a point of saying "Hello, How are you? Let me help you collect your stuff" or alternatively, when the owner rushes to cut down the stalks for the poor person and hand it to him, the owner is in effect telling the poor person, "Listen here, I am giving you a present."

The Torah is telling us that Leket, Shikcha, Peah are NOT gifts from the landowner. The Peah BELONGS to the poor person. If the owner participates in the collection, he is acting like the OWNER of those items. When the owner gives a gift, he expects the poor person to be beholden to him and appreciate his generosity. No, the Torah says. Leave it for the poor and the strangers. The Torah's message to the land owner is: "You are not the owner of that portion of the field. The portion of the crop that falls or gets forgotten from the outset belongs to the poor!" The way to convey that is for the land owner to take no part in the distribution of these items. Let the poor collect it themselves -- it is after all their property in the first place!

If a person has that attitude, then he will be deserving of "Ani Hashem ne'eman l'shalem sechar" (I am the L-rd; faithful to pay reward.) Truth be told, this should be our attitude regarding all Tzedakah [charity]. When the Almighty blesses us and gives us extra funds, we should not think of our charitable donations in terms of "I am giving MY money to you." G-d made me the steward over this money. It is as if I am the trustee of a foundation. When the trustee of a foundation gives out the money, it is not his money. It belongs to the foundation. He is merely a trustee, charged with guaranteeing that the funds are distributed. When we give Tzedakah, we should have the same attitude. Thankfully, G-d gave me more money than I need -- I am a trustee on this money. I am not giving it to you from my own pocket -- it comes from G-d's Table (M'shulchan Gavoha).

### **Why Isn't Shavuos Called Simchas Torah?**

Parshas Emor contains the Jewish holidays. One of the holidays is the Festival of Shavuos, which is not too far off at this point. Even though the Torah does not mention it explicitly, we all know that Shavuos is the time of our being given the Gift of Torah (z'man Matan Toraseinu) and it is the Yom Tov upon which we celebrate this fact.

The obvious question is the following: If we had to pick a good name for the holiday of Shavuos, it would seem like there is a much better name for the holiday: Simchas Torah! We received the Torah on Shavuos. We celebrate that event -- Simchas Torah! What could be a more logical name for this holiday?

The question then is why is Simchas Torah not on Shavuos? And do not tell me because that we celebrate "Simchas Torah" in the fall because that is when we finish reading the Torah cycle. They could have set up

the system such that we read Parshas Bereshis on the first Shabbos after Shavuos and we finish the cycle the following year on the holiday of "Simchas Torah" -- seven weeks after Pessach.

Is it not a redundancy to celebrate both Simchas Torah and Shavuos? Why isn't Shavuos the day of Simchas Torah? What is the explanation for two different holidays commemorating Torah?

I once saw a beautiful observation from Rav Simcha Zissel Brody, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Chevron Yeshiva. There are two types of gifts in the world. There are gifts that have value because of the value of the gift (such as the gift of a diamond, a car, a beautiful painting -- something with intrinsic value) and there are gifts that are valuable by virtue of the fact of who gives it to you.

Lyndon Johnson was a very effective president when it came to passing legislation. He knew how to get bills through Congress! He used to have elaborate bill signings in the White House. In front of him would be a whole bunch of pens and he would sign his name slowly using a different pen for every curve of every letter in the name Lyndon Baines Johnson. Any person who was invited into the ceremony received one of the pens used by the president for signing the legislation into law as a gift. The pen itself might cost only a couple of dollars but it was a very important gift because it came from the President of the United States. Likewise, anyone who flies in Air Force One is given cufflinks with the insignia of the President of the United States. Again, the cufflinks are worth at most \$50. However, the fact that it came from the President makes it an extremely valuable present. These are the two types of presents -- intrinsically valuable and valuable by virtue of the person who gave it.

What happens when we have the confluence of both aspects -- something that is the most valuable gift in the world and something that was given by the Greatest Being in the universe? That is Matan Torah. The gift of Torah is the most valuable gift in the world -- nothing can compare to Torah in value. And who gave it to us? Not the President of the United States but the King of Kings, Master of the Universe!

How do we celebrate this gift? Rav Simcha Zissel says such a celebration requires two separate days -- one day to contemplate the gift and one day to contemplate the Giver. Shavuos is the Yom Tov of the Torah. It is the holiday when we must come to the realization that "If not for the Torah that was given on this day, I would just be another Joe in the market place!" What would our lives look like without the Torah? What would our families be like without the Torah? [We need go no further than our front doors to peek outside and see the problems in society to know the answer to that question.] Imagine a week without a Shabbos. Imagine a year without our cycle of spiritually uplifting holidays! What would our children look like if we did not have the Torah to guide them in their development? Where would we be?

The Torah is so valuable that it requires us to have a day to sit and appreciate "Thank G-d, who separated us from those who err and who gave us the Torah of Truth and implanted in our midst eternal life." This is Shavuos.

But on that same day, we cannot try to fully understand who the Giver is. That requires a second day, which is Simchas Torah. As we all know, the Yom Tov of Succos is the most universal of all Jewish holidays. It is the holiday when we offer sacrifices on behalf of the 70 nations of the world. It is a universal Yom Tov. Shmini Atzeres (and in Chutz L'Aretz the two days of Shmini Atzeres and Simchas Torah) is a time when G-d says, as it were, "Everyone has left. The party is over. I just want you to stay with me one extra day." There are no special mitzvos -- no lulav, no esrog, no Succah, no 70 nations -- just the Almighty and His Nation getting together for a time of intimate connection. This is the day when we concentrate on the Master of the Universe. This is the day dedicated to the Giver of the gift of Torah.

Shavuos allows us to celebrate the "cheftza" of Torah (the item itself) and Shmini Atzeres / Simchas Torah allows us to contemplate the greatness of the Giver of the Torah.

#### **Ethics of the Fathers: Chapter 4 Mishneh 6**

***Rabbi Yossi states: Whoever honors the Torah his body is honored by creatures and whoever desecrates Torah, his body is desecrated by creatures.***

There are various interpretations as to what type of honor or desecration of the Torah is referred to in this Mishna. Rashi says that the desecration of Torah referred to here is leaving a Sefer Torah (or Sefarim) lying on a bench on which one may sit (at the same level). Rabbeinu Bechaye writes that it refers to one who places a Chumash on top of a Sefer Torah or a Navi on top of a Chumash or a volume of Kesuvim on top of a volume of Neviim. A person who respects the hierarchy of sanctity in Scriptures will be honored and vice versa.

The Chida in his Sefer Chasdei Avos explains this Mishna based on a very strange incident. Two people died on the same day and had their funerals scheduled for the same time. One was a great scholar, a pious and beloved personality. The other was the tax collector in town who was despised by everyone (in an era where the franchise was purchased from the ruler and when tax collectors were known to be unscrupulous and corrupt individuals who squeezed everyone for as much money as they could get out of them).

Everyone in town came to the funeral of the scholar and only the family of the tax collector came to bury their relative. It so happened that the two funeral processions which were moving along in close proximity to one another were attacked by robbers. Everyone abandoned the coffins and fled for their lives except for one disciple of the scholar who managed to hide himself from the robbers. A couple of hours later after the robbers left, the entourage of mourners returned to resume the funeral. Somehow the coffins were mixed up and the large group of people thinking it was the scholar picked up the coffin of the tax collector and the tax collector's family picked up the coffin of the scholar and they proceeded to bury the one with great eulogies and a massive show of respect and the other was buried in a very modest and low-key ceremony by the immediate family of the tax collector.

The disciple who had protested to the people to no avail that they had the wrong coffins was very upset about the matter until his teacher came to him in a dream 3 days later and explained the matter.

'Do not worry. I am in Gan Eden and the tax collector is in Gehinnom [Hell]. What happened, you want to know? One time, I was present when someone shamed another Torah scholar and I did not object.

Another time, the tax collector prepared a tremendous feast for the governor who sold him the tax franchise and the governor did not show up. As bad a person as he was, on that occasion the tax collector gave the prepared food to poor Torah scholars so that it not go to waste. I needed to receive my punishment for my oversight and he needed to receive his reward for his kindness.'

The Chidah uses this story to explain the Mishna: Whoever honors the Torah even one time -- even this despicable tax collector -- will receive reward for that effort such that his body will be honored by people.

Likewise, anyone who allows Torah to be desecrated, even one time -- as great as he otherwise was -- will receive punishment such that his body will suffer lack of honor by people.

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

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**Weekly Halacha**  
by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

### Erev Shabbos

Question: Nowadays when almost every home has a washing machine and dryer, does Ezra's takanah of not doing laundry on Friday still apply?

Discussion: Contemporary poskim debate whether or not Ezra's takanah of not doing laundry on Friday is applicable nowadays as well, since doing laundry today is not nearly as time consuming or strenuous as it was in earlier times. Some argue that regardless of the change in circumstances, the idea behind the takanah was to reserve the precious hours of erev Shabbos for the immediate Shabbos needs that cannot be attended to earlier in the week. Since laundry can be done earlier in the week, 1 no laundry should be done on Friday. According to this opinion, even if the laundry is being done by a non-Jewish maid, it should still not be done on Friday. 2 Most other poskim, however, argue that it all depends on the time factor, and if one can find the time to do laundry while also properly preparing for Shabbos, he may do so even l'chatchilah. 3 Practically speaking, while it is preferable and praiseworthy to do the laundry before Friday 4 (especially in the short winter months), it is not a must. Certainly, one who failed to do his laundry before Friday for whatever reason is permitted to do laundry on Friday. 5

Implied in Ezra's takanah against doing laundry in Friday is the understanding that one should wear freshly laundered clothing in honor of Shabbos. Thus Mishnah Berurah rules that one should not wear the same garment a number of Shabbosos in a row without laundering it, so as to not violate Ezra's takanah. Obviously, Mishnah Berurah is referring to garments such as a shirt or undergarments which become soiled or sweaty when worn. Suits or pants which can be worn repeatedly without becoming dirty are not required to be cleaned on a weekly basis.

Question: Is one allowed to schedule non-emergency surgery for the latter part of the week, since one might need to desecrate the Shabbos during the post-operative period?

Discussion: While this issue is not raised explicitly in Shulchan Aruch, some contemporary poskim base their ruling on this question on the principle established in this siman concerning embarking on a sea voyage before Shabbos: In the olden times, it was permitted to embark upon a sea voyage in the beginning of the week, even though it was likely that by the time Shabbos arrived one would find himself in a "dangerous" (pikuach nefesh) situation and be forced to desecrate the Shabbos in order to save his life. 6 From Wednesday 7 onward, however, it was forbidden to set sail. This is because the three days before Shabbos are associated with the coming Shabbos; during those days one must avoid any situation that could cause him to desecrate the coming Shabbos. Setting sail within these days is, therefore, like setting oneself up for Shabbos desecration. If, however, one was travelling for the purpose of performing a mitzvah, such as visiting Eretz Yisrael, it was permitted to begin travelling even at the end of the week, even if in all likelihood a pikuach nefesh situation would arise and chillul Shabbos would result from it.

Based on this Halachah, some poskim infer that from Wednesday onward, one should not engage in any activity that will result in a situation of pikuach nefesh and will require chillul Shabbos to save one's life. Whenever possible, therefore, a non-emergency procedure that could possibly result in chillul Shabbos during the recuperation or post-operative period should not be scheduled from Wednesday until Friday of any given week. Still, if the doctor most skilled at the procedure is available only at the end of the week, or if the patient is in pain and does not wish to delay the procedure, it is permitted to schedule the procedure even at the end of the week. 8

In the event that, contrary to Halachah, one underwent a procedure at the end of the week and now finds himself in a state of pikuach nefesh, he is treated like any other person whose life is in danger and may do whatever is necessary to save his life. 9

Even if the procedure in question will not necessarily cause chillul Shabbos during the recuperation period, it is still recommended to schedule all elective surgeries and procedures for the beginning of the week whenever possible. This is based on the view of the Rif and Rambam, quoted by Shulchan Aruch, that one may not deliberately place himself in circumstances where he will be in pain on Shabbos and thereby diminish his oneg Shabbos. So if, for example, one has the option of scheduling non-emergency oral surgery for the beginning of the week, it is recommended that he do so. 10

An issue related to the above discussion is whether or not a doctor who does not live within walking distance of the hospital where he works is obligated to stay in the hospital over Shabbos, or whether he may go home and wait to be called in case he is needed for an emergency, thereby leaving himself open to possible chillul Shabbos. Debatable as well is the question of whether a medical student is required to enroll in a Shomer Shabbos residency program or not. There are many details and issues, far beyond the scope of this article, that need to be explored before one can rule on these questions, and each doctor or medical student must discuss his individual case with an halachic authority.

- 1 Some poskim recommend that laundry be done specifically on Thursday, since that makes it clear that the laundry is being done for the sake of Shabbos. Many other poskim, however, are not particular about this; See Shemiras Shabbos k'Hilchasah 42, note 13, quoting Rav S.Z. Auerbach and Chazon Ovadyah, Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 23.
- 2 Chut Shani 3:1. See also Piskei Teshuvos, vol. 3, pg. 255.
- 3 Rav Y.S. Elyashiv (quoted in Avnei Yashfei 1:49); Ohr l'Tziyon 2:16-1; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 13; Chazon Ovadyah, Shabbos, vol. 1, pg. 24; Shevet ha-Kehasi 2:104-4.
- 4 Rav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 42, note 13)
- 5 Ben Ish Chai (Lech Lecha 8).
- 6 According to Shulchan Aruch, this is permitted even when a pikuach nefesh situation will certainly occur. Mishnah Berurah and Aruch ha-Shulchan rule, however, that even in the beginning of the week it is only permitted to travel when it is likely that a pikuach nefesh situation will arise, but not when it is certain that this would be the case.
- 7 Tuesday night is considered like Wednesday. Note that some poskim rule that this prohibition begins on Thursday (Wednesday night).
- 8 Emes L'yaakov, O.C. 331:1; Yalkut Yosef 248:10; Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasah 32:33; Orchos Shabbos 20:69.
- 9 Igros Moshe, O.C. 1:127; Shulchan Shelomo 248:4.
- 10 Orchos Shabbos 20:70.

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From Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>  
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Subject Torah Weekly

**Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Emor**  
**For the week ending 12 May 2012 / 19 Iyyar 5772**  
**by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com**  
**Insights**

The End of Rule Britannica

“Speak to the kohanim, the sons of Aharon...”

I must admit to more than a tinge of nostalgia when I read of the recent demise of that great 244 year-old creaking behemoth, the Encyclopedia Britannica. Actually Britannica will continue in its electronic version but its weighty printed tomes will no longer grace the walls of many a suburban home. Britannica really stopped publishing its print edition in 2010 when it only managed to sell 12,000 copies worldwide, a paltry number to justify its vast team of experts churning out articles.

And as far as its online future is concerned? I'm not convinced. There's some hot competition out there.

Like Wikipedia.

Nowadays, people are far more likely to search Wikipedia than Britannica. One reason of course is because Wiki is free – and everyone likes free. However, there's another reason here.

Anyone can write an entry in Wikidpedia.

In our society the axiom that democracy is only legitimate form of social organization is virtually unchallengeable.

The idea of a benevolent dictatorship strikes most people as an impossible oxymoron.

Our mindset is that the will of the majority is the best, the fairest and the only way to run society, and this ideology seeps into other areas of life as well — including encyclopedias. Critics of Britannica claim that it suffers from the biases of the experts it employs. Wiki, however, suffers no less from its biases, both cultural and

personal. The difference is really between quality and quantity. Do you want your information brought to you by a panel of experts in the field or a vast multitude whose credentials are unverified?

Presumably, the democratization of our lives has its limits: I'm not sure how many of us would submit to extensive invasive surgery based on a straw poll taken on Twitter, however gung-ho the yay-sayers might be.

The idea that if you ask enough people a question you're bound to come up with the right answer is inimical to Torah thought. The spiritual Masters teach, "The opinion of the unlettered," presumably the vast majority, "is the opposite of the Torah scholars."

Rabbi Nota Schiller once observed, "The Torah is a democracy of opportunity and an aristocracy of opinion." Anyone can open a Talmud and start to learn. However, for one's opinion to be significant it must pass a self-policing system of peer approval that validates only the greatest and the most expert.

If you think about it, the Torah was not given as the "Ten Suggestions – Please twitter this to your friends and see what they think." It was given as Ten Statements – Divine and immutable.

The priesthood too is a totally undemocratic exclusive club to which only birth gains you entry.

As it says in this week's Torah Portion, "And G-d said to Moshe, 'Speak to the kohanim, the sons of Aharon.'"

We know that the kohanim are the sons of Aharon without the Torah having to remind us. Why then does the Torah stress this?

Not everything in life is democratic: Someone with Eastern features cannot elect to be Caucasian. Women cannot decide to be men, and a Yisrael cannot decide to be a kohen. A kohen is imbued with an innate higher level of holiness merely because of his lineage, because he is a descendant of Aharon HaKohen.

Google me on that – you'll see I'm right.

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

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Subject Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

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

#### **Say to the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and you shall say to them. (21:1)**

Rashi notes the redundancy in the words, emor v'amarta, "Say (to the Kohanim) and you shall say (to them)." He explains that this is to enjoin the adults with regard to minors. It is consistent with the Talmud Yevamos 114a, in which Chazal explain that the word, "say" indicates that adult Kohanim are prohibited to make themselves impure through contact with the dead. "And you shall say" implies that the Kohanim are commanded to see to it that Kohanim who are minors must also not defile themselves. L'hazhir gedolim al ha'ketanim, "To caution adults with regard to the children" has become a Torah chinuch, education catchphrase. It is an important rule, but how is it derived from the redundancy of the words? Just that the Torah says twice to "tell them" does not provide clear proof that it is addressing the educational aspect of reaching out to the next generation.

Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl, quotes the Maggid m'Dubno who once asked his Rebbe, the Gaon, zl, m'Vilna, to identify the most effective way of influencing children. The Gaon answered with a mashal, parable. The Gaon asked the Maggid to bring a large cup and to surround it with smaller cups. Then he asked the Maggid to pour liquid into the large cup and continue pouring until the liquid overflows into the smaller cups. In order to have children absorb the lessons, so that they retain them, the rebbe/teacher/mentor must first himself be permeated with an overdose of whatever character traits he seeks to impart to his students. They, in turn, will be suffused with the overflow.

The Rosh Yeshivah comments that the Kohanim were instructed twice in order to give them a double-measure of kedushas Kohen, the sanctity of the Kohen. Thus, it will "spill over" to their children.

The lesson is simple: students learn from the rebbe. As the rebbe becomes saturated with Torah and middos tovos, character traits, so do the students imbibe from his overflow of good. This presents a new concept in what today's educational experts term "continuing education." It is not sufficient for the teacher merely to be aware of new studies and methods; he must also be able to teach - period. A rebbe who is not constantly growing spiritually will soon "run out" - become depleted - of that overflow, leaving him little to communicate to his students.

The other perspective is that of the student. In order to be inspired by one's mentor, the student must view himself as the "small" cup at the side of the much larger cup. When a student considers himself to be on the level of his rebbe, when arrogance

has reached such a nadir that he no longer sees his mentor as being greater than he, there is no overflow; he cannot learn anything. It is a two-way street. The rebbe successfully inspires his students only after he has himself been infused with Torah wisdom and ethics. The student then receives this infusion only after he has lowered himself sufficiently to the point at which the rebbe's overflow will stream down to him.

The "overflow factor" was a primary educational principle embodied by one of the past generation's premier Torah educators, the Mashgiach of Chevron/Slabodka and, later, Ateres Yisrael, Horav Meir Chodosh, zl. He would say, "One must fill himself until he brims over with wisdom and knowledge, filling the adjacent vessels - his students - with the overflow that he himself cannot contain. One must pour into the cup, pour and pour, with the pouring for himself, but everything that overflows for the students and for anyone else who wishes to learn." This was the song of his life. Everything he developed - everything that he thought about and originated - he did for himself, pouring into his own cup. His entire life was one long service of Hashem. He embodied the essence of Mussar, ethical/moral conduct, reflected by his spiritual discipline and demeanor. He served as a perfect role model for others to emulate, as the "liquid" poured over the sides with an overflow that inspired those close to him.

Rav Meir would say, "Nurture yourself, so that you may nurture others." Horav Shlomo Wolbe, zl, commented, "When Rav Meir spoke with his students, every word was a result of his work on himself. This idea goes to the very core of the Mashgiach's principles and the method of education he imbibed from his great Rebbe, Horav Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zl, reverently known as the Alter m'Slabodka. The Mashgiach was once queried concerning what he was preparing for his upcoming Mussar shmuess, ethical discourse. His response is classic and bespeaks his Mussar personality. He replied, "I am not preparing a specific lecture. I am going to speak from what is in my heart." In his shmuessen, the Mashgiach did not transmit ideas and statements from Chazal in a vacuum. When he spoke, he transmitted himself. He shared with his listeners whatever it was that he was engaged in at that specific moment, the subject in which he was presently absorbed, in which he desired to plumb its depths in order to grasp its concepts and internalize them. When these topics penetrated his mind, when they pervaded his heart and animated his spirit, he would share them with his students. Whatever it was; a chiddush, novel idea; a new perspective; an emotion which he now felt. It was as though an inner light illuminated the depths of these ideas, compelling him to share it with his students.

In order for a rebbe/mentor to succeed with the overflow effect, the material he studies must become a part of himself - his essence. His learning and middos are not external, but an intrinsic part of his being. The traits that one values do not float somewhere in the upper reaches of his intellect or in profound depths of philosophy. One's middos are not simply a "good vort," a nice thought. They become life itself. One becomes a living, breathing Mussar sefer, volume of ethical refinement. Only then can he successfully impart "himself" to his students.

#### **And they shall not marry a woman who has been divorced by her husband; for each one is holy to his G-d. (21:7)**

The circle of permitted marriages diminishes as one rises higher in the social/spiritual hierarchy. The Torah places restrictions upon the Levi and Yisrael concerning certain marriages. The Kohen has even greater limitations, while the Kohen Gadol, High Priest, is in a very tight circle with regard to marriage. These provisions concerning marriage are governed primarily by the principle of yichus, pedigree, and the nobility of untainted family descent. The preservation of the blood lines is one of the principles of Jewish family life. In its purest form, yichus is conveyed through the male line from generation to generation by marriages to woman who are halachically suitable for this union. Why certain women are considered unsuitable may be rationalized, but when all is said and done, it is Hashem, Who, for reasons known only to him, determines suitability. We can only obey.

A Kohen may not marry a divorcee, regardless of who her former spouse was, the catalyst for the divorce, or the circumstances leading up to the ultimate separation. The Torah is clear in its prohibition. We must accept its edicts. I recently came across a poignant story, quoted by Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, which should inspire our emunas chachamim, faith in our sages.

A couple had a wonderful, loving marriage for fifteen years. One thing, however, kept gnawing at this relationship: they had no children. After much deliberation and despite the harmony that reigned in their home, they decided to divorce. Perhaps they would each be blessed the second time around. They said their "goodbyes," and the get, divorce, was processed. Shortly after the get had been completed, the woman discovered that, lo and behold, she was pregnant. This was wonderful news and should have generated much joy. Indeed, it would have - had the husband not been a Kohen. His ex-wife was pregnant, but he could not remarry her, since she

was a divorcee. Talk about misfortune. Their pain and heartbreak were off the charts.

The husband turned to Horav Chaim Kanievsky, Shlita, who told him that there was no way to override the halachah. He could not remarry his former wife. He suggested that he should consult with his father-in-law, Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, Shlita. The man listened and turned to Rav Elyashiv and poured out his heart. The Rav shared his pain, but, regrettably, the halachah is very clear: as a Kohen, he may not marry his former wife. "The only thing I can tell you," he said, "is to go to the Kosel Maaravi and daven, pray to Hashem to save you."

When Rav Elyashiv speaks - one listens, and he immediately left for the Kosel to pour out his heart without restraint. Fifteen years of yearning; fifteen years of prayer, hope and rejection: finally their prayers were answered, but now the obstacle to their shared joy was immutable. One cannot get around Biblical law. He cried and cried, his hands scraping the stone wall. After davening for a lengthy period of time, he felt someone's hand on his shoulder. He turned around and saw a young, distinguished talmid chacham, Torah scholar of note, who inquired what had happened to him. Anyone observing the Kohen's heartfelt prayer, would have raised that question. This was no ordinary davening. The Kohen repeated his story, and the scholar asked him, "Do you have a father?" The man did not really make sense to the Kohen. "Of course I have a father," he replied. "He is very old and lives in a nursing home in America. He is quite ill and barely communicates with those around him."

The scholar turned to the depressed Kohen and said, "In my opinion, you should fly to America and speak with your father. Tell him what has taken place and ask his advice." The Kohen looked at the man as if he had just landed from outer space: "I told you that my father's physical and mental condition has deteriorated considerably. He neither talks, nor does he seem to understand what people say to him. Anyway, about what could I talk to him which would change my situation?" The stranger listened to the Kohen and looked at him in such a manner as if to say, "Listen, I am telling you to go. Your excuses are no reason not to go. Who knows? The visit might even pay off."

The Kohen ruminated over the events of the past few days. First, Rav Kanievsky told him to speak with Rav Elyashiv. The venerable gadol hador, preeminent Torah leader of the generation, told him to pray at the Kosel. At the Kosel, he met a stranger who insisted that his problem would be solved if he were to fly to America and speak with his incommunicable father. What should he do? The entire story seemed like a mystery, but, to believing Jews, every mystery has an underlying meaning. Somehow, all of these events fit together. In some way, they had to all make sense. All he had to lose was a plane ticket. What could hurt if he paid a visit to his father? Twenty four hours later, the Kohen was walking up the steps of the nursing home entrance.

When the Kohen entered the home and said that he had come to visit with his father, the nurses said that it was a waste of time. His father had not communicated with anyone in the last four months. Nothing - period. Not even eye contact. He should not expect a reaction. This did not prevent the Kohen from relating the entire story to his father, who just sat there staring out in space, seemingly oblivious to all that was taking place. The son spoke; the father stared blankly, and then the son burst out in bitter weeping. It was just too much. The trauma of years of yearning - followed by divorce and the pregnancy - was overwhelming. Suddenly, the unbelievable happened. The father began to speak! "You are wrong. It is all a mistake. You are not my biological son! After the Holocaust, your mother and I realized that we could no longer have children, so we adopted you as an infant and raised you as our child - which you are, but you are not a Kohen! Thus, there is no reason that you cannot marry your former wife."

A powerful story with an even more powerful lesson. One must have faith in our chachamim. They are blessed with an extraordinary intuition called daas Torah, the thought process that is the result of a lifetime of Torah study. They see things that we do not see; they hear things that we do not hear. They are aware of things that elude us. It is about trust.

**The Kohen who is exalted above his brothers... He shall not come near any dead person... he shall not leave the Sanctuary... for a crown - the oil of his G-d's anointment is upon him. (21:10-12)**

There is a hierarchy within the Jewish nation. The Kohanim who serve in the Bais Hamikdash are enjoined with specific laws regarding their spiritual defilement caused by coming in contact with the dead. The Kohen Hedyot, regular Kohen, may come in contact with seven close relatives: father, mother, sister brother, wife, son and daughter. Otherwise, all other Jewish corpses are off-limit. The Kohen Gadol, High Priest, has further restrictions. He may not become tamei, defiled, to anyone - not even his closest relatives. Furthermore, he may not leave the Sanctuary to follow the funeral procession. In short, the Kohen Gadol must maintain his level

of spiritual sanctity and purity, regardless of the trauma, the grief, the emotional toll.

Let us view this halachah in perspective. The Kohen Gadol is serving in the Sanctuary and receives a call that his father/mother has suddenly passed away. The shock is overpowering; the immediate grief is overwhelming. He may not leave. He may not halt what he is doing. His mind must continue concentrating on the avodah, service, at hand. His siblings are all involved in planning and preparing for the funeral - which he may not even attend! Even when they return from the gravesite and begin to sit shivah, seven-day mourning period, the Kohen Gadol does not sit in the same manner as they do. He does not sit on the ground. He is the spiritual leader of the Jewish people. He is different.

When we take into consideration concerning to whom this halachah is addressed, the incredulity increases. The Kohen Gadol is the standard bearer of ahavas Yisrael, love for all Jews. Aharon HaKohen, the first Kohen Gadol, was known as the ohaiv shalom, lover of peace, between man and his fellow man. Clearly, his grandson personifies this attribute. His love for all Jews is certainly greater than what one would expect of the average Jew. Yet, this great man is not permitted to perform - or even be a part of - the final honor given to the man who brought him into this world. His father's light has been suddenly and perhaps tragically distinguished, yet he must remain within the confines of the Sanctuary, resplendent in his gold brocaded Priestly vestments and continue his spiritual work - as if nothing had happened. How can so much be expected of a human being? Horav Aryeh Leib Heyman, zl, explains that the answer lies in the question. It is clearly too much to expect from a mere human being, but, Aharon HaKohen was not a mere human being. Due to his incredible desire to cling to Hashem, he was able to transcend the physical boundaries and limitations that are intrinsic to the human nature. He strived, without let up, to achieve what is normally impossible for a human being to accomplish.

Chazal teach that three partners join in the creation of man: Hashem; his father; and his mother. The parents share in contributing to his human dimension, his body with its various components. The portion that Hashem contributes is the neshamah, soul. Aharon endeavored his entire life, leaving no stone unturned, to make his spiritual dimension dominant over his physical component. He was, thus, closer to his spiritual side than to his physical. He lived in this world, but his mind was in Heaven.

The Torah intimates to us that in every generation one of Aharon's descendants will achieve his grandfather's plateau of spiritual transcendence. The Kohen Gadol of every generation will be an individual whose bond with Hashem will be unlike that of other people. Through him, Hashem's spiritual flow will descend, bringing spiritual life and sustenance to the generation. This flow may not be halted - even momentarily. Thus, the Kohen Gadol may not even for a moment pause in his relationship. He remains within the confines of the Sanctuary, replete in his sanctity and strong in his unbreakable bond with Hashem. The nation relies on him. A regular mortal cannot overcome his human nature, but the Kohen Gadol was no longer a regular mortal. He had achieved a spiritual ascendancy like no other man. Rav Heyman writes that he discovered this idea, to which the Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 270 alludes, "The soul of the Kohen Gadol, who is separated to be holy of holy despite being a mortal in a human body, resides in the upper echelons of the spiritual realm. Due to his increased clinging to Above, he becomes divorced from the nature of men. Thus, his heart forgets any involvement with this temporal world."

A flipside to this unique sanctity emerges: How does an individual so holy, so far-removed from human society, continue to remain connected with people? Aharon's disciples loved and pursued peace, loved people and brought them closer to Torah. Can a person removed from human endeavor succeed at human interaction?

Rav Heyman explains that Aharon's love for people originates from his total clinging to Hashem. His consummate bond with Hashem catalyzed within him a feeling through which he did not view himself as having a brother or a friend. All Jews were the same to him. His love for them was somewhat similar to the love Hashem has for us: total, unequivocal, balanced, everyone is the same in His eyes. As Hashem looks at us with compassion, sensitivity, and overwhelming mercy, so did Aharon. This is why he sought every avenue to promote peace and welfare among Jews. They were all the same to him. He saw no evil in anyone - only love for each one. Hashem's will was Aharon's will. Thus, when his younger brother, Moshe, was selected to lead the Jewish people from Egypt, Aharon rejoiced for him. This is what Hashem wants; therefore, it is what Aharon wants. Aharon did not have a personal will. His will was subjugated to that of Hashem.

Aharon sustained a mind-numbing tragedy on what should have been the most auspicious day of his life. The day of Chanukas HaMishkan, the Inauguration of the Sanctuary, was to be Aharon's crowning moment. He was to be invested in Kehunah Gedolah, the High Priesthood, while his two older sons, Nadav and

Avihu, would begin to serve in the Mishkan as the first Kohanim. His joy, however, was marred by indescribable tragedy, as his two saintly sons died before his very eyes. Chazal teach that actually the decree concerning their deaths was that they were to have taken place earlier, during the Giving of the Torah. A number of reasons are stated for the "delay" in executing this decree. Rav Heyman suggests a novel rationale, based upon his understanding of kedushas Aharon, the sanctity of Aharon.

Hashem sought to impart to the nation the exemplary status of Aharon, to explain to them that the nation's first High Priest had not been selected for this position as a result of his familial relationship with Moshe Rabbeinu No, Aharon warranted this position of his own unique accord. Furthermore, Hashem was demonstrating to the nation why and how Aharon's service had the capacity for achieving atonement for the people. The people had to see with their very own eyes, without embellishment, that Aharon was like no other man. When the terrible tragedy occurred before a stunned crowd, everyone had the opportunity to see how this shocked father did not react, did not complain, did not mutter, did not fall apart in grief. He continued the service as if nothing extraordinary had taken place. When the people saw how Aharon continued his work without fanfare, without pause to regain his emotions, they understood why Hashem had selected him to represent them in achieving atonement. Aharon was like no other man. He was the Kohen Gadol - gadol mei echav, "exalted above his brothers."

**But an ox or a sheep or a goat, you may not slaughter it and its off-spring on the same day. (22:28)**

While the Torah does use the masculine pronoun oso, "his," as opposed to "its" (offspring), this prohibition applies only to the mother and child. In his Moreh Nevuchim, the Rambam posits that the reason for prohibiting oso v'es beno, the slaughter of a female cow or sheep and its young, is to prevent the mother's suffering in seeing her child killed. This halachah holds true even if the mother does not actually see its young being slaughtered.

The Rambam explains that a mother's compassion for her child is instinctive - not cognitive. Otherwise, animals would not have this sensitivity, as they lack the necessary cognition. This explains why some humans who have lost their sensitivity to their young feel no compassion. They have lost the innate characteristic that is found even in animals. The sense that a mother loves her child is applicable only when a mother feels that she is a mother. When a mother loses her complete sense of direction, her focus in life, she exists purely as a creature, not as a mother.

Why are the cow and sheep singled out from among all other animals? Does compassion not apply to them as well? The Rambam distinguishes between animals that separate from their young when the nursing period is over, and cows and sheep, which are domesticated, thus remaining with their young on the owner's estate. For this reason, their filial bond continues unabated.

Perhaps domestication allows for a greater sense of motherhood to develop. A mother that has a child for a short span of time does not develop the usual sense of love that accompanies motherhood. She feels used rather than loved, which precludes the development of any extended sense of compassion.

**I will be sanctified among Bnei Yisrael. (22:32)**

If one peruses history, he notes that the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem, Sanctifying Hashem's Name, has applied to children as well. In other words, parents who were prepared to sacrifice themselves to sanctify Hashem's Name were, likewise, prepared to do the same for their children. During the Crusades, it was not unusual for parents to take the lives of their children prior to killing themselves, just so that the murderers would not defile their bodies. Why are children not exempt from the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem? The only reason that mitzvos apply to children is chinuch, educating them in the Torah's way in order to prepare them for a life of commitment. Does chinuch apply to Kiddush Hashem as well?

In his Emes L'Yaakov, Horav Yaakov Kaminetzky, zl, derives from the lashon ha'Rambam, the vernacular of the Rambam, that, indeed, he is of the opinion that Kiddush Hashem applies to children. In Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah 5:1, the Rambam writes: Kol Bais Yisrael metzuvim al Kiddush Hashem. "The entire House of Yisrael is commanded in the mitzvah of sanctifying Hashem's Name." Rambam uses a term, Bais Yisrael, which implies the entire house - men, woman and children. Bnei Yisrael is the term that would apply only to adults.

Rav Yaakov suggests that by using the word, V'nikdashti, "I will be sanctified," in lashon nifal, the passive conjugation of the verb, rather than speaking directly to the people and exhorting them to sanctify Hashem, the Torah is teaching us that the primary goal is for Hashem's Name to be sanctified - regardless of who is doing the sanctification. Thus, ketanim, young children, can also sanctify Hashem, because it is not who does the act, but rather, the very fact that the act of Kiddush Hashem takes place that causes Hashem's Name to be glorified.

In the Talmud Sanhedrin, we learn that "the grandchildren of Cicero studied Torah in Yerushalayim; the grandchildren of Sancheirev taught Torah in public; the grandchildren of Haman taught Torah in Bnei Brak." In his Netzach Yisrael, the Maharal, zl, m'Prague, explains that the mere fact that the grandchildren of these supremely evil men converted and taught Torah publicly is an incredible thing. We must understand that the three evil individuals mentioned - and so many others like them - have enormous power, which is derived from the super power of Hashem. In these men, however, the power was defiled. When their descendants converted, they harnessed this innate power and purified it. The fact that the power has its origins in G-d gives it a grain of sanctity which generations later can ultimately be purified. Yet, we wonder in what merit did their descendants convert? Descending from such impurity should preclude their conversion.

Rav Yaakov explains that since the ultimate goal of v'nikdashti is that Hashem's Name be glorified, it is no matter why or how this sanctification occurs. Haman and the others were the catalysts that spearheaded a tremendous kiddush Shem Shomayim. Thus, they merited that their grandchildren became devout, committed disseminators of Torah.

**Va'ani Tefillah**

**Borei refuos - He creates cures.**

Chazal teach that, prior to striking Klal Yisrael with a punishment, Hashem already has the refuah, cure, prepared. Concerning the nations of the world, however, He first strikes and later prepares the cure. Horav Reuven Melamed distinguishes between the foci of punishment between the Jewish people and that of their enemies. When Hashem punishes Klal Yisrael, the purpose is to cure them of their spiritual deficiency. Thus, He first prepares the cure, then sends the punishment.

The cure is the focus of the punishment. Without the makah, potch, slap, there is no reason for the cure. This is supported by Chazal's statement in the Talmud Megillah 14 concerning Achashveirosh's removal of his ring: "Greater (more consequential) was the removal of (Achashveirosh's) ring than the dire prophecies of forty-eight Neviim, Prophets." The admonishments of the prophets did not inspire the people as much as the threat of destruction. A good potch achieves more and faster than the most inspiring Mussar shmues, ethical discourse.

This is unlike the punishment meted out to those who oppress the Jew. Hashem's punishment to them is His initial goal. The cure comes later so that they are "around" for the next "round." This is the underlying meaning of the pasuk in Devarim 7:10, "And He repays His enemies in his lifetime to make him perish." Hashem punishes His enemies for what they do to His children. He is not interested in curing their spiritual deficiencies, but in exacting punishment. Thus, he cures them, so that they will be around for more of the same.

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