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**Parshat Emor and Coronavirus: The Only Guarantee Is Uncertainty
by Rabbi Jonathan Sacks**

There is something very strange about the festival of Succot, of which our parsha is the primary source. On the one hand, it is the festival supremely associated with joy. It is the only festival in our parsha that mentions rejoicing: "And you shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days" (Lev. 23:40). In the Torah as a whole, joy is mentioned not at all in relation to Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur or Pesach, once in connection with Shavuot and three times in connection with Succot. Hence its name: z'man simchatenu, the festival of our joy.

Yet what it recalls is one of the more negative elements of the wilderness years: "You shall live in booths seven days; all citizens in Israel shall live in booths, so that future generations may know that I made the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I the Lord your God." (Lev. 23:42-43)

For forty years, the Israelites lived without permanent homes, often on the move. They were in the wilderness, in no man's land, where it is hard to know what to expect and what dangers lie in wait along the way. To be sure, the people lived under Divine protection. But they could never be sure in advance whether it would be forthcoming and what form this protection might take. It was a prolonged period of insecurity.

How then are we to understand the fact that Succot of all festivals is called z'man simchatenu, the festival of our joy? It would have made sense to call Pesach – freedom's birthday – the festival of joy. It would have made sense to call Shavuot – the day of revelation at Sinai – the festival of joy. But why

give that title to a festival that commemorates forty years of exposure to the heat, cold, wind and rain. Remembering that, why should we feel joy?

Besides which, what was the miracle? Pesach and Shavuot recall miracles. But travelling through the wilderness with only temporary homes was neither miraculous nor unique. That is what people who travel through the wilderness do. They must. They are on a journey. They can only have a temporary dwelling. In this respect there was nothing special about the Israelites' experience.

It was this consideration that led Rabbi Eliezer[1] to suggest that the succah represents the Clouds of Glory, ananei kavod, that accompanied the Israelites during those years, sheltering them from heat and cold, protecting them from their enemies, and guiding them on the way. This is a beautiful and imaginative solution to the problem. It identifies a miracle and explains why a festival should be dedicated to remembering it. That is why Rashi and Ramban take it as the plain sense of the verse.

But it is difficult, nonetheless. A succah looks nothing like the Clouds of Glory. It would be hard to imagine anything less like the Clouds of Glory. The connection between a succah and Clouds of Glory comes not from the Torah but from the book of Isaiah, referring not to the past but to the future:

Then the Lord will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory will be a canopy. It will be a succah for shade from heat by day, and a shelter and hiding place from the storm and rain. (Is. 4:5-6)

Rabbi Akiva dissents from Rabbi Eliezer's view and says that a succah is what it says it is: a hut, a booth, a temporary dwelling.[2] What, according to Rabbi Akiva, was the miracle? There is no way of knowing the answer. But we can guess.

If a succah represents the Clouds of Glory – the view of Rabbi Eliezer – then it celebrates God's miracle. If it represents nothing other than a succah itself – Rabbi Akiva's view – then it celebrates the human miracle of which Jeremiah spoke when he said: "Thus said the Lord, "I remember the devotion of your youth, how as a bride you loved Me and followed Me in the wilderness, through a land not sown" (Jer. 2:2). The Israelites may have complained and rebelled. But they followed God. They kept going. Like Abraham and Sarah, they were prepared to journey into the unknown.

If we understand this to be the miracle, we can infer a deep truth about faith itself. Faith is not certainty. Faith is the courage to live with uncertainty. Almost every phase of the exodus was fraught with difficulties, real or imagined. That is what makes the Torah so powerful. It does not pretend that life is any easier than it is. The road is not straight and the journey is long. Unexpected things happen. Crises suddenly appear. It becomes important to embed in a people's memory the knowledge that we can handle the unknown. God is with us, giving us the courage we need.

Each Succot it is as if God were reminding us: don't think you need solid walls to make you feel safe. I led your ancestors through the desert so that they would never forget the journey they had to make and the obstacles they had to overcome to get to this land. He said, "I made the Israelites live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt." (Lev. 23:43) In those booths, fragile and open to the elements, the Israelites learnt the courage to live with uncertainty.

Other nations told stories that celebrated their strength. They built palaces and castles as expressions of invincibility. The Jewish people was different. They carried with them a story about the uncertainties and hazards of history. They spoke of their ancestors' journey through the wilderness without homes, houses, protection against the elements. It is a story of spiritual strength, not military strength.

Succot is a testament to the Jewish people's survival. Even if it loses its land and is cast again into the wilderness, it will lose neither heart nor hope. It will remember that it spent its early years as a nation living in a succah, a temporary dwelling exposed to the elements. It will know that in the

wilderness, no encampment is permanent. It will keep travelling until once again it reaches the promised land: Israel, home.

It is no accident that the Jewish people is the only one to have survived 2,000 years of exile and dispersion, its identity intact and energy unabated. It is the only people who can live in a shack with leaves as a roof and yet feel surrounded by clouds of glory. It is the only people who can live in a temporary dwelling and yet rejoice.

Economist John Kay and former Governor of the Bank of England Mervyn King have just published a book, *Radical Uncertainty*.^[3] In it they make the distinction between risk, which is calculable, and uncertainty, which is not. They argue that people have relied too much on calculations of probability while neglecting the fact that danger may appear from a completely unexpected source. The sudden appearance of the Coronavirus just as their book appeared proved their point. People knew there was a possibility of a pandemic. But no one knew what it would be like, where it would come from, how rapidly it would spread, and what toll it would take.

More important than the calculation of probabilities, they say, is understanding the situation, answering the question, “What is going on?”^[4] This, they say, is never answered by statistics or predictions but rather by narrative, by telling a story.

That is exactly what Succot is about. It is a story about uncertainty. It tells us that we can know everything else, but we will never know what tomorrow will bring. Time is a journey across a wilderness.

On Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we pray to be written into the Book of Life. On Succot we rejoice because we believe we have received a positive answer to our prayer. But as we turn to face the coming year, we acknowledge at the outset that life is fragile, vulnerable in a dozen different ways. We do not know what our health will be, what our career or livelihood will be, or what will happen to society and to the world. We cannot escape exposure to risk. That is what life is.

The succah symbolises living with unpredictability. Succot is the festival of radical uncertainty. But it places it within the framework of a narrative, exactly as Kay and King suggest. It tells us that though we journey through a wilderness, we as a people will reach our destination. If we see life through the eyes of faith, we will know we are surrounded by clouds of glory. Amid uncertainty we will find ourselves able to rejoice. We need no castles for protection or palaces for glory. A humble succah will do, for when we sit within it, we sit beneath what the Zohar calls “the shade of faith.”

I believe that the experience of leaving the protection of a house and entering the exposure of the succah is a way of taming our fear of the unknown. It says: We have been here before. We are all travellers on a journey. The Divine Presence is with us. We need not be afraid. That is a source of the resilience we need in our interconnected, hazardous, radically uncertain world. Shabbat Shalom

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subject: Rav Frand - Chinuch Begins at Home

Parshas Emor

Chinuch Begins at Home

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD #1117 — Must We Honor Leviim as Well as Kohanim? Good Shabbos! Parshas Emor begins with the pasuk: “Hashem said to Moshe: ‘Say to the Kohanim, sons of Aharon, and you shall say to them: to a (dead) person he shall not become impure among his people.’” [Vayikra 21:1]. There is a redundancy in this pasuk in terms of the verb “to speak” (Emor). If first says “Emor el haKohanim” (speak to the Kohanim) and then “v’Amarta aleihem” (and say to them). The repetitious “and say to them” could have simply been eliminated.

The Gemara [Yevamos 114a], cited by Rashi here, derives the fact that the elders (gedolim) must warn the minors (ketanim) to observe these laws (of priests not becoming contaminated through contact with the dead) from that pasuk. This is one of three places where the Torah tells us that not only is an adult commanded to do a mitzvah or prohibited from transgressing an aveirah, but the parents of little Kohanim have a responsibility to make sure that they too should not become impure (tameh).

The other two places where the Torah teaches such a lesson are not places where this derivation is based on a redundancy in Scripture. For instance, with the halacha of Sheratzim (forbidden reptiles and creeping creatures) where the pasuk [Vayikra 11:42] says “Lo Tochlum” the Gemara's exegesis is “Lo Ta-achilum” (rather than “Do not eat”, the pasuk implies “Do not feed” as well), applying this law not only to Sheratzim, but to all kinds of forbidden foods.

The third place where we have such a teaching is the pasuk “...Any soul from you shall not consume blood...” [Vayikra 17:12] where the Talmud again teaches “This implies that the adults must warn the children not to violate this prohibition.”

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin in his sefer, *Oznaim La'Torah* asks an interesting question: We see it is possible to teach this principle that “adults must warn their minor children” without resorting to redundancies. This was the case with forbidden foods and the consumption of blood. Why, by the prohibition of Tumas Kohanim, where the father needs to make sure that his young Kohen son also does not become ritually impure – is it necessary to articulate this detail with the redundant expression “Emor el haKohanim v’Amarta ...”?

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin answers with a great truth of life. When raising children, as we all know, there are two main influences – the parents and “the street”. Parents try to inculcate and educate their children with the right values – the dos and the don'ts of how to behave. Society (“the street”), however, also has an undeniable influence on children. The main influence little children receive is from their parents. But as soon as the children become a little older and they start going to school, the parents are no longer their only influence. As soon as children mature a bit and become subject to peer influence and peer pressure, this too has a tremendous influence on them. In short, two things shape a child: (1) His home, his father and mother; and (2) His surroundings and environment.

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin says that when the street and the environment and the peers are teaching the same lesson as the parents, the Chinuch (education) the children receive at home is reinforced in the street and in the external environment. In such a case, the chances of being successful with the Chinuch of children is greatly increased. The children will not be hearing “mixed messages.” The parents are not saying one thing while the street says another. On the other hand, if someone's society, class, or set friends have different values then parents will be fighting a very difficult war. Parents say one thing and the street says another.

The only way to combat this, says Rav Zalman Sorotzkin, is “Emor, v’Amarta” – redoubling our efforts, reinforcement of our words. A person's Chinuch efforts vis a vis his children will not be reinforced by a society of peers who have different rules to play by. He points out that the father of a Kohen has a much more difficult task than the father of a Levi or the father of a Yisroel. The father of a Kohen tells his son “You need to keep the mitzvos“, “You need to keep Shabbos“, “You need to eat Kosher“. The street also says that. All the children keep Shabbos. All the children eat Kosher. The father tells his son “You cannot speak Lashon HaRah“. All the children's parents tell them not to speak Lashon HaRah. However, it is different by “Tumas Kohanim“. If the father tells his son “You cannot play ball near the cemetery“, all the other children are playing ball near the cemetery. So, by the prohibition of Kohanim to come into contact with death-impurity, the “street” does not preach the same values as the Kohen. When someone has an eight-year-old child and everybody else is playing near the cemetery, the child will be under significant peer pressure to

join his friends in their games. What is he going to do – tell his 8-year-old friends “I cannot go. I am a Kohen?”

There, says Rav Zalman Sorotzkin, the father needs to more forcefully with his Chinuch. Therefore, the Torah here says “Emor...v’Amarta...” — to teach that the parents must emphasize an added level of education and explanation with their children. When the lesson is not going to be reinforced in the street, it is up to the parent to tell his son (Emor) and then to repeat it once again (v’Amarta).

Rav Isaac Bernstein, z”l, takes this lesson of Rav Zalman Sorotzkin one step further.

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky makes an interesting observation in his sefer: The Torah says “If the daughter of a man who is a Kohen will be defiled through having illicit relations, she defiles her father – she will be consumed by the fire.” [Vayikra 21:9]. A Kohen’s daughter who commits adultery – be it as a married woman or even as an halachically “engaged” woman – her death penalty is more intense than others who commit adultery. Whereas others receive “Chenek” (strangulation) for this crime, she receives “Sereifah” (forced drinking of molten lead). The Torah gives the reason for this stringency for a Kohen’s daughter: “For she has profaned her father.” Not only is she committing a sexual crime, but she is also defaming her own father.

Rav Yaakov quotes the Gemarah [Succah 56b] which states that the Priestly Family of Bilgah was punished.. When the Lechem Hapanim (Show Breads) were divided among the Kohanim, between the “Mimshmar” that was coming in and the “Mishmar” that was leaving, the Chachomim posed certain penalties and fines on the House of Bilgah. The Talmud explains that a Miriam from the house of Bilgah became an apostate. She married a Greek officer. When the Greeks entered the Bais HaMikdash, she went to the Mizbayach and began kicking it with her sandal. She yelled “You wolf, you wolf! How long will you consume the money of Israel and not stand with them in their time of need. The Temple service is a sham. People bring sacrifices. It is a waste of their money. You don’t help them when they need it.”

When the Sages heard about this incident, they fined the entire family of Bilgah and enacted the penalties against them, as mentioned in the Talmud. The Gemara asks why the rest of the family should be penalized for the sin of the daughter. Abaye explains – that this was in fact an appropriate punishment because that which a child says in the street, he or she must have heard at home from either his father or mother. Someone in the family must have been complaining about the fact that the Jews were bringing sacrifices and they were not getting proper “payback” from Heaven. They spend a fortune – what do they get out of it? The daughter did not invent this expression on her own. It was something she picked up at home. So far, we have been quoting from the Talmud [Succah 56b].

Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky makes an interesting observation: This halacha – “her father she defiles” and this incident involving the punishment of the family of Miriam daughter of Bilgah – is a phenomenon that only exists by daughters! By sons, there is not such a concept of “his father he defiles”, no matter how mischievous or how off the track he may be! Similarly, a young girl who was illicit during her engagement (na’arah ha’meorassah) is “stoned by her father’s home.” Here again, this is only by a daughter. She shames her father and is punished by the entrance to his home. Why do we not find a similar phenomenon by sons?

Rav Yaakov answers that this is because in Biblical times (and up until recent history), the only chinuch (education) that a girl received was in the home. There was no “street”. There was no external environment from which she might learn. Think about it – girls did not go to school! “The honor of the daughter of the King is inward.” [Tehillim 45:14] They spent their time at home. Therefore, if the daughter of a Kohen has illicit relations or speaks in a coarse fashion – it came from something she picked up at home. She has defamed her father! The parents are the clear culprits in her less than perfect

upbringing. She did not pick this up at school or while playing baseball on the street. Girls grew up in a hermetically sealed environment called “home.” In the Laws of Nesias Kapayim (the Priestly Blessing), it says “There are those who say that for a Kohen who has a daughter who converted or who engaged in illicit relations, there no longer exists on obligation (on Israelites) to honor him.” In other words, this daughter has “profaned her father” and he loses part of his stature as a Kohen. The Ramo cites this from the Mordechai. The Mordechai lived in the 1400s. In that era, if a girl came to convert or become sexually immoral, the likely source of the problem was from the home!

And yet, my friends, the Mishna Berura comments: “The later authorities (Achronim) write that nowadays we do not invalidate a Kohen for the apostasy or immorality of his daughter.” Why not? It is because perhaps in Biblical times and perhaps even in the time of the Rishonim such as the Mordechai in the 1400s, the parents could invariably be blamed for the how their daughter turned out. Today, the situation has changed. There are currently too many outside influences – even for girls – to place all the blame on what goes on in her parents’ home. The influence of the “street” was once limited only to sons. Today it impacts daughters as well.

I have one last observation from the Satmar Rav on the previously cited Gemara. The Gemara related the incident involving Miriam, daughter of Bilga, who converted and married one of the Greek officers. She married a Gentile and then verbally attacked the Mizbayach: “Lukas, Lukas.” She called the Mizbayach a money-waster. For this, her father’s family was punished.

The Satmar Rav asks: Is this what did her in? For calling the Mizbayach a money-waster we throw the book at her and her family? What about the fact that she had previously converted? What about the fact that she had previously married a Gentile? Something is wrong with this picture! The Satmar Rav made a very thought-provoking point: For her conversion and for her intermarriage, the parents cannot be entirely blamed. Sometimes a girl falls in love with a handsome and charming young man of another faith – it happens, Heaven Forbid. If she leaves Yiddishkeit? That is not necessarily the parents’ fault. But “Lukas, Lukas! How much longer are you going to needlessly consume the money of the Jews?” That is something she picked up at home. A young girl does not pick up such a mantra on her own. It came from her parents!

We cannot necessarily blame the parents for the other things – as horrible and as tragic as they are. But the vulgar speech, the blasphemy, a child’s attitude about the Holy Mizbayach – that must have come from the home and for that, the entire family is fined.

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This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion.

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Parashat Emor

The Power of Speech

Rabbi Meir Goldwicht

Iyar 5766

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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Subject Weekly Halacha

by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt (dneustadt@cordetroit.com)

Weekly Halacha :: Parshas Emor Counting Sefiras Ha-Omer Unintentionally Rabbi Doniel Neustadt Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya As Lag ba-Omer approaches, it is timely to call attention to a halachic problem which can easily arise. People frequently ask each other what day of the Omer it is. If one gives the correct answer – even though he does not intend to fulfill the mitzvah of counting the Omer by answering his friend – it is considered as if he fulfilled his obligation to count the Omer. This halachah, which is recorded in the Shulchan Aruch,(1) is based on an opinion in the Talmud that holds that mitzvos eimam tzrichos kavanah, mitzvos can be fulfilled even without specific intent to fulfill them. By uttering the correct day's count of the Omer, he has lost the opportunity to recite a blessing over the counting since he has, in the eyes of the halachah, already counted the Omer, albeit unintentionally.(2) One should, therefore, not give a direct answer when asked for the day of the Omer; rather one should say: Yesterday's count was such and such. Of course, this advisory applies only from sunset and onwards, since counting sefirah before sunset is invalid.(3) The danger of inadvertently counting the Omer by a causal response or comment regarding what day of the Omer it is, is most prevalent on Lag ba-Omer. The very name "Lag ba-Omer" states that it is the 33rd day of the Omer count (as Lag is the letter equivalent for the number 33).(4) Thus on the evening of Lag ba-Omer after sunset, one should be careful not to express that "today is Lag ba-Omer" until after he counts the Omer with the blessing.

QUESTION: If, inadvertently, one forgot and responded with the correct sefirah count, is there any way that he can count again that night with the blessing? DISCUSSION: B'diavad, one is permitted to recite sefirah that night with the blessing: If he responded by saying just the correct number of that day, but did not say "Today is number so and so," then he may repeat the sefirah with a blessing.(5) But if he omitted just the word "ba-Omer" (or "la-Omer"), then the count remains valid and it may not be repeated with the blessing.(6) If he responded by saying, "Today is so and so" but did not mention the "weeks" count, he may still repeat the sefirah with a blessing. For instance, on the seventeenth day he responded, "Today is day number seventeen," but he did not add, "which is two weeks and three days."(7) [Obviously, this applies only after the first week of sefirah has passed.] Even if he responded with the correct number and the right weekly count but had

specific and clear intention not to fulfill the mitzvah of Sefiras ha-Omer with his response, then he may repeat the sefirah with a blessing.(8) If the person who inadvertently forgot and responded, “Today is so and so” is one who is always particular to count the Omer after tzeis ha-kochavim only, and this exchange took place before tzeis ha-kochavim, he may repeat the count with the blessing.(9) If on the fifth day, for example, he responded, “Today is six minus one,” or, “Today is three plus three,” he may repeat the count with the blessing.(10) If in response to the question he wrote down the correct sefirah count (but did not say it), he may repeat the sefirah with the blessing.(11) If the questioner, for example, asked, “Is today day number five?” and the response was, “Yes, it is,” then both the questioner and respondent can repeat the sefirah and recite the blessing.(12)

QUESTION: May one repeat the sefirah with a blessing if, in response to the question, “What was yesterday’s Sefiras ha-Omer,” one mistakenly answered today’s count? DISCUSSION: Yes, he may. Since his intention was to say yesterday’s count, it is considered as if he had specific intent not to fulfill today’s mitzvah. Although he mistakenly said the wrong (today’s) count, it still does not change the fact that he specifically intended not to fulfill the mitzvah.(13)

SHAVES AND HAIRCUTS ON LAG BA-OMER: QUESTION Is it permitted to shave or take a haircut on the evening of Lag ba-Omer or does one need to wait until the morning? DISCUSSION: The Rama(14) says that haircutting may not take place on Lag ba-Omer until “Lag ba-Omer itself, not the evening [before].” The poskim debate what the Rama meant: Some(15) say that he meant to exclude the evening before the day of Lag ba-Omer. In their view, haircutting may begin only on the morning of Lag ba-Omer. This interpretation is based on the fact that Lag ba-Omer itself is still included in the days of mourning over the death of the disciples of Rabbi Akiva. The halachic principle of miktzas hayom kekulo – a small part of the day is considered like a whole day –permits us to lift the mourning restrictions after a small part of the day has passed in mourning. Other poskim,(16) however, reject this interpretation of the Rama’s ruling. In their opinion, the Rama meant to exclude only those who permit haircutting before the night of Lag ba-Omer has actually begun (tzeis ha-kochavim). Once it is definitely night, however, Lag ba-Omer has begun and haircutting is permissible. Both of these views are quoted in the Mishnah Berurah, who does not render a clear decision on this issue. In many communities it has become customary, based on the previously mentioned view, not to take a haircut or a shave until the morning of Lag ba-Omer. But in an area where a clear custom does not exist, or in case of necessity, one may be lenient and take a haircut or a shave immediately upon nightfall of Lag ba-Omer.(17)

[Concerning weddings, however, there are poskim who hold that they should not be held on the evening of Lag ba-Omer,(18) while others are lenient in regard to weddings as well.(19)] FOOTNOTES: 1 O.C. 489:4. 2 Although basic halachah follows the opposing view – that one must have specific intent when fulfilling mitzvos – still, in deference to the view according to which one would have fulfilled the mitzvah, we do not recite the blessing on the (second) sefirah; Mishnah Berurah 489:22 and Be'ur Halachah (s.v. sh'eim and eino). 3 Be'ur Halachah 489:4 (s.v. eino). A minority view recommends that one should avoid a direct response as early as plag ha-minchah; see Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav 489:15 and Machatzis ha-Shekel 489:10. 4 See Sha'arei Teshuvah 489:1 and Be'ur Halachah (s.v. moneh) who quote various views as to whether or not one fulfills the mitzvah of sefirah by counting with roshei teivos. 5 Mishnah Berurah 489:20 and Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 25. L'chatchilah, however, one should not rely on this leniency and should avoid stating the correct number even without saying “today.” Kaf ha-Chayim 489:53. 6 Mishnah Berurah 489:8;489:21. 7 Mishnah Berurah 489:22. Since other poskim disagree and maintain that one has fulfilled his obligation even without mentioning the “weeks” count [except at the end of each week – day 7, 14 ,21, etc.], one should l'chatchilah not rely on this leniency; see Da'as Torah 489:4 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 489:28 and Kaf ha-Chayim 489:55. 8 Mishnah Berurah 489:22. 9 Be'ur Halachah 489:4 (s.v. sheim) 10 Be'er Moshe 3:82. 11 Chasam Sofer 6:19; Aruch ha-Shulchan 489:9. 12 Da'as Torah 489:4, quoting Zachor l'Avraham. 13 Be'er Moshe 3:80. 14 O.C. 493:2. 15 Levush, Gra, Machatzis ha-Shekel, and others. 16 Chok Yaakov, Mor u'Ketziya, Eliyahu Rabbah, and others. 17 See Kaf ha-Chayim 493:30. 18 See Mishnah Berurah 493:11 quoting the Eliyahu Rabbah. See also Teshuvos Chasam Sofer O.C. 142. 19 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:159; Chelkas

Yaakov 1:97. Weekly-Halacha, Text Copyright © 2004 by Rabbi Neustadt, Dr. Jeffrey Gross and Torah.org. Weekly sponsorships are available—please send email to the moderator, Dr. Jeffrey Gross jgross@torah.org. Rabbi Neustadt is Rav of Young Israel in Cleveland Heights. He may be reached at 216-321-4635 or at jsgross@core.com. Weekly Halacha © 2020 by Torah.org.

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Emor: Agents of Holiness Rav Kook Torah

The Talmud in Nedarim 35b describes the kohanim as sheluchei didan, our agents. When they perform the Temple service, the kohanim act as our emissaries. Yet this idea - that the kohanim act as agents for the Jewish people - appears to violate the legal definition of a shaliach. An agent acts on behalf of the one sending him (the principal), executing his wishes. The agent, however, can only do that which the principal himself is authorized to do. So how can the kohanim perform the Temple service on our behalf, when we as non-kohanim are not permitted to serve there? Potential vs. Actual The parashah opens with a set of special directives for kohanim: “God spoke to Moses: Tell the kohanim, the sons of Aaron...” (Lev. 21:1). The text appears repetitive - “the kohanim, the sons of Aaron.” Why does the text need to emphasize that the kohanim are descendants of 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 holiness. The second aspect is an additional layer of holiness as expressed by a kohen’s actual service in the Temple. This aspect is designated by the term “kohanim.” The verb le-khahein means “to serve,” so the word “kohanim” refers to their actual service in the Temple. Thus the term “sons of Aaron” refers to the kohanim’s inherited potential, while “kohanim” refers to their actualized state of priestly service. The Chofetz Chaim 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 into a special category. He is called a chalal, from the word chilul, “to defile holiness.” Despite his lineage as the son of a kohen, 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, 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. Why are a chalal’s offerings accepted? 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 actualized sanctity of a functioning kohen. But he still retains the inherited sanctity as a “son of Aaron.” 1 This intrinsic sanctity cannot be revoked. Therefore, while a chalal should not serve in the Temple, his offerings are accepted after the fact. The Sages derived this ruling from Moses’ blessing of the tribe of Levi: “May God bless his strength (cheilo), and favor the acts of his hands” (Deut. 33:11). Even the acts of those who are chulin, who have lost part of their kohanic sanctity, are still acceptable to God (Kiddushin 66b). 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 Temple, for they lack the holiness of actual priesthood. Yet every Jew has the 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 and perform the Temple service on our behalf. Israel's Future Holiness This understanding of the role of kohanim sheds a new light on the ceremony of Birkat kohanim, the special priestly benediction (as described in Num. 6:23-27). The purpose of their blessing is to awaken the latent kohanic holiness that resides within each member of the Jewish people. As the kohanim extend their arms to bless the people, they reach out toward 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 established 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)

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Reasons For Our Minhagim The Shul Chazan 8645. The Shliach Tzibbur who leads the Tefilah prayers in shul is called the Chazan. 8646. The root of Chazan is chozeh, which means seeing. Before the advent of printed books and siddurim, the shliach tzibbur was the only member of the congregation who prayed from a written script and not orally - by heart, as the other worshippers did. Shiblei Haleket 10, Mes. Shabbos 11b, 35b, Tosafos Yom Tov Mes. Shabbos 1:3, Keser Shem Tov 284, Otzar Taamei Haminhagim The "Gabbai" of The Shul 8647. It is customary (mainly among Ashkenazim) that the person who supervises shul procedures such as seating, baalei tefilah, and calling individuals to the Torah is called the "Gabbai". In many Sephardic congregations the same functionary is called the "Parnes". 8648. This appellation originally referred to one who collected local taxes or tzedakah in the community. Since monetary contributions are necessary for shul maintenance and were usually collected by the same person, the term Gabbai [or Parnes] evolved as the title for the one appointed to generally supervise shul procedures. Mishnah Berurah SA OC 141:16, 147:8, Mes. Demai 3:1, Mes. Kedushin 4:5, Mes. Avos 3:16, Keser Shem Tov 295, Otzar Taamei Haminhagim

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Emor *For the week ending 9 May 2020 / 15 Iyyar 5780 Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair -*
www.seasonsofthemoon.com Parsha Insights Dynamite of the Soul

"Until the morrow of the seventh week you shall count." (23:18) Staying awake all night may not sound "religious," but there are several times during the Jewish year when the custom is to burn the midnight oil until the sun peeps through the blinds. Many people stay up after the Seder on Pesach until the time of the morning prayers in order to recount and analyze the great miracles of the Exodus. As the Haggadah says: Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria and Rabbi Akiva stayed up all night talking about the Exodus until their talmidim (students) came to tell them that it was time to recite the morning Shema Yisrael. On Yom Kippur, those with sufficient strength stay up all night in prayer and supplication, atoning for their sins. On Hoshanah Rabbah, the time when the decrees of Yom Kippur are given over to those agents who will carry them out, there is a tradition to learn all night. On the night of Shavuot there is also a widely observed custom to stay up all night. The Sages of the Kabbala formulated an order of study call a tikun (lit. "fixing") for the night of Shavuot. This includes passages from the written Torah, the oral Torah, the mystical Zohar, as well as a list of all 613 mitzvahs. The Zohar commends those who stay awake in anticipation of receiving the Torah. The giving of the Torah was, as it were, the wedding of the Jewish People and the Torah, and so it is fitting that we should be engaged in preparing the ornaments of the bride the previous night. Another reason: On that first Shavuot morning there were some who overslept and had to be awoken to receive the Torah. In order to rectify this, we stay up. But there is a deeper reason for our not sleeping on

the night of Shavuot. Sleep is the taste of death. In fact, the Talmud tells us that sleep is one-sixtieth of death. One part in sixty is the threshold of perception. Similarly, Shabbat is a "taste" of the World-to-Come. It is precisely one-sixtieth of the World-to-Come. Sleep is the taste of death in this world. King David died on Shavuot. But before he died, he never even tasted the taste of death, because he never fell into a deep sleep. Therefore, on the occasion of his yartzeit, the anniversary of his death, we avoid the "taste of death" by staying up all night. The angel of death came to King David to try and take his life. But it had no power over him since he was immersed in learning Torah, and Torah is the essence of one's life-force in this world. The only way that the angel of death could take David's life was through cunning. He managed to distract David from his learning, and in that split second he was able to take his life from him. So, on this night of Shavuot, which is both the anniversary of the giving of the Torah and the end of King David's life, we stay awake all night and immerse ourselves in Torah study. Torah breathes life into Man. But it was not always this way. When G-d first created Man, he was animated by G-d's utterance, "Let Us make Man." It was the power of these words spoken by the Creator that gave Man the ability to live and breathe and think and act. However, this was only until the Jewish People stood at the foot of Sinai. When Hashem said, "I am Hashem, your G-d" as the first commandment, the life-force that animated Man parted from the body and the entire Jewish People died. Miraculously their souls were put back into their bodies, but what animated them now was a different utterance. No longer was their life-force derived from "Let Us make Man." Now they were like new creations. Their inner essence was powered by "I am Hashem, your G-d." From this moment, the Torah became the animating dynamic of the Jewish Soul. And when the Mashiach, the scion of King David, arrives to herald the era of the revival of the dead, it will be the Torah, the dew of life, which will be the mechanism to awaken the body from its long sleep. Then we will finally understand the words we have sung for so long: "David, Melech Yisrael, chai vekayam!" David, king of Israel, lives and endures! *Sources: Tehillim 73:5, Yalkut Shimoni; Talmud Berachot 3b; Tehillim 19:9; Book of Our Heritage, Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, translated by Rabbi Nachman Bulman; Time Pieces, Rabbi Aaron Lopianski © 2020 Ohr Somayach International*

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The Unburied Corpse

by Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Dead. Unburied. Abandoned. Forgotten.

What can be a worse fate? I once read a very moving novel about the events immediately preceding World War I and the fate of those who were caught up in the chaos of the opening days of that war. The author of the book, a Jew, was Joseph Roth, and the name of the book is The Radetzky March. I was drawn to this book because it deals, in part, with the Jews of Galicia and the effect that World War I had upon them. Both my paternal and maternal great-grandparents were caught up in the events of those times, and I wished to learn more about those events, if only from a fictional account. I found the book informative and troubling, but the single event recorded in it that had the most impact on me was a description of the novel's hero, a combatant in the initial outbreak of the battle and gunfire. At one point, as he was fleeing for safety, he encountered the corpse of one of his fellows. Rather than pass this corpse by in his flight, he chose to drag the corpse to a nearby graveyard, dig a shallow grave with his bayonet, and bury the poor man. Although the hero of this story was not a Jew, he was acting in accordance with a supreme Jewish value. At great personal risk, he buried a met mitzvah, an abandoned corpse with no one else present to bury it. Our Torah insists that giving such a corpse the dignity of a proper burial is a mitzvah, one which takes priority over almost any other good deed.

The source for this great mitzvah is in this week's Torah portion, Parshat Emor, where we read of the strict prohibition upon kohanim, members of the priestly caste, to come into contact with the dead. Exceptions are made for the kohen's parents, children, siblings, and spouse.

And an exception is made for the met mitzvah. Should the kohen encounter an abandoned corpse, and no one else is available to bury it, he is commanded to ignore the prohibition against contact with the dead, and he must bury that corpse himself.

This is the meaning of the phrase in the very first verse of our parsha, "... he shall not defile himself for any dead person among his people..." (Leviticus 21:1). Paraphrasing Rashi's words here: "When the dead man is among his people, the kohen cannot defile himself, but when the dead man is not among his people, i.e., there is no one else to bury him, then the prohibition does not apply."

Our tradition is unusually sensitive to the sanctity of the human body. In life, certainly. But even in death. A proper Jewish burial is the last chesed shel emet (kindness of truth) that one can perform for another.

It is this important Jewish value which has led Jewish communities throughout the ages to do all that they could to recover the bodies of those of our brethren who perished in prisons, on battlefields, or in tragic natural disasters.

I must note a poignant incident in our history, an incident which culminated in the recovery of two metei mitzvah. Part of the narrative of these two heroes is recounted in the book *The Deed* by Gerold Frank. It is the story of two boys who gave their lives to assassinate a high British official, based in Egypt, whose policies threatened to block Jewish immigration into what was then Palestine. Their names were Eliahu Bet Zouri and Eliahu Hakim. They acted under the orders of the high command of the "Stern Group." They succeeded in assassinating the official, but were tried and hanged for their efforts. They were buried near Cairo in 1945.

But they were never forgotten. In 1975, the State of Israel exchanged twenty Arab prisoners for the bodies of these two young men and reburied them in hero's graves upon Mount Herzl. In recovering their bodies and eventually affording them an appropriate Jewish burial, the Israeli government was adhering to the teaching of this week's Torah portion. They saw to it that these metei mitzvah were buried properly. Even at this moment, the remains of several Israel soldiers are unrecovered and are held by our enemies. We hope and pray that even in these uncertain times, and perhaps especially in these times, our efforts to reclaim the bodies of these heroes will be successful. These soldiers are metei mitzvah in every sense of that phrase. They performed great mitzvot in their military service, and bringing them home for a proper burial is the least we can do to honor their memories. And so, this week again, as so often in our study of the parsha, we discovered a value of paramount importance, a priority mitzvah, buried between the lines, nay between the words, of a simple phrase. This week, that phrase is in the very first verse of Parshat Emor.

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Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

chiefrabbi.org Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis Dvar Torah: Emor When can the performance of a great mitzva bring our people into disrepute? The Torah, in Parshat Emor, gives us the mitzvah: 'vlo techalelu et sheim kodshei – you must not desecrate my holy name'. Here Hashem is telling us that none of our deeds should, God forbid, give a bad name to Hashem, to our Torah or to our people. Then the Torah continues with a second mitzvah, 'Vnictashti b'toch bnei Yisrael – and I shall be sanctified in the midst of the Jewish people'. The Gemara, in Megillah, Daf 3b, tells us that from the word 'b'toch' – 'in the midst of' – we learn about the requirement of a minyan, a quorum of 10 men for all devarim shebikdusha – precepts of supreme holiness. Such as Baruchu, Kedusha, Kaddish, the reading of the Torah in public, a wedding and so on. Now, the two mitzvot of chillul

Hashem (not desecrating His name), and Kidush Hashem, (sanctifying his name) are linked together through the vav, the word 'and' between them in the phrase 'V'nikdashti' – 'and I will be sanctified'. The Chatam Sofer explained as follows: 'shelo yitchallel al yadei kiddush Hashem shemo hagadol' – says the Chatam Sofer: we must always make sure that our Kiddush Hashem does not cause a Chillul Hashem. Let me give you an example. When travelling on an airplane and you want to daven in a minyan; what you should first do is enquire from the stewards and stewardesses if they're ok with it and when the best time will be. Then, when you do daven, guarantee that you don't cause inconvenience for fellow travellers, in terms of your location on the plane. Because if you're not careful, it is possible that the staging of this minyan could cause a Chillul Hashem. Similarly during these very trying times of the Coronavirus, we are witnessing a few incidents of awful Chillul Hashem, bringing us all into disrepute. But the converse is also the case, I would like to say a huge Yashar Koach, a huge thank you to all of you who should have been enjoying smachot at this time. But unfortunately that's not possible, either they're being postponed or they have needed to be an adjusted version of your grand simcha. Your disappointment has been matched by your recognition of the fact that you're performing an incredible mitzvah – the mitzvah to preserve life. And I, and so many others, have been so inspired by the example that you have set and the great kiddush Hashem that you have performed. Let us hope that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will provide us with many opportunities to perform Kiddush Hashem, to sanctify his name and to keep far away from Chillul Hashem – never to desecrate his name. And may we, as soon as possible, be in a position, in good health and happiness, to come together in minyanim, for the sake of Devarim Shebikdusha, to sanctify God's name in this world in the best possible way. *Shabbat shalom. Rabbi Mirvis is the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom. He was formerly Chief Rabbi of Ireland.*

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torahweb.org Mikdash, Simcha, and Chessed - The Three Pillars of Yom Tov Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky Every yom tov has its unique halachos and themes, and yet there are some aspects of yom tov that apply to all yomim tovim. The bringing of Korbanos, referenced in Parshas Emor, plays a major role in the celebration of all yomim tovim. The Shalosh Regalim have their mitzvos of offering multiple Korbanos upon visiting the Beis Hamikdash, Yom Kippur has its unique Avodah that plays such a prominent role in the observance of the day, and even Rosh Hashana, which is not linked directly to the Mikdash, is observed in a unique way in the Beis Hamikdash. Teikas Shofar is performed slightly differently in the Beis Hamikdash; according to the Talmud Yerushalmi the practice of blowing Shofar on Shabbos only in the Beis Hamikdash is of Torah origin, thereby highlighting that Tekias Shofar in Mikdash is different than everywhere else. Furthermore, we can see from the fact that Elkanah and his family would visit the Mishkan in Shilo annually on Rosh Hashana that Rosh Hashana in Mikdash is unique. In Parshas Re'eh we are instructed to be b'simcha (to rejoice) on the Shalosh Regalim. Although different from the Shalosh Regalim, the Yomim Noraim, according to many, are also times of joy. The Rambam notes that Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are not days of boundless joy because of the somber mood that must accompany days of judgment, nevertheless there, is to a lesser degree, a mitzva of rejoicing even on these days. The halacha that aveilus is cancelled by Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur just as it is by the Shalosh Regalim proves that we have a chiyuv simcha even on the Yomim Noraim. Our responsibility to do chessed with others, particularly those in dire need, has added significance on all of the yomim tovim. The Torah stresses that our joy cannot be complete without sharing with the poor and others who are in need financially or emotionally. In Parshas Emor we read that the celebration of the Shavuos harvest is only complete when we share

of that harvest with others. It is not coincidental that the story of Megillas Rus is read on Shavuot; care for the needy is integral to celebration of the day. During the days of Ezra there was a great celebration of Rosh Hashana that is described in Tanach. We read not only of the Torah and Tefilla that marked the day but also of the sending of food to those in need. Rosh Hashana is not complete without caring for others. Although Yom Kippur does not involve providing food for the poor for Yom Kippur itself, the age-old custom of kapparos being distributed to the poor highlights that even Yom Kippur cannot be observed properly without caring for the needy. These three universal aspects of yom tov - Mikdash, simcha, and chessed - are strongly linked to one another, and it is our connection to Hashem through the vehicle of Mikdash that sets the stage for the proper observance of yom tov. As we visit Hashem's home and we experience being in His presence we are immediately filled with intense joy; Rabbi Soloveichik observed that the very mitzva of simcha is a direct result of being in Hashem's presence. The starting point of our very existence is a state of total joy, but as we drift further from Hashem our joy is mitigated. When we return, through aliyah l'regel on the Shalosh Regalim and through teshuva during the Yomim Noraim, we are filled again with that all-encompassing joy. It is this simcha of reconnecting with Hashem through Mikdash that is the engine that drives our responsibility to others. The Ramban in his introduction to Vayikra highlights how the world of korbanos teaches us about the great kindness Hashem bestows on us. Korbanos which atone for our shortcomings are a gift from Hashem who is all compassionate. Rather than judging us strictly, He treats us with loving kindness. When we are recipients of His kindness, we in turn realize we must share that kindness with others. The Rambam (Hilchos Megilla) describes the significance of sharing the joy of Purim with those who need it most, telling us that one who does so is compared to Hashem Who acts in this manner and thus the sharing of joy with others is the greatest form of simcha. May we merit to see the Beis Hamikdash rebuilt and our simcha complete as we share our joy with others and by doing so emulate Hashem Himself. Copyright © 2020 by TorahWeb.org. All rights reserved.

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 Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky
Drasha - Parshas Emor Mitzvah Vigilante Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Dedicated to the speedy recovery of Mordechai ben Chaya
 The Torah tells us in this week's parsha, "u'shmartem es mitzvotai, v'aseesem osum — watch the mitzvot and do them" (Vayikra 22:31). What does watch mitzvot mean. If one does a mitzvah he is surely doing more than watching them. Watching mitzvot seems quite passive. Observant Jew is a term used for those who actually perform the and adhere to the laws, and the curious word observant, perhaps, indeed comes from the Hebrew word u'shmartem. But doesn't Hashem want us to be more than just watchers. If He tells us to do mitzvot, then surely we watch them! Why the double, if not redundant, expression? This past Thursday evening I went to be Menachem Avel (in the vernacular - pay a shiva call) a friend, Rabbi Zissel Zelman, who was sitting shiva for his father. He is a Chicago native whose father, Rabbi Zelman, grew up in Chicago way before Torah Judaism had flourished there. Reb Zissel related that as a young man, his father would pass the newsstand every Saturday night after shul to pick up a paper. As he did not carry money with him, he had made an arrangement with the vendors to return on Sunday morning to pay the vendor. Rabbi Zelman was not interested in the sports pages nor was he interested in the headlines. In fact he was not interested in the paper altogether. Rabbi Zelman bought the paper for his mother. She also was not interested in the sports or the news. She was interested in the dead. Every Saturday night she would comb th paper looking for announcements of tombstone unveilings that were to take place on Sunday at the Jewish Cemeteries. An unveiling is a time when people are charitable, and the elderly Mrs. Zelman would go to the cemeteries and raise

funds from the gathered for Yeshivos in Europe in Israel. She would eventually turn the coins into bills and send the money overseas. A plaque hangs today in the Slobodka Yeshiva in Israel commemorating her efforts. Perhaps the Torah is telling us more than just doing mitzvot. It is telling us to watch for mitzvot. Be on guard. There are hundreds of opportunities to find mitzvot and to do them. But we must be observant and vigilant. There are hundreds of mitzvot that pass by our very eyes. Scores of Good Mornings. Hundreds of packages we can help lift, as well as spirits. There are hundreds of hearts we can help heal as well as small acts of charity we can fulfill. Perhaps the Torah is telling us more than watch the mitzvot that come our way. Perhaps it may be telling us to be on the lookout for those that are out there waiting for us to observe them! *Sponsored L'Refuah Shlaimah of Yehuda ben Miriam Liba Text Copyright © 2005 by Rabbi M. Kamenetzky and Torah.org. Drasha © 2020 by Torah.org.*

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network Peninim on the Torah - Parshas Emor פרשת אמור תשפ
But on the fifteenth day of the seventh month...you shall celebrate Hashem's festival for a seven-day period. (23:39) The Festival of *Succos*, as is the case with all the other festivals, is replete with deep esoteric meaning far beyond the grasp of the average Jew who observes it simply because it is a G-d-given *mitzvah*. A *mitzvah*, regardless of the level with which one observes it, and his understanding of its various spiritual facets, have enormous power and incredible influence. Just executing the decree of Hashem, simply because this is the way of a Jew, is powerful, as the following story related by the *Tolner Rebbe, Shlita*, illustrates. A *baal teshuvah*, penitent, who had come to the *Rebbe* for advice regarding a specific problem, told the following story. This man's grandfather lived in a small American town, distant from mainstream America and even more distant from mainstream Judaism. Nonetheless, he observed one *mitzvah* religiously – to the point of *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice: *Succah*. He was steadfast in its observance, unswerving in his commitment to the *mitzvah*, despite the fact that he observed absolutely nothing else. Every year when *Succos* arrived, he built a *succah* in the courtyard of his house and dwelled in it 24/7 for seven days. Prior to leaving this world, he wrote a will bequeathing all of his assets to the one descendant who would observe *Succos* as he did: build a *succah* and live in it for seven days, day and night. His children and grandchildren were certain that he had lost his mind. Thus, they were unprepared to accept his will. They were not going to dwell in a *succah* for seven days. It was meaningless to them, because they were quite distant from religious observance. They did not even visit their temple on *Yom Kippur*, as other pseudo-religious/secular oriented Jews do. They knew nothing, and, as a result, kept nothing. Indeed, they were clueless concerning why their father/grandfather was so committed to this weird practice. Furthermore, to the best of their knowledge, their father/grandfather's estate was not worth much. He was not known to have had any money to speak of. One grandson, a sensitive soul, was upset that not a single member of the family was willing to honor the memory of his grandfather. He decided that he would do it. He met with the lawyer who was executor of the estate and informed him of his decision. The lawyer was pleased, but he first wanted the rest of the family to sign off on the will. They all signed that as far as they were concerned, the entire estate could go directly to the grandson who had acquiesced to his grandfather's request. After the grandson received the will, he discovered a reality (to which the lawyer had been privy the entire time) that his grandfather was quite wealthy. He had made investments that paid off handsomely, and he owned a number of parcels of real estate which, although when originally purchased were not worth much, had increased exponentially in value over the years. Not one to create jealousy and discord

within the family, he kept his newly-found wealth a secret. He had made a lucrative decision. *Succos* came along, and he carried out his end of the deal, sequestering himself for seven full days in his grandfather's *succah*. During these seven days, in order to overcome the feelings of loneliness, he would think. He first tried to learn the significance of *Succos* and what it meant to the Jewish people. He could not do it on his own. He searched for a rabbi who could answer his questions. A few days passed, and he was given the name of an Orthodox rabbi who lived a few hundred miles away, a four-hour drive from his town. His curiosity overwhelmed him. He called the rabbi, told him the story and asked him to explain the meaning and significance of the *succah*. The rabbi understood that he was referring to the *mitzvah* of *Succah*, so he explained its meaning and religious significance. He asked the rabbi if he could impose upon him to visit and look at the *succah* and validate it as kosher for festival use. He offered to reimburse the rabbi for his time and expenses. The rabbi agreed and made the trip. How shocked he was to discover that the "*succah*" was nothing more than metal bars attached together by plastic sheeting wrapped around them. There was no *schach* whatsoever covering the *succah*. It was totally *pasul*, invalid. The rabbi attempted to explain the meaning and difference between kosher and non-kosher with regard to *succah*, and, for that matter, everything else about Judaism. The grandson was relentless and refused to be pushed off, until the rabbi agreed to tutor him in the basics of Judaism. This is how it all began. A *mitzvah pesulah*, invalid performance of a *mitzvah*, with good intentions, but a lack of knowledge, had the awesome power to catalyze the alteration of this man's life. This is the extraordinary power of a *mitzvah*!

ויצא בן אשה ישראלית והוא בן איש מצרי...וינצו במתנה...ויקב...ויקלל **The son of a Yisraeli woman went out and he was the son of an Egyptian man ...they contended in the camp... and he pronounced the Name ... and he blasphemed. (24:10,11)** It was a truly tragic ending to a sinful relationship that had begun years earlier in Egypt. Shlomis bas Divri was a woman of ill repute, whose immoral behavior led to a relationship with an Egyptian that produced a son who later blasphemed the Name of Hashem. It might take time, but a relationship that is prohibited, that is not meant to be, will not bear good fruit unless the poison is expunged. Love conquers all – but Torah. Having said this, we quote *Rashi*, who explains, *Mei heicha yatza*, "From where did he (the blasphemer) go out?" Apparently, he came to pitch his tent in the camp of the tribe of Dan (his mother was from that tribe). The members of the tribe asked him what he was doing there; i.e. what was his connection to the tribe of Dan? He replied that he was one of the sons of Dan [he belonged]. They said that a tribal son was defined by his paternal lineage, not maternal. His father was not a Jew, thus excluding him from pitching his tent among them. He took his case to Moshe *Rabbeinu*, who found his claim wanting. As a result of losing the case, he "lost it" and blasphemed. The blasphemer was no ordinary person. He had witnessed the miracles in Egypt, and stood at *Har Sinai* amid the *kolos*, loud sounds, *kolos u'berakim*, loud sounds and lightning, that accompanied the giving of the Torah. He had heard Hashem's voice. Yet, in the space of a moment, this individual lost it and descended from his spiritual perch to the nadir of depravity, during which time he blasphemed the Name. How does such a tragic downfall occur in such a short interval of time? *Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl*, explains that it all began when, *Va'yeitzei*, "He went out" from Moshe's *bais din*, court, feeling that he had been deprived of justice, that he had been wronged. He felt justified in making his claim for a place among the tribe of Dan. Moshe told him, "Sorry, you are not a member of the tribe. Your mother's lineage does not count." That is *halachah*. One's disagreement does not alter the *halachah*. *Halachah* is immutable. It does not change just because a person finds it difficult to accept. The moment that the judge (Moshe *Rabbeinu*) decided against him, the *megadef*, blasphemer, went out of his mind and spiritually threw his life away. He became angry, and he blasphemed the Name of Hashem! It happens all the time. A person

may be driving for hours; everything is going smoothly; the weather is perfect and traffic is moving; he is listening to an inspiring CD; all is well, until someone cuts him off, and he loses it. In that ten-second interval, spurred on by anger, he makes a decision to speed up and chase the offender, to pay him back for destroying his moment of calm. That is when he loses control and spins out...Ten seconds of anger can destroy a lifetime of achievement. As this is true in the physical world, it applies equally to *ruchnius*, spirituality. One can be a devout, G-d-fearing, fully-observant Jew – *davening*, learning, *tzedakah*, *Daf Yomi* – all of the good and holy endeavors, until one day, one moment, during which he does not come out on top, when the fellow with whom he does not see eye-to-eye emerges triumphant. He loses it and voices his opinion in the most degrading, demeaning, profane manner. Gone! All his spiritual achievement just went out the window. That is what anger will do to a person. *V'haseir Satan milfaneinu u'meiachareinu* "And remove *Satan* from before us and from behind us." Before us – illicit desire; after us – anger. There you have it. We must pray to be spared from the effects of anger. We cannot do it alone. We require Heavenly assistance. For that, we must pray. In the *sefer*, "*Maane Rach*," an inspiring compendium on the evils of anger and ways to protect oneself from it, the distinguished author, *Horav Moshe Levinson, zl* (grandfather of *Horav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zl*), lists in detail all the Rabbinic statements that pertain to anger. He also provides advice and strategies on how to circumvent falling into the clutches of anger. Of the twelve suggestions/strategies that he gives, I would like to focus on the last two. *Middah k'neged middah*, measure for measure, plays a pivotal role in how Hashem responds to our actions – both good and bad. In other words, what goes around comes around. The way we act toward others sets the barometer on how Hashem will deal with us. When we are demanding and nit-pick everything that our fellow does concerning us, so will Hashem act towards us. (He will not nit-pick, but our behavior and demanding attitude short-circuit his usual magnanimity.) People mess up; they make mistakes; they forget to pay compliments, act decently and graciously. When we forgive, we can hope that we, too, will be forgiven. When we retaliate, execrate and demand vengeance, we can expect the same when we befool. Second, everything that happens to us is Heavenly-manipulated for a good reason. (I say "good" because everything that comes from Hashem – even if we do not see or understand it is good.) If what just happened causes us to become angry, we must realize that Hashem wanted it to happen. He did not want us to become angry, but to accept and live with what happened. He wanted us to exert self-control, but, when we did not, we added "failed" to the test. *Horav Yisrael Salanter, zl*, the father of the *Mussar*, ethical/character refinement, movement, was an individual of exemplary character and extraordinary self-control. This was especially true with regard to the *middah*, character trait, of *kaas*, anger. He was wont to say, "Almost all infractions that occur between man and his fellow man are the result of some form of anger." (A person who is overly demanding and refuses to acquiesce, to ameliorate an indignity that occurred.) *Rav Yisrael* was by nature an exacting person with a fiery personality, who, through self-control, was able to expunge from within himself any taint of dissatisfaction with any grievance against him. He overlooked and smoothed over any indignity that came his way. If someone acted callously and offended him, he let it slide and would go out of his way to perform a favor for the one who had acted rudely to him. Nonetheless, at times he acted strongly, never allowing for the honor of Torah or its disseminators to be impugned. Even when he manifested anger, it was merely in order to prove a point. He would refer to this as "facial" anger, not "emotional" anger. In other words, it was all for show. One time, however, *Rav Yisrael* "became" angry. **In 1859, the cholera plague broke out** with a vengeance, devastating Vilna and its surrounding towns. It claimed the lives of many of our brothers and sisters, not discriminating against age or economic background. *Rav Yisrael* organized healthcare and maintenance programs that virtually saved thousands of lives. He himself established a hospital with 1500 beds to serve

the needs of the ill. He influenced the physicians to settle for a fee of “zero” for their services. He enlisted the assistance of his students, who traveled from town to town at great risk to their own lives, to ferret out any suspected cases of cholera in order to bring the patient to Vilna to the hospital. These young men, under the specific direction and encouragement of Rav Yisrael, transformed *Shabbos* into *chol*, weekday, as stated in *Shulchan Aruch*. (*Orach Chaim* 328 – *Pikuach nefesh docheh Shabbos*. The *Shabbos* prohibitions are set aside in deference to human life.) One Friday night, the grandson of one of Vilna’s most distinguished families took ill. His fever spiked, and his future appeared be ominous at best. He was a very sick child. Rav Yisrael’s students worked through the night, chopping wood for fire to heat up water, bringing medicine and anything else that would save the child. Hashem listened to the accompanying prayers, and their efforts proved successful, to the point that the child pulled through. A few days passed, and the grandfather visited Rav Yisrael’s *Kollel* to pay his gratitude to the *Kollel* fellows who had labored tirelessly and with utmost devotion to save his grandson. All would have been well had he said, “thank you,” and left. Sadly, he felt he must say his piece. He had a problem with the *chillul Shabbos*, blatant desecration of *Shabbos*, that the *Kollel* members had done. He felt that it was too much. [The complaints always seem to come after the fact.] Rav Yisrael was concerned lest his students weaken their commitment to saving lives. He acted out of character and declared, “You are going to teach me what is permitted [concerning *Shabbos*] and what is prohibited? I arranged for these special young men to leave their homes and dedicate themselves to saving lives. I guaranteed their families that the contagious nature of this plague would not affect them. [He obviously prayed for their continued health.] Hashem listened to me, and we were able to save thousands without one of our students becoming ill. Can you make such a claim?” When the grandfather heard this, he realized that he had hurt the feelings of the *gadol ha’dor*, preeminent leader of the generation. He immediately sat down on the floor (which is what one who is excommunicated does, much like a mourner) and begged Rav Yisrael’s forgiveness for his insolence. Rav Yisrael, of course, forgave the man, but, for the rest of Rav Yisrael’s life, he was pained over the fact that once in his life he was compelled to employ anger.

לעילוי נשמות הרב הלל צר ישעיהו אליהו לל ברכה גאלדע בת שלמה הכהן עה ר' יוסף רפאל צר אסר לל
 Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved prepared and
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Weekly Parsha Emor Rabbi Wein’s Weekly Blog

This week’s Torah reading begins with a rather detailed instruction sheet for the children of Aaron, the priests of Israel. The Torah describes for us the limitations that were placed upon them in order to guarantee that their service would be in purity and in holiness. Aspects of this instruction are still enforced today. Those who are of the priestly clan observe them rigidly even if, in other matters, they may not be that strict.

I had an experience with this regarding a certain leading official in the Jewish Agency about 30 years ago. I knew the man very well and he was a person of honor and integrity, but he was an old time socialist and was not observant in any traditional sense of the word. I happened to be in Israel when another leading person in the educational department of the Jewish Agency passed away and the family asked me to say a few words at the funeral.

This man accompanied me to the funeral chapel, but as I was going to mount the steps, he said, "This is as far as I'm going because I am a priest, a Kohen, and I don't go to funerals." I looked at him somewhat quizzically because there were so many other violations of tradition that I had observed in him, but even so I was greatly impressed. And he said to me, "Don't be so surprised; for thousands of years my family are Kohanim and I'm not going

to give that up. That is a heritage that I cannot forgo." So, that is the first part of the Torah reading.

The second part of the Torah reading, which also occupies a great deal of the subject matter of the entire portion, is a recounting of the calendar. It is an enumeration of the holidays, the special days of the Jewish calendar throughout the year. At first glance, one would think that these two sections of the same Torah reading really have no intrinsic connection one with the other. They deal with far different subjects and have a different tone and mood to their words. But again, I feel that that is only a superficial view. Upon deeper examination we will see a common thread that runs thru not only these two subjects but thru all subjects in the Torah as well.

The Torah represents for us constancy. It establishes a regular rhythm in our life. It is why we have so many commandments that we can, and should, fulfill day in and day out under all circumstances and conditions. It is this very constancy, the repetitiveness that the Torah imposes upon us that builds within us the holiness of spirit and is the strength of our tradition. The fact is it is not a one-day-a-week or three-days-a-year holiday for the Jewish people, but that every day counts and has its importance. Daily, one is obligated to do the will of one's creator. All of this gives a rhythm to our lives, makes life meaningful, with a specific direction for the time that we are here on earth. The holidays themselves are the rhythm of the Jewish calendar year. We just finished Pesach and we are coming to Shavuot and then after Shavuot there comes the period of mourning, then after that the High Holy days, the holiday of Sukkot, then Hanukkah, et cetera. It is that rhythm of life that invests every holiday and allows the holiday to live within us even when its days have passed. Essentially, every day is Pesach and every day is Shavuot, and every day can be Yom Ha-Kippurim. And this is the constancy regarding the laws for the priests as well, that every day they are reminded who they are. Every day they are bound by the restrictions, discipline and nobility that the Torah ordained for them.

So, that is the thread of consistency that binds all these disparate subjects together. The Torah preaches consistency, regularity, habitual behavior, and the idea that life is one rhythm, like a river flowing, not to be segmented into different emotional waves depending upon one's mood and upon external conditions. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein.

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Shabbat Shalom: Emor (Leviticus 21:1-24:23) By Rabbi Shlomo Riskin
 Efrat, Israel – “And I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel” (Lev. 22:32).

The portion of Emor opens with a strange commandment to the kohanim-priests of Israel: “And the Lord said to Moses, ‘Say to the priests children of Aaron, and tell them: “Do not defile yourselves by contact with the dead of the nation.”’” (Leviticus 21:1). The Bible then lists the exceptions to this rule. A Kohen may defile himself only for the burial of his wife, his mother, his father, his son, his daughter, his brother and his unmarried sister. Otherwise our Priest-teachers are forbidden contact with the dead. In contrast, one of the most important functions of the Christians clergy is administering “last rites,” and properly burying the dead. Clearly the Torah is teaching that Judaism is not chiefly concerned with death and the hereafter; rather, it is principally engaged with life in the here-and-now. Our major religious imperative is not how to ease the transition from this world to the next, but how to improve and repair our own society. But there seems to be an inconsistency; our very same portion goes on to command (as quoted above): “You shall not desecrate the name of My holiness; I shall be sanctified in the midst of the children of Israel” (Lev. 22:32). And herein lies the mitzvah of “Kiddush HaShem,” explain our Talmudic Sages, the necessity of sacrificing one’s life—sanctifying the name of God—for the sake of the commandments of the Bible. Jews must give up their lives rather than transgress any of the three major prohibitions of murder, sexual immorality or adultery; and, in times of persecution, Jews must die rather than publicly transgress even the simplest or most “minor” of Jewish laws, even a Jewish custom involving our shoelaces (B.T. Sanhedrin 74a,b). Our Talmudic Sages insist, however, that when Jews are not being persecuted, it is forbidden for Jews to forfeit their lives in order not to desecrate Shabbat, for example, if an individual feels

chest pains Shabbat morning, he must be driven to the nearest hospital! It is better that he desecrate one Shabbat and remain alive to keep many Shabbatot.

But then, if life is so precious, why command martyrdom at all? And the sad truth is that our history is tear stained and blood soaked with many sacred martyrs who gave up their lives in sanctification of the Divine Name, during the Spanish Inquisition, to cite but one example, in the late 15th and early 16th Century, when Jews were forced to kiss the cross of crucifixion or die!

The answer lies in the very juxtaposition of the law of priestly defilement emphasizing the importance of life, and the law of martyrdom enjoining death, within our same Biblical portion. Yes, preservation of life is crucial and this world is the focus of the Jewish concern—but not life merely for the sake of existing. Living, and not merely existing, means devoting one's life to ideals and values that are more important than any individual life. We participate in eternity by dedicating our lives to the eternal values that will eventually repair the world and establish a more perfect society – in this world. As the late Martin Luther King said it. A person whose life is not dedicated to values for which he would give up his life is not worthy of living!

Hence we must value and elevate life, but always within the perspective of those principles which are greater than our redemption. Yes, “live by these [My laws],” but live the kind of life which will teach the highest purposes of life!

But how can we justify martyrdom, even if only during periods of persecution, for the sake of a Jewish custom regarding our shoelaces? What can there possibly be about a shoelace which strikes at the heart and essence of our Jewish mission? The Talmudic Commentaries of the French and German Sages of the 11th and 12th centuries, when many Jews were martyred by the Crusaders, suggest that the general accepted clothing etiquette in Rome and its numerous colonies during the second century of the Common Era was to wear white shoelaces. Jews, however, wore black shoelaces, as a memorial to the loss of our Holy Temple, Holy City of Peace, Jerusalem. and our Jewish national sovereignty. When Gentiles in times of persecution attempted to force Jews to wear white shoelaces—and thereby force the Jewish community to cease mourning for the loss of our national homeland—the Jew must respond with martyrdom (B.T. Sanhedrin 74b, Tosafot ad loc.).

My revered teacher Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik added a crucial point: There are many Jewish laws, decrees and customs which have developed from biblical times to the present, which Jews themselves do not always realize are truly vital for our national and religious preservation. Our Gentile enemies, however, always do, because they—wishing to persecute and destroy us—strike at the jugular. Hence whatever they insist that we abandon, we must maintain even at the price of our lives! From this perspective, it becomes easier to understand why anti-Semitism expresses itself in unfair attacks on the free and democratic State of Israel, condemning us while championing the cause of our terrorist enemies; we must focus on how crucial and vital the State of Israel is for Jewish survival today.

The memorials of Holocaust Remembrance Day and Remembrance Day for the Fallen of Israel's Wars quickly followed by Independence Day and Jerusalem Day must remind us that Israel is not merely a destination but is our destiny. Israel is not only the place of our survival, but it is the heart of our mission for world salvation, from whence the word of God—a God of life, love and peace—will spread to all of humanity. Shabbat Shalom!

[Rabbi Nahum Eliezer Rabinovitch, a native of Montreal, an Israeli posek and among the leader of National Religious Jews in Israel, head of Yeshivat Birkat Moshe in Ma'ale Adumim, passed away Tuesday night at 92.]

https://www.jewishideas.org/article/haver-ha-ir-model-rabbinic-leadership#_edn27

Haver Ha-Ir: A Model of Rabbinic Leadership

Rabbi Dr. Marc D. Angel

Among the titles that rabbinic literature ascribes to Torah scholars is Haver Ha-Ir. This phrase denotes someone of great learning, integrity and commitment to the welfare of the community.[1] Rabbi Benzion Uziel noted: “The rabbi of a community is called by our Sages Haver Ir because he tends to the needs of the public and gathers them for prayer and Torah study.”[2]

The Haver Ha-Ir model of rabbinic leadership deserves careful attention. The rabbi is literally to be a “friend” of the city, a person who is engaged in people's lives, who strives to make society a better place. He is to feel personal responsibility for the spiritual and material wellbeing of the community. The Haver Ha-Ir is not an aloof scholar nor an otherworldly mystic, but is with the people and for the people.

We may explore the Haver Ha-Ir model by considering the teachings of four rabbinic figures of the modern period: Rabbi Benzion Uziel (1880–1953); Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (1903–1993); Rabbi Haim David Halevy (1924–1998); and Rabbi Nahum Rabinovitch (1928–).

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Rabbi Nahum Rabinovich: Shutfut

Rabbi Nahum Rabinovich has served as Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Birkat Moshe in Maale Adumim for many years. A respected posek and thinker, his teachings provide important insight into the role of a Haver Ha-Ir.

Rabbi Rabinovich draws on the halakhic idea that members of a community are in a partnership relationship. They each share equally in rights and obligations. Since societies include members with different views, the notion of shutfut, partnership, is very important. Instead of each individual or group struggling in an adversarial manner against those with different opinions, all members of society should recognize that they are partners in the same venture. In spite of differences, they need to find ways of working together for the betterment of society as a whole.

In order to reach a practical agreement and cooperation among various groups of society, it is necessary to open doors of genuine dialogue among these groups. Dialogue among the various groups in society will enable them to overcome the deep rifts and conflicts that exist and that are growing.[27]

Rabbi Rabinovich pointed out that the religiously observant community had a responsibility to society as a whole, not merely to their own religious enclaves. Since the religious, along with all other citizens, are partners with equal rights and obligations, they need to be concerned with issues beyond their own neighborhoods. For example, since the Torah was given to all Jews, it is incumbent upon the religious education leaders to recognize their responsibility to the entire public. They should work in harmony with the general education system in order to meet the needs of all students, not only the students in the religious school system. They need to work for the inclusion of Torah values, without diminishing the need for students to study science and technology and other subjects that are essential for the social and economic life of the nation.

We must create religious schools not only for children [from religious families] but also for children whose parents want them to excel in computers, mathematics, vocations and other fields. In these schools children will also learn Torah... Religious education can draw to itself a large portion of children in Israel, if only it would know how to approach the various groupings of society.[28]

As another example of how the religious community should be working in partnership with other segments of society, Rabbi Rabinovich points to economic issues. All society is impacted negatively by rampant inflation. Why then are the religious parties not front and center in dealing with this problem? Shouldn't rabbis throughout the land be preaching and teaching about the ills of inflation, the sufferings of the poor, and so forth? Why should economic issues be relegated to the domain of the “secular” community, when this is an area that impacts on society as a whole?[29]

Another striking example: seat belts. Many Israelis are killed or injured in automobile accidents each year. Some years ago, a suggestion was made to make wearing seat belts a legal requirement. This would save lives and reduce injuries. Yet, before a seat belt law was enacted in Israel, there were delays so that studies could be made to determine the effectiveness of seat belts. Yet, such studies had already been made in other countries and the evidence was clear that seat belts are an important safety feature. Why was so much time lost before enacting the law in Israel? Why wasn't this issue high among the priorities of the religious community? “The time has come for us to recognize that confronting such issues is a moral and religious obligation, and we must be the acute prodders in confronting situations which involve safety to life.”[30]

Rabbi Rabinovich notes that the light of Torah cannot be revealed or shown as long as Torah manifests itself as the Torah of a particular group, but only when the Torah is the Torah for all society. The challenge at the door of the sages of Torah is to demonstrate how great is the power of Torah for arranging the life of the community at large... We have the genuine opportunity to spread Torah among large segments of the Israeli public, and ultimately to almost all the residents of the State, if only we can succeed to break the sectarian or religious party muzzle. This will not be an easy task, and there are those on all sides who wish to protect their narrow interests and who strive to strengthen those muzzles. Nevertheless, we must undertake this task.[31]

For Rabbi Rabinovich, the principle of shutfut is at the heart of creating a vibrant and healthy society. Each member of society needs to feel a sense of partnership with all other members of society. Breaking into small self-contained “interest groups” undermines the general harmony of society.

The Haver Ha-Ir model of leadership entails a grand religious vision, courage, respect and a sense of partnership with all members of society. The rabbi, as an exemplar of this model of leadership, must strive not merely to study and teach Torah, but to live Torah.

[27] Nahum Rabinovich, *Mesilot Bilvavam* (Maale Adumim: Maaliyot, 5775), 372.

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 393. [29] *Ibid.*, p. 396. [30] *Ibid.*, p. 397. [31] *Ibid.*, p. 400.