

Torah Tidbits

ISSUE 1417 MAY 1ST '21 י"ט אייר תשפ"א

פרשת אמור

PARSHAT EMOR

PIRKEI AVOT 4

ב"ה
Over
40
Years
OU ישראל



DEAR TORAH
TIDBITS FAMILY

Rabbi Avi Berman
Executive Director, OU Israel
page 4



Winner Of The
World Bible Quiz
Has Something To
Say To Us

Sivan Rahav Meir
page 56



בר יוחאי
נמשחת אשריך
שמן ששון מחברריך

YERUSHALAYIM IN/OUT TIMES FOR SHABBAT PARSHAT EMOR

Candles 6:43PM • Earliest 5:55 • Havdala 7:59PM • Rabbeinu Tam 8:37PM

This week's Torah Tidbits cover image!

Photo By: YK

Meaning: Our beloved grandchildren live across from a vacant space. Every year we see their excitement as Lag B'omer approaches and they & their friends work single-mindedly on their madurot. We observe the same enthusiasm among children across Israel!

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Submit a picture that captures the spirit of **Yom Yerushalayim**, *Deadline May 2nd*

Please send your high resolution photo to arong@ouisrael.org

(Image will be cropped to this size: 13.8X18.2 cm, 300 dpi)

We are looking forward to seeing your amazing shots!



**Torah
Tidbits**



CANDLE LIGHTING AND HAVDALA TIMES



OTHER Z'MANIM



JERUSALEM

RANGES 11 DAYS / WED - SHAB APRIL 28 - MAY 8 / 16-26 IYAR

Earliest Talit and Tefilin	5:02 - 4:52am
Sunrise	5:56 - 5:47am
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema (Magen Avraham: 8:37 - 8:31am)	9:16 - 9:11am
Sof Z'man T'fila (According to the Gra and Baal HaTanaya)	10:23 - 10:19am
Chatzot (Halachic noon)	12:37 - 12:36am
Mincha Gedola (Earliest Mincha)	1:10pm
Plag Mincha	5:54 - 5:59pm
Sunset (counting elevation)	7:21 - 7:29pm

CANDLES	EARLIEST	EMOR	HAVDALA	BEHAR/BECHUKOTAI		
				Candles	Earliest	Havdala
6:43	5:55	Yerushalayim / Maale Adumim	7:59	6:48	5:58	8:04
7:00	5:57	Aza area (Netivot, S'derot, Et al)	8:00	7:05	6:01	8:06
7:01	5:56	Beit Shemesh / RBS	7:59	7:06	5:59	8:05
6:58	5:55	Gush Etzion	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:04
7:00	5:57	Raanana/ Tel Mond/ Herzliya/ K. Saba	8:01	7:05	6:01	8:07
6:59	5:56	Modi'in / Chashmona'im	8:00	7:04	6:00	8:05
7:00	5:57	Netanya	8:01	7:05	6:01	8:07
6:59	5:56	Be'er Sheva	7:59	7:04	6:00	8:05
7:00	5:57	Rehovot	8:00	7:05	6:00	8:06
6:43	5:57	Petach Tikva	8:01	6:48	6:00	8:06
6:59	5:56	Ginot Shomron	8:00	7:04	6:00	8:06
6:51	5:57	Haifa / Zichron	8:02	6:56	6:01	8:08
6:58	5:55	Gush Shiloh	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:04
7:00	5:57	Tel Aviv / Giv'at Shmuel	8:01	7:05	6:01	8:07
6:58	5:55	Giv'at Ze'ev	7:59	7:03	5:59	8:05
6:58	5:55	Chevron / Kiryat Arba	7:58	7:03	5:59	8:04
7:01	5:57	Ashkelon	8:01	7:05	6:01	8:07
7:00	5:57	Yad Binyamin	8:00	7:05	6:00	8:06
6:54	5:55	Tzfat / Bik'at HaYarden	8:00	6:59	5:59	8:06
6:58	5:55	Golan	7:59	7:03	5:58	8:05

Rabbeinu Tam (J'lem) - 8:37 PM • next week - 8:42 pm

Times According to MyZmanim (20 min. before sundown in most cities,
40 min. in Yerushalayim and Petach Tikva, 30 min. in Tzfat/Haifa)

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DEAR TORAH TIDBITS FAMILY



Rabbi Avi Berman Executive Director, OU Israel

Parshat Emor focuses mainly on two topics: the Halachot of Kohanim and the Chagim, both of which are very Beit HaMikdash focused. There is a constant yearning that each of us should have for the Beit HaMikdash. I am sure that it exists in each of us, and that at some times it is stronger and at other times its less strong. As a Jew that davens 3 times a day, this theme is prevalent. We say: Vel'Yerushalayim Ircha B'rachamim Tashuv," "Et Tzemach David Avdecha Meheira Tazmiach," "V'hashev Et HaAvodah L'dvir Beytecha" and other verses signifying our longing for Mashiach and the Beit HaMikdash.

During our prayers, we are constantly expressing how badly we want Hashem to bring His complete Shechina back to Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh. Our goals while praying should be twofold. First, to impact our feelings and emotions. Second, to show Hashem how much of a desire we have for the Beit HaMikdash which will hopefully be rebuilt very, very soon.

For over a year, I have heard the same line from hundreds of my friends around the world - a line that brought me great happiness along with great sadness. "Avi you have no idea how much we miss Israel. Is there anything you can do to help us get in?" In some cases, these sentences came from wonderful Jews that for no special event or occasion felt a strong desire to be here. In many other cases, it came from Jews who wanted to come to Israel for various Smachot, special occasions, to visit relatives, and unfortunately also for the funerals or Yahrzeits of loved ones.

Up until 13 months ago, traveling back and forth from around the world to Israel was something taken for granted. It was extremely common, and I knew people who visited Israel and Yerushalayim as much as 10 or even 20 times a year. When our borders were closed due to the pandemic, the privilege and ability to come was suddenly closed. Especially for those of us born after the establishment of the State of Israel, it was previously unfathomable to imagine a Jewish State that was not open to all our Jewish brethren.

I saw from so many friends that the inability to come to Israel triggered within them the immediate and intense yearning to be in Yerushalayim. While it was beautiful to see this remarkable yearning, it was also painful hearing the frustration of so many



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of our brothers and sisters who were unable to come.

These conversations got me thinking about my own personal yearning for the Beit HaMikdash. While I try to have intense Kavana when davening three times a day, this scenario caused me to reflect with a new perspective. It caused me to think of what it must have been like for the Jews just one year after the destruction of the Beit HaMikdash.

Unfortunately, it has been almost 2,000 years since the Beit Hamikdash stood proudly in Yerushalayim. However, the fact that we are still yearning, davening, missing and even crying for the lack of the Beit Hamikdash can give us tremendous hope that it will be built very soon and that this upcoming Shavuot we will once again gather there, as commanded to us in this week's Parsha.

My dear friend Roy Spiewak, former treasurer of the OU, is one of the first non-Israelis I know to be able to compile all the documents required by the State of Israel and make it here to visit his children who made Aliyah this past year. Seeing the smile on Roy's face when he came to visit me last week gave me a glimpse of how big our smiles will be when we are Zoche to see the Beit HaMikdash very soon B'ezrat Hashem.



Avi,
Executive Director, OU Israel
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ALIYA-BY-ALIYA SEDRA SUMMARY



Rabbi Reuven Tradburks
Director of
RCA Israel Region



1st aliya (Vayikra 21:1-15)

Kohanim are not permitted to come in contact with the dead except for their nuclear family. Nor are they to adopt non Jewish mourning practices such as balding their head and beard or cutting their flesh. For Kohanim need be holy to G-d, for they are His front line servers. They may not marry a divorcee. You are to sanctify them. The Kohen Gadol should not become tamei at all, for he is anointed. He may not marry a divorcee or widow.

The dominant theme of the book of Vayikra is kedusha, holiness. While the Hebrew name of the book, Vayikra is merely the first word of the book and says little of its



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content, the English name Leviticus does relate to its content. It is the book of Levi, which in Latin connotes the priests. It is the book of the Kohanim, the priestly class.

But I would have given that name second place. First place would go to Sefer Kedusha, the book of Holiness. Holiness dominates the book. Holiness in the Torah means different. Different because it is closer to the Divine. The closer to G-d, the more rarefied, the holier. But it comes with a price; holiness, that proximity to G-d comes with greater restrictions. It is no surprise that the Kohanim, those who are entrusted with facilitating offerings, man's approach to the Divine, should have unique rules for their personal conduct. But why does holiness, that proximity to G-d require more restrictions?

In the rendezvous of G-d and man, man need be reticent. Careful. Finite man approaching infinite G-d invites arrogance, pride, self-importance. We approach gingerly, humbly. Carefully. The message of holiness is that we approach with care. The many rules of the Mikdash reflect this tentative approach. And the rules divide into what we would expect: what, where, when, who and how. We have described the Mishkan, the where. The offerings, the how. Tuma, the who, or more accurately, the who not.

The Kohanim who offer the offerings have their rules too. There are restrictions on who they may marry. This fits seamlessly with the rules outlined last week regarding who is permitted to marry and who not. The first 2 things man is told on the 6th day


of Creation are: be fruitful and multiply. And eat vegetation and fruit. Relationships. And food. The first 2 things outlined in this book that shape us to be holy are: kashrut and forbidden relationships. Holiness inheres in the borders of food and relationships. The Kohanim who need be more scrupulously holy have their own rules here concerning their relationships.



2nd aliya (21:16-22:16) A Kohen who has a blemish may not serve in the Mikdash. This includes

blind, lame, broken limbs, eye conditions and others. He may consume holy items but not perform the service. A Kohen may not serve while Tamei, as this desecrates the holy. While a non-Kohen may not consume the holy (Teruma), those who are a part of the Kohen's home may. His daughter, before marriage or after if childless, is part of his home and may consume the holy. The holy is profaned when consumed by others.

The Kohen is not to do the service while bearing certain blemishes. But he remains a Kohen. Kohen is who he is. Service is what he does. He remains a Kohen even if unable to do the service. Hence a blemished Kohen may consume the offerings. And consume Teruma. Teruma may also be consumed by any member of his family. But only when they are in a state of purity. Today, we assume all Kohanim are in a state of impurity and hence are not able to consume Teruma. However, they may burn it. If a person has an olive tree and wants to give teruma to a real live Mr. Kohen, then Mrs. Kohen may use that olive oil that was given to them as Teruma by their neighbors



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to light their Shabbat candles. With our return to Eretz Yisrael, many Shabbat candles of Kohanim across the land are being lit with Teruma olive oil.



3rd aliya (22:17-33) An animal offering may not have a blemish.

This includes blind, broken limbs, eye conditions and others. This applies to a non-Jew's offering as well. An animal with a blemish is not pleasing. An offering must be at least 8 days old. A mother and offspring may not be slaughtered on the same day. An offering may not be eaten after the 2nd day. Do not profane My Name, rather sanctify Me in your midst.

The Kohen need be unblemished; the offering too. A non-Jew may bring an offering in our Mikdash; but on our terms, not theirs. It must meet the rigor of our standards for offerings.

The conclusion of this section states that following these rules sanctifies Me, while offerings that are improper profanes Me. But in this rather innocuous comment lies the mitzvah of Kiddush Hashem and Hillul Hashem. Actions done by little ole me can cause G-d's Name to be desecrated, Hillul Hashem. Or sanctified, Kiddush Hashem. While there are a lot of details of Holiness

in offerings, our every day actions give us an even greater opportunity for Holiness. The Holiness of G-d's Name hovers over our every action. What a weighty responsibility. And wonderful opportunity.



4th aliya (23:1-22) These are the holy days: 6 days work, 7th day is Shabbat. Pesach is on the 14th of

the 1st month; for 7 days eat matza. The first day is holy, no melacha should be done, as is the 7th day. The Omer offering of freshly harvested barley is brought the day after the first holiday day of Pesach. It permits consumption of the new grain. Count 7 full weeks and on the 50th day bring an offering of new wheat as baked chametz. That day (Shavuot) shall be a holy day on which no melacha shall be done. When harvesting, leave the corners and the dropped items to the poor and stranger.

We are introduced to holiness in time. The holiness of proximity to G-d has been expressed in holiness in space, the Mishkan. And through food and relationships, we are holy. And Kohanim have holiness. Now, time too. Shabbat and holidays are a rendezvous with G-d, not only in a particular place but in a particular time as well. Rav Soloveitchik pointed out that we have Kabbalat Shabbat but we do not have Kabbalat Yom Tov. Because the rendezvous changes hosts. On Yom Tov there is a mitzvah of aliya l'regel, pilgrimage. We visit Him in His home. On Shabbat, He visits us in our home. On Shabbat we welcome Him to our home, hence Kabbalat Shabbat – more accurately we welcome the Shechina, her. When it is our turn to host, Shabbat, we welcome our guest, the Shechina to our



home through Kabbalat Shabbat.



5th aliya (23:23-32) The first day of the 7th month (Rosh Hashana) is a truah remembrance. No work shall be done. The 10th day (Yom Kippur) is a holy day on which to afflict your soul, for it is a day of atonement. No work shall be done. From evening til evening.

These 2 are not pilgrimage holidays. We will see in Parshat Pinchas that their offerings are not the same as the 3 regalim. But they share the work restriction with all the other holidays. Whether the rendezvous is joyful or reflective, holy time is marked by work restriction. Work and its accomplishment, while valuable, is tempered by its cessation. Our lives are not to be consumed by our work; we reclaim the meaning of life itself, independent of work, on Shabbat and holidays. It is the rendezvous with G-d of those days that gives life meaning.



6th aliya (23:33-44) The 15th of the 7th month begins a 7-day holiday of Sukkot. The first day is holy, no work shall be done. The 8th day is holy, no work shall be done. These are the holy days each with its offerings, besides the offerings of Shabbat and voluntary ones. And also on the 15th of the 7th month take a Lulav and Etrog and rejoice before G-d for 7 days. Dwell in Sukkot so you shall know that I had the Jews dwell in Sukkot upon the Exodus.

After all the holidays have been outlined and summarized, the Torah goes back and says to take the Lulav for 7 days and rejoice. It would seem that the Lulav is the expression of appreciation at the end of

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the holiday cycle that began with Pesach. How fortunate are we to enjoy our special days. Hence we shake the Lulav in Hallel, the prayer of appreciation for our holiday cycle.



7th **aliya** (24:1-23) Bring oil for a permanent light in the Menorah, set outside the Holy of Holies.

Bake 12 loaves to be placed in 2 groups of 6 on the Shulchan every Shabbat. The Kohanim shall eat this holy bread in the Mikdash. 2 men fought. The Jewish man cursed G-d. He was held until his sentence would be determined by G-d. He shall be stoned. These crimes are punishable by death: cursing G-d, murder. Others have financial penalties: property damage and bodily assault.

The subject of the death penalty in the Torah is a weighty one. But certainly, the punishment by death of the blasphemer is to tell us that our life's meaning, its purpose is to sanctify G-d by our behavior. Cursing Him drains our life of its purpose. ■

HAFTARAH EMOR YEHEZKEL 44:15-31

This week's haftarah echoes the parsha in that it discusses various laws pertaining to the kohanim.

We are privy in this memorable passage to learn about the service of the kohanim in the third Holy Temple through the elevated prophecy of Yechezkel. The realities he describes will come to fruition at the time of the Final Redemption.

As part of his vision we learn about the unique vestments worn by the priests, laws of who they can marry, and the laws regarding coming in contact with a dead body.

There is also a call to the kohanim to serve as teachers and leaders of the nation of Israel.

Being that the kohanim are to serve solely as the emissaries of the Almighty, they do not receive a portion of the Land of Israel but are given the meats of the sacrifices and tithes which support their holy work. ■



STATS

31st of 54 sedras; 8th of 10 in Vayikra
Written on 215 lines (rank: 20th)
17 parshiyot; 11 open, 6 closed
124 p'sukim, rank: 15; 1st in Vayikra
1614 words, rank: 22; 2nd in Vayikra
6106 letters, rank: 23; 2nd in Vayikra
Relatively short p'sukim account for its drop in ranking for words & letters



MITZVOT

63 of 613 mitzvot; 24 pos. 39 prohibitions
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THE PERSON

BY RABBI DR. TZVI HERSH WEINREB
OU Executive Vice President, Emeritus

IN THE PARSHA

“Like All Other Boys”

The custom is fairly prevalent nowadays, but it was not a common practice thirty years ago when my friend raised his sons. He would seek out especially pious rabbis, generally quite elderly ones, to request that they bless his children.

In keeping with tradition, these rabbis would place a hand upon the head of the little boy, perhaps quote a biblical verse or two expressing blessing, and then say something like, “May he grow up to be a *talmid chacham*, an excellent Torah student.” Sometimes, they would say, “May he grow up to be an *ehrliche yid*, a righteous Jew.”

But I will never forget the day that my friend and his young son encountered

Rabbi Israel Gustman, of blessed memory, and requested a blessing from him. I will remember that day because my friend came to me just moments after he received the blessing and asked me what I thought the old rabbi meant by it.

For, you see, the rabbi gave a blessing which was unprecedented and unexpected. He did place his hand upon my friend’s son’s head, and did utter an appropriate biblical verse. But then he said something quite puzzling: “May he grow up to be a boy like all other boys.”

I don’t know why my friend considered me an expert on rabbinic blessings. And I must confess to you, dear reader, as I confessed to him, that I hadn’t a clue as to what the old revered rabbi meant and why he would deliver such an unusual blessing instead of a more traditional one. I also must admit that it took me quite a while until I became convinced that I understood the meaning of the rabbi’s mysterious message.

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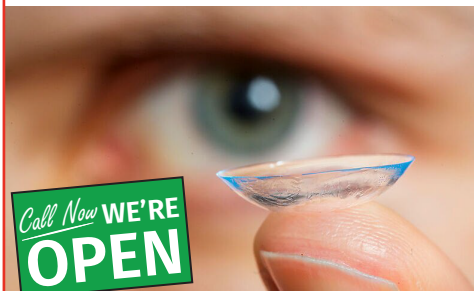
Understanding that message required the knowledge of a verse in this week's Torah portion, *Emor* (*Leviticus* 21:1-24:23). It also required knowing something about Rabbi Gustman's tragic life.

The verse to which I refer reads, "You shall not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelite people..." (*Leviticus* 22:32). This verse is the source text for two opposing concepts which lie at the core of Jewish belief. One concept, the negative one, is *chillul Hashem*, the profanation of God's name, behavior which disgraces the Divine reputation. The opposite concept is *kiddush Hashem*, behavior which sanctifies God's name and thus brings prestige and honor to Him.

Before providing illustrations of the types of behavior that might either profane or sanctify God, let me give you a brief sketch of Rabbi Gustman's biography. He was a brilliant Talmud student in the *yeshiva* he attended. As a very young man, he was betrothed to the daughter of the rabbi of one of the small suburbs of the great prewar Jewish metropolis of Vilna. Soon after his marriage, his father-in-law died, leaving the position of rabbi of that community to his son-in-law, Rabbi Israel.

The towering rabbinic figure in Vilna in those immediate prewar years was Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzenski. Rabbi Chaim Ozer was so impressed by this young man that, despite his age, he included him in his rabbinic court. Soon afterwards, the war broke out. Rabbi Gustman managed to survive by hiding in an array of unimaginable circumstances—in the forest, in a cave, in a pig

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pen, and in the abandoned ghetto of Vilna. In the course of his flight and evasion of the Nazis, his little son was murdered in front of his eyes. He would recount the story of how he witnessed his son's murder and of how he was forced to take his dead son's shoes and sell them for food.

Rabbi Gustman survived the Holocaust, emigrated to the United States, and eventually settled in Israel. There, he lived and taught in a small *yeshiva* in Jerusalem and experienced the various wars of those years. He carefully and compassionately made it his business to comfort the bereaved parents of fallen soldiers by sharing with them his grief over his own fallen son.

He was overheard telling a particular bereaved father that in a certain sense, his soldier son was superior to the rabbi's own son. "Both your boy and mine," he said, "sanctified God's name by their death. They were both killed because they were Jews. But in the synagogue in heaven, where they both reside now, my son is sitting in the pews. Your son is the *shaliach tzibbur*, the prayer leader. This is because my son died as a passive victim, whereas your son died as a hero, leading a group of soldiers in defense of our land and our people."

These two boys performed the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem* by virtue of their death. But that is only one way to perform that *mitzvah*. There is another way to perform the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*, and that is by sanctifying God's name not in death, but in life, by living one's daily life in a meritorious fashion.

The Talmud, for example, tells us of one great sage who felt that had he purchased meat in a butcher store on credit, without paying immediately, he would be guilty of profaning God's name. By simply paying his bills immediately, not allowing anyone to suspect that he was taking advantage of his rabbinical position, he was performing the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem*.

The *Mishnah* in the tractate of *Megilah* teaches us that when a Jew simply attends the synagogue and participates in the recitation of the *devarim shebekedusha*, the sacred passages of our liturgy, he is fulfilling the *mitzvah* referred to in our verse, sanctifying God through his prayers.

Thus, there are ways to sanctify God not by suffering a martyr's death, but by living an ethical and spiritual life. The Talmud says that should others comment favorably on a

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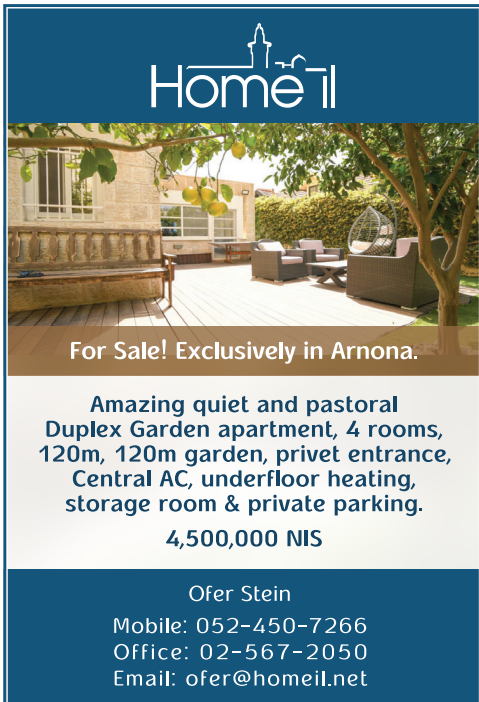
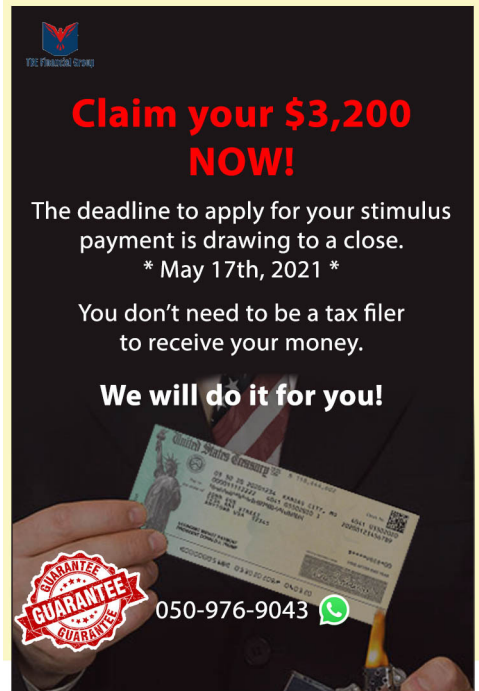
person's behavior, complimenting his parents for having raised him in the path of the Torah, that person has sanctified and glorified God's name.

Now we are in a position to understand the seemingly strange blessing which Rabbi Gustman gave my friend's little boy. "I bless you", he was saying, "that you just be like other boys, like boys in peaceful times. I bless you that you not suffer times of persecution and that you never need to experience the battlefield. I bless you that you sanctify God in your ordinary life, in life and not, God forbid, in tragic death."

In his blessing, he envisioned a time when little boys would not have to grow up to be soldiers and would not be hunted down and shot as his son was. He foresaw a time when this boy could be like other boys, living an ordinary life, full of living acts of *kiddush Hashem*.

During the past several weeks, Jewish people have commemorated the *kiddush Hashem* of Rabbi Gustman's son, a Holocaust victim, by observing Yom HaShoah. We also commemorated the *kiddush Hashem* of the young soldier whose bereaved father Rabbi Gustman so poignantly consoled by observing Yom HaZikaron.

We all pray for the time when boys will not be forced to perform the *mitzvah* of *kiddush Hashem* by giving up their lives, but will be able to do so by living their lives; a time when "boys will just be like other boys," allowed to emerge from their childhood alive and well, entering adulthood in a world at peace, able to sanctify God in their faith and in their noble accomplishments. ■





COVENANT & CONVERSATION

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"L

Former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

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PROSTHETIC DENTISTRY AND ORAL REHABILITATION

Dedicated by Dr. Robert Sreter DDS., M.S.

On Not Being Afraid of Greatness

Embedded in this week's parsha are two of the most fundamental commands of Judaism – commands that touch on the very nature of Jewish identity.

Do not desecrate My holy name. I must be sanctified among the Israelites. I am the Lord, who made you holy and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the Lord.' (Leviticus 22:32)

The two commands are respectively the prohibition against desecrating God's name, *Chillul Hashem*, and the positive corollary, *Kiddush Hashem*, that we are commanded to sanctify God's name. But

in what sense can we sanctify or desecrate God's name?

First we have to understand the concept of "name" as it applies to God. A name is how we are known to others. God's "name" is therefore His standing in the world. Do people acknowledge Him, respect Him, honour Him?

The commands of *Kiddush Hashem* and *Chillul Hashem* locate that responsibility in the conduct and fate of the Jewish people. This is what Isaiah meant when he said: "You are My witnesses, says God, that I am God" (Isaiah 43:10).

The God of Israel is the God of all humanity. He created the universe and life itself. He made all of us – Jew and non-Jew alike – in His image. He cares for all of us: "His tender mercies are on all his works" (Ps. 145:9). Yet the God of Israel is radically unlike the gods in which the ancients believed, and the reality in which today's scientific atheists believe. He is not identical with nature. He created nature. He is not identical with the physical universe. He transcends the universe. We are not capable mapping or quantifying Him by science – through observation, measurement and calculation - for He is

not that kind of thing at all. How then is He known?

The radical claim of the Torah is that He is known, not exclusively but primarily, through Jewish history and through the ways Jews live. As Moses says at the end of his life:

Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created human beings on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of? Has any other people heard the Voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived? Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? (Deut. 4:32-34)

Thirty-three centuries ago, Moses already knew that Jewish history was and would continue to be unique. No other nation has survived such trials. The revelation of God to Israel was unique. No other religion is built on a direct revelation of God to an entire people as happened at Mount Sinai. Therefore God – the God of revelation and redemption – is known to the world through the people of Israel. In ourselves we are testimony to something beyond ourselves. We are God's ambassadors to the world.

Therefore when we behave in such a way as to evoke admiration for Judaism as a faith and a way of life, that is a *Kiddush*



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Hashem, a sanctification of God's name. When we do the opposite – when we betray that faith and way of life, causing people to have contempt for the God of Israel – that is a *Chillul Hashem*, a desecration of God's name. That is what Amos meant when he said:

They trample on the heads of the poor as on the dust of the ground, and deny justice to the oppressed ... so desecrate My holy name. (Amos 2:7)

When Jews behave badly, unethically, unjustly, they create a *Chillul Hashem*. They cause others to say: I cannot respect a religion, or a God, that inspire people to behave in such a way. The same applies on a larger, more international scale. The Prophet who never tired of pointing this out was Ezekiel, the man who went into exile to Babylon after the destruction of the First Temple. This is what he heard from God:

I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. And wherever they went among the nations they profaned My holy name, for it was said of them, "These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave His land." (Ezekiel 36:19)

When Jews are defeated and sent into exile, it is not only a tragedy for them. It is a tragedy for God. He feels like a parent would feel seeing their child disgraced and sent to prison. A parent often feels a sense of shame and, worse than that, of inexplicable failure. "How is it that, despite all I did for him, I could not save

my child from himself?” When Jews are faithful to their mission, when they live and lead and inspire as Jews, then God’s name is exalted. That is what Isaiah meant when he said, in God’s name: “You are my servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified” (Isaiah 49:3).

That is the logic of *Kiddush Hashem* and *Chillul Hashem*. The fate of God’s “name” in the world is dependent on us and how we behave. No nation has ever been given a greater or more fateful responsibility. And it means that we each have a share in this task.

When a Jew, especially a religious Jew, behaves badly – acts unethically in business, or is guilty of sexual abuse, or utters a racist remark, or acts with contempt for others – it reflects badly on all Jews and on Judaism itself. And when a Jew, especially a religious Jew, acts well – develops a reputation for acting honourably in business, or caring for victims of abuse, or showing conspicuous generosity of spirit – not only does it reflect well on Jews. It increases the respect people have for religion in general, and thus for God.

Maimonides adds, in the passage from his law code speaking of *Kiddush Hashem*:

If a person has been scrupulous in his conduct, gentle in his conversation, pleasant toward his fellow creatures, affable in manner when receiving, not retorting even when affronted, but showing courtesy to all, even to those who treat him with disdain, conducting his business affairs with integrity ... And doing more than his duty in all things, while avoiding extremes



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and exaggerations – such a person has sanctified God.¹

Rabbi Norman Lamm tells the amusing story of Mendel the waiter. When the news came through to a cruise liner about the daring Israeli raid on Entebbe in 1976, the passengers wanted to pay tribute, in some way, to Israel and the Jewish people. A search was undertaken to see if there were any Jewish members on board the ship. Only one Jew could be found: Mendel the waiter. So, at a solemn ceremony, the captain of the cruise liner, on behalf of all the passengers, offered his deep congratulations to Mendel, who suddenly found himself elected *de facto* as the ambassador of the Jewish people. We are all, like it or not, ambassadors of the Jewish people, and how we live, behave and treat others reflects not only on us as individuals but on Jewry as a whole, and thus on Judaism and the God of Israel.

“Be not afraid of greatness. Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and others have greatness thrust upon ‘em,” wrote

1 Maimonides, *Hilchot Yesodei ha-Torah*, 5:11.

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Shakespeare in *Twelfth Night*. Throughout history Jews have had greatness thrust upon them. As the late Milton Himmelfarb wrote: “The number of Jews in the world is smaller than a small statistical error in the Chinese census. Yet we remain bigger than our numbers. Big things seem to happen around us and to us.”²

God trusted us enough to make us His ambassadors to an often faithless, brutal world. The choice is ours. Will our lives be a Kiddush Hashem, or God forbid, the opposite? To have done something, even one act in a lifetime, to make someone grateful that there is a God in heaven who inspires people to do good on earth, is perhaps the greatest achievement to which anyone can aspire.

Shakespeare rightly defined the challenge: “Be not afraid of greatness.” A great leader has the responsibility both to be an ambassador and to inspire their people to be ambassadors as well. An act which creates a Kiddush Hashem - is this one of your life-long aspirations? ■

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These weekly teachings from Rabbi Sacks zt”l are part of the ‘Covenant & Conversation’ series on the weekly Torah reading. Read more on www.rabbisacks.org.

2 Milton Himmelfarb, *Jews and Gentiles*, Encounter Books, 2007, 141.



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As we have learned from previous haftarah selections taken from the final section of Sefer Yechezkel, the navi uses these final chapters to describe the future Temple service that would be observed during the era of Bayit Shlishi, the Third Temple. This particular haftarah from the 44th chapter contains a direct connection to our Torah reading for it focuses on the laws that would be followed by the kohanim serving in the “Messianic” Bet Mikdash, much as the parasha reviews the laws that would be followed by the kohanim during the time of the earlier Batei Mikdash.

Except for certain stringencies that future kohanim will observe, many of the laws mentioned here by Yechezkel echo the very words of the parasha itself, e.g. they shall not shave their heads nor let their hair grow wild; they shall not marry a widow (prohibited to the Kohen Gadol) nor a divorcee, but only a maiden from Israel; they shall not approach a corpse—save that of their father, mother, son, daughter, brother or unmarried sister. Most interestingly, however, is one function of the Kohen that is included in the haftarah but is not mentioned in the parasha at all, although it is found elsewhere in the Torah. The navi states: “V’et ami yoru bein kodesh l’chol... Part of the function of the Kohen was to be a teacher, one who would guide the people and pass down the laws and explanations given at Har Sinai. The Kohen of Israel

could not be compared to the ancient idolatrous priests who served as mere ritual functionaries with limited connection to the daily lives of the people themselves. In fact, quite the opposite was true: these “priests” were usually involved with preparations for death and for the afterworld—not life and this world. Not so the kohen in Israel. His responsibility was far more than merely a ritualistic one. The kohen was required to be involved in many aspects of the people’s lives. He was commanded to take an active role in the LIFE of the nation; a role that would require him to avoid dealing directly with death, that gave him the responsibility of adjudicating the people’s quarrels and that challenged him to educate and inspire both the current and future generations.

Moshe blessed them with the words (D’varim 33: 12): “Yoru mishpatecha l’Ya’akov v’Torat’cha l’Yisrae’l”—to teach Torah to Israel, while the navi Mal’achi put it simply when he stated (2:7): “Ki siftei chohen yishm’ru da’at v’Torah y’vak’shu mipihu”, “The lips of a Kohen must safeguard knowledge and people should seek (Torah) teachings from him”. And by doing so, he fulfills Hashem’s mission, as the navi explains, “ki mal’ach Hashem Tzva’kot hu,” “for he is the agent of Hashem, Master of Legions!” Our haftarah reminds us that serving Hashem cannot be limited to ritual alone. And this truth will be carried on during the Messianic era as well. ■



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One Step At a Time

The opening pasuk in the Parsha states: **“Emor el hakohanim bnei aharon v’amarta aleyhem”**. Rashi explains that the double use of the terms **“emor”** and **“v’amarta”** is to admonish the adult Kohanim to be responsible for the minor Kohanim- to properly educate them to refrain from coming into contact with an impure element.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe extends this directive to apply not just to Kohanim, but rather as a warning to all parents of the importance of educating their children. We are not speaking of the basic necessity to educate our children as this would not first appear in the middle of Sefer Vakira. Rather, this instruction appearing in Emor is hinting at a more advanced approach to

education. This is highlighted by another important concept that appears later in our parsha – the counting of the Omer, which always intersects with the reading of Parshas Emor. Just as we count the 49 consecutive days of the omer, so too are we to educate our children that they are to **progressively** advance to higher levels of spiritual achievement step by step on a daily basis.

When advancing in spirituality as in other aspects, one must be careful not to seek shortcuts, but to progress one step at a time. As the Imre Shefer posits, first focus on the basics (613 commandments) and only thereafter to take upon oneself additional restrictions or limitations.

Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu, *al pi derush*, derives an important lesson relating to spiritual growth from the mitzva of requiring one to construct a guardrail around his roof. When people are inspired, they often seek to reach for the stars. It is natural to strive to be the best at everything we do. However, when it comes to enhancing our spirituality, we need to establish realistic goals and to take it step by step. If a person tries to jump too high too quickly, he is likely to fall. We have to establish a fence around the roof, or the target we set for ourselves, so that it is within our reach. Be careful not to set goals that are unrealistic and

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unattainable. A goal that is slightly beyond a person's reach may be within his grasp, and one should constantly seek to grow and improve. Yet trying to take upon oneself too much too quickly is doomed for failure.

The *Gemara* recounts that Mar Ukva states that he is not as great as his father, who waited twenty-four hours between eating meat and milk (Hullin 105a). If Mar Ukva felt that this was such a pious act, why did he not adopt it as well? Perhaps Mar Ukva felt that there were many other characteristics that he had to improve that were more significant than expanding the waiting period between eating meat and milk. He knew that spiritual growth must occur gradually. Someone who is having difficulty with speaking *lashon hara* and proper *kavana* during *davening* should probably not take upon himself *tikkun hatzos* – to wake up in the middle of the night to mourn the destruction of the *Beis HaMikdash*. Each *humra* that we accept upon ourselves must fit our level of observance.

As we count each day of the Omer, let us contemplate how we can enhance our spirituality and our middos – doing so gradually, one step at a time so that such conduct becomes embedded within us and a strong foundation is established upon which one can further build. ■

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Stupendous Speech

Isn't it interesting that *parashat Emor* is named after a seemingly elementary word? Rashi (*Vayikra 21:1*) notes that the repetition in the passuk, "*emor – veamarta*", teaches that the elders should instruct the younger people in the laws of purity. What is implicit in this word? What does Rashi add from this injunction that is different from the general mitzvah of *chinuch*?

Rav Hirsch explains that the word "*emor*" connotes telling or instructing, in contradistinction to "*daber*", which intimates speaking. A person can speak to himself, however, telling involves conveying an idea to others. What are some ideas that the Torah is transmitting here?

Rav Pincus in *Tiferet Shimshon* notes that there is an added element of *chinuch* that

is derived from our passuk. "*Emor*" is instructive, ensuring that the young not only hear what is being taught, but live the lessons imparted. One should not put a child in a situation of transgressing a Torah command even it is to help others. For example, a child, even a very young one, should not be told to turn on a light on Shabbat if one forgot to do so. Rav Pincus adds that some authorities maintain that anyone, not only a parent, must ensure that a child is not transgressing a Torah law. A child should be stopped from lying, stealing or hitting. To this extent the *chinuch* becomes actively acquired. At the same time, a child should become accustomed to performing positive commandments so that a Torah lifestyle becomes an integral part of his psyche and essential nature.

Rav Ochayon in *Ohr Daniel* likewise focuses on the difference between "*amira*" and "*dibur*", albeit with another emphasis. "*Dibur*" is speaking in a strict, disciplined



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way, while “*amira*” is a softer approach. When teaching a child, one needs to recall what Chazal teach us; the right must draw close, while the left pushes away (*Sanhedrin 107b*). It is important to look at each child as an individual, to appreciate their unique, distinct needs. This type of specialized approach is encapsulated in the word “*emor*”, allowing the softness and love to dominate the more rigid, severe style.

Rav Feinstein in *Darash Moshe* sees another important message of *chinuch* in the double expression of “*emor*” and “*veamarta*”. First it is important to focus on the information, what is allowed and what is forbidden, this is “*Emor*”. Then “*veamarta*” imparts the mindset how to perform a mitzvah. Parents ought to be role models, transmitting the love of living a Torah life with joy and fulfilling its precepts with passion. This type of instruction is not so much with words as it is with feelings and sharing Yiddishkeit. It is this dynamic direction that ultimately has the most powerful impact on the next generation. ■

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“Anderish!”

The famed Mirrer rosh yeshiva, Rav Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, zt'l (known as “Reb Leizer Yudel”), was the son and successor of the Alter of Slabodka a prize talmid of the great Reb Chaim Soloveichik of Brisk. With the outbreak of WWII, Reb Leizer Yudel established a new branch of the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim. He was beloved for his incredible *ahavas haTorah*, *midos*, sensitivity and concern for others.

Not long after Reb Lazer Yudel came to Yerushalayim, he met the sons of the Brisker Rav, his Rebbe’s grandchildren, and was surprised to see that the young children were dressed the same exact way as they had back in Europe, in old-fashioned caps and vests. The Rosh Yeshiva reasoned that like most families in Yerushalayim, they were struggling financially, and lacked the funds to buy new suits.

Ever sensitive and generous, Rav Leizer Yudel sought out their father, the Brisker Rav, and offered to buy the children new outfits, commenting that with their old-

school clothing, the kids stood out and looked very different than the other *bonei Torah* in the city. The Brisker Rav nodded in agreement: “Ah, Yes... they do look different... because they are *takeh anderesh* — different indeed!”

.....
”ויאמר ה' אל משה אמר אל הכהנים בני אהרן
ואמרת אליהם...”

“Speak the Kohanim, the sons of Aharon, and tell them...” (21:1)

Rashi teaches us that the apparent repetition of “*emor*, speak to” and “*v’amarta*, say” teaches us להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים, “the adults should *l’hazir*, ‘warn’ the young.” In other words, in addition to the Kohanim themselves following the laws of purity, they should also ‘warn’ their children to observe the commandments, to see to it that young Kohanim too should not make themselves impure. They should avoid contact with the dead so as not to be rendered *tameh l’nefesh*, ritually impure.

Rav Yaakov Bender, shlit’a, beloved rosh yeshiva of Darchei Torah in New York, shared a powerful memory from a Torah Umesorah convention held the week of Parshas Emor many years ago. Rav Yaakov Weinberg zt'l, the Rosh Yeshiva of Ner Yisrael in Baltimore, addressed the convention and spoke on the topic of transmission of values to the next generation. He expanded the exhortation in our *parsha* to include every area of Torah, and

not limited to elder kohanim training their children. It applies to all of us.

Rav Weinberg noted that the Torah specifically shares this lesson in context of *halachos* of *tumas Kohanim*, a set of laws that are exclusive to a small minority of Klal Yisrael. This he explained with a *mashal*:

Two newborn infants lay in bassinets next to each other in a baby nursery, one born a *Kohen* and the other a *Yisrael*. From birth, from the very first moment, the *Kohen* is different; his place in the community, his future role and responsibilities, the spiritual expectations and standards he must keep, are unique. This is not as a result of anything he has done, achieved or earned. Simply because of where he comes from, born to a family of *Kohanim*, he is elevated: he will bless the Nation during the repetition of the *Amidah*, be honored to lead *bentching*, receive the first *aliyah* to the Torah, and one day, BE"H, serve in the Beis Hamikdash. While both babies are beautiful and holy, the infant *Kohen* is different.

It is specifically with the mitzvah of warning the children of *Kohanim* regarding the care they must exercise in maintaining their *taharah* that the Torah reveals the mandate to inform *all* of our children and students, and transmit to them a lesson that is applicable to every single law and area of the Torah. That is, we are a Nation that is different, set apart and charged with a unique responsibility to live with a higher sense of spiritual standards and obligations. Indeed, as the Brisker Rav told Reb Lazer Yudel... we are *takeh*, indeed, *anderish!* ■

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SUN, MAY 2

9:00 AM

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Tehillim – Divine Poetry

10:15 AM

Rabbi Aaron

Goldscheider The Giants

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Orthodoxy (Rabbi Adler
Resumes Sun May 23)

11:30 AM

Rabbi Yitzchak

Breitowitz Mishlei: Wisdom
for Life (L'Ayla) (Zoom only)

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

Men's Gemara Chabura S,T,TH
<https://zoom.us/j/887981820>
(Zoom only)

4:30 PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

Men's Gemara B'lyun
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(Zoom only)

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MON, MAY 3

9:15 AM

Mrs. Pearl Borow

Sefer Daniel (L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

Rabbi Aaron

Goldscheider

Rav Soloveitchik on
the Parsha

11:45 AM

Rabbi Shmuel

Herschler

Ethics, family and society
in the writings of Rav
Hirsch, Rav Kook
and Rav Soloveitchik

4:30PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub

Parshat HaShavua

<https://zoom.us/j/888974573>
(Zoom only)

9:00 PM

Rabbi Sam Shor

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TUE, MAY 4

9:00 AM

Rabbi Yitzchak Breitowitz

Minchat Chinuch
(Zoom only)

9:15 AM

Mrs. Shira Smiles

Torah Tapestries (L'Ayla)

10:30 AM

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin

Parshat HaShavua

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

5:00 PM

Mrs. Sylvie Schatz

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WED, MAY 5

9:00 AM

Rabbi Shimshon Nadel

Halacha and Medina

10:15 AM

Rabbi Anthony Manning

Contemporary Issues in Halacha and Hashkafa

11:30 AM

Rabbi Alan Kimche
Great Jewish Thinkers

4:30PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

7:00 PM

Rabbi Baruch Taub
Halacha (Zoom only)

8:30 PM

Rav Meir Goldwicht
(Hebrew)

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Parshat Hashavua

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9:00 AM

Rabbi Ian Pear
Meaning in Mitzvot

10:15 AM

Rabbi Baruch Taub
Parshat HaShavua

11:30 AM

Rabbi Shai Finkelstein
Unlocking the Messages of Chazal

2:00 PM

Rabbi Jeffrey Bienenfeld

4:30PM

Rabbi Hillel Ruvell

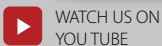
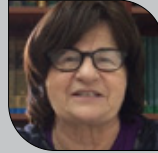
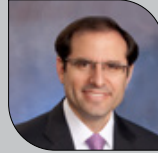
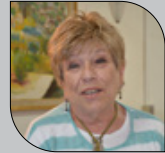
8:00 PM

Rabbi Ari Kahn
Parshat HaShavua

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RABBI MOSHE

TARAGIN

Ram, Yeshivat Har Eztion

OU Torah Tidbits is honored to welcome Rav Moshe Taragin to the pages of our weekly Torah journal. The topic of his weekly d'var Torah will place special focus on the theme of geula, redemption, and how this notion impacts our lives as Jews; especially those who dwell in the Land today.

Geulas Yisrael #2 How Do We Know This Is Redemption?

Redemption can be very, very confusing. On his deathbed, Ya'akov decided to provide a detailed road-map of Jewish redemption. When it would happen, how it would unfold and what omens would assure us that redemption was at hand. Recognizing the dangers of uncontained redemptive fervor, Hashem withdrew Yaakov's prophetic visions and denied his descendants this important information. It is difficult enough to redeem history. It is even more challenging redeeming it while blindfolded.

So our generation faces a haunting question: How do we know? How do we know that this process is the intervening hand of G-d? How do we know that the Spring of geulah has begun? No one knows

how long it will last or what arc it will follow, but we have a profound sense that history has shifted and that we are living in the final era of Jewish history. How do we know this is real and not a façade or, even worse, an illusion? In 1952 the Satmar Rebbe authored his scathing work known as *Vayo'el Moshe* in which he lodged this very claim. The Zionist return wasn't the hand of G-d but the deception of Satan. The Jewish people were being misled into an illegal and unwanted redemption whose time hadn't yet arrived. How do we know?

My Rebbe, HaRav Yehuda Amital assured us that this question was posed at an earlier point of history- by Shimshon's parents. Shimshon's parents were twice visited by an angel who informed them that the child they would bear would rescue the Jews from Midyan. They received detailed instructions about raising him as a nazir, their korban offering was engulfed in a heavenly fire and they witnessed the angel ascending to Heaven. The distrustful father named Manoach continued to worry that perhaps they would perish prior to these prophecies unfolding. His wife assured him: Had G-d desired our demise He would not have invested in these miracles. The grand miracles they witnessed proved that this prophecy was legitimate and this future assured. G-d doesn't toy with human

beings and the impressive miracles they experienced confirmed that they had been chosen.

Sometimes ideological debates are resolved in the beit midrash or around the discussion table. Other times, history resolves our ideological debates for us. The State of Israel had very humble beginnings. In 1948 around 600,000 Jews gathered in a fledgling state which was quickly invaded by numerous Arab legions. In its incipient decade the Jewish state suffered diplomatic isolation and economic austerity. Under those meager conditions the question "How do we know that this is real" felt very legitimate. In the 70 years since, our small state has witnessed uncountable miracles. Israel has miraculously morphed into a superpower in almost every imaginable sector- economically, militarily culturally, technologically, and academically just to name a few. We have drained the swamps, converted the desert into a flowering bloom and have begun to export water and water management capabilities to the parched lands in our neighborhood. Torah is flourishing in a manner that it hasn't in over 3000 years. All this while absorbing Jews from across the globe and from across diverse demographic "lines". It pays to listen to Shimshon's mother: G-d would not perform all these miracles as an delusion – this is real and it is happening! ■

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SIMCHAT SHMUEL

BY RABBI SAM SHOR

Program Director, OU Israel Center

Parshat Emor introduces us to one of the most mysterious rituals in the *Beit Hamikdash*. The *Torah* instructs us that we are to prepare and bake the *lechem hapanim*- twelve loaves that are to be placed on each of the twelve drawers of the *Shulchan*, and are to remain there constantly, each week new bread is placed for *Shabbat*, simultaneous to the removal of the previous week's loaves (*Vayikra* 24:5-8).

So too, *Rav Chaim Vital zy'a*, wrote that the practice of the *Arizal* was to have 12 loaves of bread at every *Seudat Shabbat* to parallel the twelve loaves of the *lechem hapanim*.

The Gemara in Chagiga (26b) tells us that *Reish Lakish* explained that these 12 loaves were displayed before all those who came to the Temple for each of the three pilgrimage festivals, and that it was stated before them- 'See how much Hashem loves

the Jewish People, the loaves are as fresh (from the previous week) now as we remove them, as they were when they were placed! 'Rebbe Yehoshua ben Levi stated that a great miracle occurred with the lechem hapanim loaves, they stayed fresh from week to week, they remained as warm as they were when they were placed.'

Reb Tzadok HaKohein of Lublin explains our *Gemara* as teaching a profound eternal message. The twelve loaves of the *lechem hapanim* represent the twelve tribes of the Jewish People. The miracle of the twelve loaves of the *lechem hapanim* staying fresh and warm demonstrated that *Hashem's* love and warmth is equally bestowed on each of the twelve tribes of the Jewish People. This miracle also is meant to teach us an eternal lesson, that if *Hashem* loves each and every Jewish tribe equally, then we too must strive to feel warmth and love for each and every member of *Klal Yisrael*.

May we merit to take to heart these beautiful teachings, to learn to see the beauty and warmth within one another, and to express our love for every member of *Klal Yisrael*. Even if we are not ready to embrace the idea of having twelve *challot* at each *Seudat Shabbat*, may we merit that our *Shabbat* table is indeed a place where every single Jew feels unconditional warmth and love. ■

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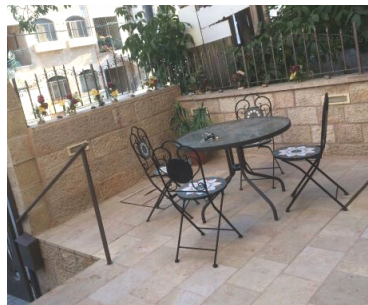
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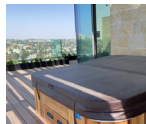
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The Prohibition of Dam (Blood)

The Torah commands us in four different places (three times in *Sefer Vayikra* and once in *Sefer Devarim*) not to consume *dam* (blood). Various reasons are provided for this prohibition. The *Rambam* (*Moreh Nevuchim* 3:46) relates the prohibition to ancient idol worship, in which people believed that eating blood would connect them with powerful spirits. (See *Ramban Vayikra* 17:7,11) *Sefer HaChinuch* (148) explains that the Torah prohibited consuming blood in order to teach us mercy and compassion. Blood is the life force of living beings and consuming it may seem cruel.

Our Sages provide two methods in which blood can be removed. Either by salting the meat after slaughtering or by high-temperature roasting.

Which blood is prohibited?

In *Vayikra* (9:26) we read: וְכֹל־דָּם לֹא תֹאכְלוּ בְכָל מוֹשְׁבֵי־בְתֵיכֶם לְעַף וְלִבְהֵמָה:

And you must not consume any blood, either of bird or of animal, in any of your settlements.

From this verse, we learn that blood from kosher fowl and mammals is prohibited by the Torah. The *Mishna* in *Keritot* (5:1)

states that blood from other types of animals, such as fish blood, is not biblically prohibited. However, on a rabbinical level, fish blood remains questionable. (This topic will be further discussed in future articles).

When is blood prohibited?

On Shabbat there is a prohibition of *muktzeh*, handling objects that have no use or are connected to a Shabbat prohibition. The *gemara* in *Shabbat* (128:a) states that one may handle raw, unsalted meat on Shabbat, meaning that it's not *muktzeh*, since it was then common to consume such meat. The *Tosfot* on this *gemara* questions how one can eat raw unsalted meat when it is full of blood, thereby transgressing *isur dam*?! *Tosfot*, based on this and other sources, rules that blood is only prohibited when it has been removed from its original source in the animal. However, blood that remains in the flesh is not included in the prohibition of *dam* and may be consumed.

In halachic terms, *dam* that has left the flesh is known as *dam shepiresh*. In turn, *Tosfot* explains the above *gemara*, that raw meat is not *muktzeh* on Shabbat and is permitted to eat. Many early authorities agree with *Tosfot's* ruling regarding *dam shepiresh* (*Rosh Chulin* 1:19, *Ran* on *Rif Chulin* 4:a). *Maharach Ohr Zarua* (24) disagrees, and explains the *gemara* in *Shabbat* in a



different manner. Halachic authorities also disagree about the *Rambam's* (*Ma'achalot Asurot* 6:4) position on this issue (see *Kesef Mishna* Ibid and *Aruch Hashulchan* YD 67:7-10). Rav Yosef Karo summarizes the dispute in his *Beit Yosef* and clearly rules like *Tosfot* (*Shulchan Aruch* YD 67:2), which is the majority opinion. Later *poskim* concur with the *Shulchan Aruch's* ruling (*Levush* and *Pri Chadash* Ibid).

Eating raw meat and steak tartare

When preparing cooked kosher meat, removing the blood beforehand is essential. This is due to the fact that during the cooking process the blood is released and then reabsorbed into the meat. In order to consume raw meat that was neither salted nor roasted, halachic authorities require other preparations to remove blood. Although blood **within** the flesh is not halachically prohibited, external blood must be washed and removed. If raw meat is cut and blood is released on the surface, that blood must also be removed, since it is considered *dam shepiresh* (see *Pri Chadash* YD 67:2, *Pri Megadim* SD 67:1) . *Poskim* add that before eating any raw meat, one should remove any veins in the meat, since the blood in the veins is accumulated, and is also considered *dam shepiresh* (*Ran* on the *Rif Chulin* 30:b).

Steak tartare, presumed to have originat-

ed in France, is a dish in which diced, raw beef is served together with spices and raw eggs. If the meat was properly slaughtered and the proper preparations were done as explained above, it may be eaten without concern (see responsa *Sridei Esh* 2:15). However, in modern cuisine it can be made in different formats which might be problematic. As such, steak tartare should have proper kosher certification.

In summary:

- It is biblically prohibited to consume *Dam* (blood)
- Only blood from fowl or mammals are included in the prohibition.
- Blood is only prohibited once it has left its source in the animals' body, known as *dam shepiresh*.
- Raw meat that still has blood inside it may be consumed on two conditions. Blood on the surface must be washed off and the veins removed.
- Steak tartare and other raw meat products may be consumed if they are produced under strict kosher supervision. ■

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RABBI EPHRAIM

SPRECHER

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The Sin of Lashon Hara – A Chillul Hashem!

The Torah states in Parshat Emor “You shall not desecrate My Holy Name” (Vayikra 22:32).

This verse is the source for the sin of Chillul Hashem, which is one of the most serious sins that a Jew can commit, and for which it is extremely difficult to do tshuvah (Yuma 86a). A little known aspect of Chillul Hashem is when a person habitually speaks or listens to lashon hara. The Chofetz Chaim includes Chillul Hashem in the list of sins one violates when speaking lashon hara.

In explaining the reason for this, he says that generally a person sins for various motivations, either because he has a desire for something, which he cannot control, or because the sins will provide him with some physical pleasure.

However, the sin of lashon hara cannot be considered the fulfillment of a physical drive or pleasure, for which the person could not control his yetzer hara. It is

simply habit a person gets into when speaking negatively about others, or listening to others speaking lashon hara. If he realizes that the Torah forbids it, how can he just ignore and continue to violate this serious sin?

Rav Pam would point out that speaking lashon hara is also a Chillul Hashem because that person has so little regard for Hashem’s will that he brazenly violates it. By shamelessly throwing off the yoke of Heaven, he has cheapened and denigrated the Word of Hashem by speaking ill of others.

The Chofetz Chaim adds that the sin of lashon hara is compounded if the one doing this is a distinguished person whom people look up to and respect. When people see how he casually disregards the Will of Hashem, they too will take liberties in the performance of Mitzvot. This is especially true when they see a Talmid Chacham speaking lashon hara (see Rambam Sefer Hamitzvot, negative commandment 63).

This is another important reason to avoid lashon hara in ALL its forms. ■

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RABBI AARON

Editor, Torah Tidbits

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The ‘Erev Shabbos Jew’

Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik zt”l famously spoke about the missing “Erev Shabbos Jew” in America. He wrote that “it is not for the Sabbath that my heart aches, it is for the ‘eve of the Sabbath.” The Rav lamented that there are Sabbath-observing Jews in America, but there are not ‘*erev-Shabbat*’ Jews who go out to greet the Shabbat with beating hearts and pulsating souls.” (‘On Repentance’, Peli, p.88)

Some have interpreted Rabbi Soloveitchik’s message to be that in America, people observe Shabbat, but in Europe, people spent more time on Friday preparing for Shabbat. In America there was no *Erev Shabbat* feeling in the streets. However, there is another important point Rabbi Soloveitchik was making: In a spiritual sense do we greet the Shabbat with “beating hearts and pulsating souls”? Do we long for the depth and deeper spirit embedded in this unparalleled weekly celebration?

The Rav expounded on the profundity of the Shabbat and the rich spiritual hues we are meant to discover. In order to reveal its depth, the Rav pointed to a novel correlation between Shabbat and the sin of Adam and Eve.

In numerous places in the Torah we find the command to observe the Shabbat. In our parsha of Emor a double language of ‘*Shabbat Shabbaton*’ (Vayikra 23:3) is employed which may allude to a multiplicity. Just two parshiot prior (*Kedoshim*, 19:3) the language regarding Shabbat also suggests a plurality - *et Shabbotai tishmoru*, ‘you shall observe My Sabbaths.’

On Shabbat, however, the world unites once again with the Creator

What is the meaning of this plurality regarding the Shabbat?

The Rav cited the mystical work of the *Zohar* (*Parshat Terumah*) which indicates that the plural form *Shabbotai* signifies that every Shabbat contains in fact two Sabbaths: *Shabbat dele’eila* (the supernal Shabbat) and *Shabbat de’latata* (the earthly Shabbat).

The sin of Adam of eating of the forbidden fruit resulted in God punishing him (*Bereshit* 3:17-19). The curse consisted of the following components:

Hard labor: “With the sweat of your face shall you eat bread (3:19).”

This can be broken down into two forms

of difficult labor. First is the kind that is exhausting and difficult. The other aspect is the feeling that it's endless, uninterrupted, *pointless work*, what the verse in *Kohelet* describes as *amal* (*Kohelet* 2:11).

Restlessness: Fear and suffering - *itzavon* (3:17).

Mortality: 'For dust you are and to dust you shall return (3:19).

In sum, Adam's curse was to suffer continuous, exhausting, pointless labor that is by nature unproductive, resulting in conflict and ultimately, death. Factors like the competitive society we live in, the fear that others may take away our possessions, the vulnerability that our source of income may dry up all lead to the anxiety and uneasiness that man experiences.

As a counterpoint to this uneasiness and suffering the blessing of the Shabbat relieves man from these curses.

On Shabbat we are released from the monotony, jealousy and rancor that are often part of mundane pursuits. Work is dignified and ennobling as long as one knows when to stop. Endless work can estrange people from their families. The Torah commands that the family rest together. All of this relates to the *Shabbat de'letata*. A calm and serenity enters our midst.

However, there is still one component of the curse that is not assuaged with the onset of Shabbat. Namely, the third curse, the curse of death. In what way does Shabbat offer solace for the reality of death. This is addressed by *Shabbat dele'eila*, alluded to in the final mishna in *Tamid*: "A psalm, a



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song for the Sabbath” (Ps.92:1): [meaning] a psalm, a song for the time to come, for the day which will be entirely Sabbath and rest for life everlasting.”

Shabbat itself is associated with the World to Come. This idea, said the Rav, is based on the description in *Bereshit*. Toward the conclusion of creation, on the sixth day, the verse states that the world was ‘very good’ (1:31); a world of complete unity and totality, as implied by the word *kol*. The world was in a state of wholeness and perfection. However, after the sin of the Tree of Knowledge the world was no longer whole. On Shabbat, however, the world unites once again with the Creator, recreating the wholeness of Creation as on the original Friday. This wholeness will be replicated in the World to Come.

This lofty insight that Shabbat represents a longing for peace and oneness is alluded to in an addition we make to the Friday night prayer that differs from the rest of the week. We ask God to spread His *Sukkat Shalom*, His shelter of peace over us and over Jerusalem. This special insertion implies that we anticipate a time when evil will depart, when we will be free of suffering and death. This is not a reference to our Shabbat rest of this world but to the Shabbat that is an eternal Shabbat, the *Shabbat dele'eila*. (*Darosh Dorash Yosef*, pp. 249-252).

The Psalm for the Shabbat day is also striking in that it strangely does not make any direct mention of Shabbat. However, it does direct our attention to life’s challenges and to finding faith and meaning. The Rav

commented on the verse, “To tell of Your loving-kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness at night.” “It is much easier to feel God’s immanence during a time of redemption, identified with ‘dawn’ or the ‘morning’. The challenge is to perceive God from the perspective of adversity and tragedy, ‘night’ or ‘darkness’. The Shabbat hints to us that there will be a time of clarity and justice; ‘the Lord is upright, He is my Rock, in whom there is no wrong.’” (Mesorat HaRav Siddur, pp. 358-360)

The Rav taught that the Shabbat for which man must prepare refers not only to the day that comes at the end of the week. Man must also prepare for the “day which is completely Shabbat.” Only one who prepares for the distant tomorrow, only one who builds for future generations, is living his life properly (*Yemei Zikaron*, p. 185).

The Torah calls Shabbat (*Shemot* 31:17), an eternal sign (*ot hee le’olam*). We declare these words each Shabbat in our prayers when we recite the *Kiddush*. The author of the *Reshit Chochmah*, an important book of Kabbalah and Ethics written in the 16th century, teaches that this phrase means that it is a “sign of Eternity.” (*Reshit Chochmah, Shaar HaKedushah* 3 (New York, 5728) p. 131a)

On Shabbat, writes Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, “the door opens a crack, and we see a spark of the Eternal. We feel a breeze blowing from the Future World When All is Sabbath. The Shabbat feeling is a sign of the Future, when man and God will be in total harmony.” (*Sabbath Day of Eternity*, The Aryeh Kaplan Anthology II, pp. 126-127) ■



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Kiddush Hashem: The Quest

Perhaps one of the most obvious principles of the Jewish faith is one of the most difficult to observe consistently. For some of us who attend to life's chores, the daily grind so absorbs us that our religious sensitivities and responsibilities pass us by. We are so immersed in our worries that we forget the axiom: שׁוּיִתִּי ה' לִנְגִדִי תָמִיד – "I have set Hashem always before me" (Tehillim 16:8).

In this week's Parsha, we learn about the sanctification of Hashem's name (*Kiddush Hashem*) and its converse, desecration of His name (*Chillul Hashem*). In the spirit of 'Depart from evil and do good,' Hashem instructs Moshe to teach that "You shall not desecrate My holy name, rather I should be sanctified among Bnei Yisrael; I am Hashem Who sanctifies you, who took you out of Eretz Mitzrayim to be a God unto you: I am Hashem" (Vayikra 22:32-33).

Ideally, we should behave in a way that causes a Kiddush Hashem because Hashem is *Kadosh* (Parshat Kedoshim). However, Hashem now appeals to a lower sense of

values, namely, reciprocity (see Kohlberg's stages of moral development). Because He brought us out of Egypt to be our God, so we should accord Hashem honor and loyalty – and act accordingly.

Desecration of Hashem (*Chillul Hashem*) is one of the most severe sins and most easy to come by. In psychological and Torah circles, much is made of the effect we have on others, knowingly and otherwise. For example, we all know people who have said, "If that's the way observant Jews behave, what can you expect of me?" We are also aware, for instance, of the horrendous impact of Lashon Hara on society.

It just takes a slip of the tongue to destroy lives completely. It takes courage and perseverance, however, to act constantly in a way that gives rise to *Kiddush Hashem*.

Not for nothing, we pray that "we should find grace and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (*Benching* – Grace after meals). No wonder that following these mandates, the Torah introduces the *Mo'adim* – times (like Shabbat) to forget the daily struggles and spend quality time with Hashem. Then we might better cultivate our relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu, thus to fulfill our mission in this world. כִּן יִהְיֶה רָצוֹן – May it be His will. ■

Shabbat Shalom! Menachem Persoff

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“Hineni Muchan U’mezuman” before Sefirat Ha’omer

Question: I am not consistent about saying “*Hineni muchan u’mezuman*” (= *hmum*) before *sefirat ha’omer*. Should I decide one way or the other, and which way is better?

Answer: The practice of saying “*Hmum*” before *mitzvot*, like many “extra” ritual recitations, can be traced to the Arizal (16th century) and a small elite group of his disciples until it spread broadly especially among Sephardim and Hasidim. Some *gedolim* opposed this introduction to *mitzva* (sometimes as part of the opposition to mystically-oriented Hasidic practices, although some detractors predated Hasidism— see Chok Yaakov 489:11 and the Maharshal he cites.)

The most prominent critic is the Noda B’yehuda (Yoreh Deah I, 93). His main concern was the recitation’s first line (“*L’shem yichud...*”), which relates to a difficult kabbalistic idea that we want the performance of the *mitzva* to “unite Hashem and His Presence.” The Noda B’yehuda argued that

this concept is too deep and secret to share with the masses, which could be philosophically dangerous. He also reasons that it is unnecessary to verbalize such ideas, as the “unifying” power of *mitzvot* occurs by itself when one does the *mitzva* with the intention to serve Hashem.

Beyond *l’shem yichud*, *hmum* is a statement that we are doing the *mitzva* because Hashem commanded us to do so. The Noda B’yehuda does not see that as bad, but unnecessary. If one indeed is doing the *mitzva* because Hashem commanded it, he does not need to verbalize it. However, his own practice was to distinguish – he would state his intention to do a *mitzva* before *mitzvot* that do not have a *beracha*. When there are *berachot*, we can trust Chazal to compose them with all the worthwhile elements. Instituting a text that Chazal did not disturb him.

The practice of *hmum* is much less polarizing now than it was 200 years ago. While the Mishna Berura does not mention it, the (non-Hasidic) Aruch Hashulchan (OC 489:6) does, noting the opposition to it and his viewpoint that at his time it was widespread and done positively. It has mainly become a matter of communal *minhag* and/or personal preference, which are fine in such a matter, as is reciting it sporadically. Hopefully, you had in mind not to do it as a practice that could bind you through *neder*.

It is interesting that many people recite

The Orthodox Union - via its website - fields questions of all types in areas of kashrut, Jewish law and values. Some of them are answered by Eretz Hemdah, the Institute for Advanced Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, headed by Rav Yosef Carmel and Rav Moshe Ehrenreich, founded by HaRav Shaul Yisraeli zt"l, to prepare rabbanim and dayanim to serve the National Religious community in Israel and abroad. Ask the Rabbi is a joint venture of the OU, Yerushalayim Network, Eretz Hemdah... and OU Israel's Torah Tidbits.



hmum regularly before some *mitzvot* and not other *mitzvot*, and *sefirat ha'omer* is one of the more popular times. There is actually more opposition by some (see Yalkut Yosef, Sefirat Ha'omer 1; Teshuvot V'hanhagot II:247) to reciting the standard version for *sefirat ha'omer* – because of the mention of “*mitzvat aseh*” and “*k'mo shekatuv baTorah*” (a positive commandment, as it says in the Torah). *Rishonim* dispute whether *sefirat ha'omer* is a *mitzva* from the Torah in a time when there are no *korban ha'omer* and *korban shtei halechem* to count between (see Vayikra 23:15). While the Rambam (Temidin 7:22) says that it is still from the Torah, Tosafot (Menachot 66a) follows the opinion (ibid.) that it is Rabbinic, and the Beit Yosef (OC 489) views that as the primary opinion. When we ask after counting that Hashem should return us to service in the *Beit Hamikdash*, we infer that only then will *sefira* once again be from the Torah). The Rambam (Mamrim 2:9) says that presenting a Rabbinic law as one from the Torah violates *bal tosif* (adding on to the Torah). Our common text either relies on the possible reading that it is a Rabbinic positive *mitzva* and is thereby an extension of the *p'sukim* or on the fact that the Rambam's contention that it is from the Torah might be correct (Halichot Shlomo, Moadim 11:2).

We will now conjecture why many recite *hmum* specifically for *sefirat ha'omer*:
1. There are other additional recitations

that one may already be doing (see Magen Avraham 489:5); 2. The mystical elements of *sefirat ha'omer* might be stronger than for most *mitzvot*; 3. It has a catchy tune (which happens not to include “*L'shem yichud...*”) that people like to sing. In any case, there is little halachic importance whether one does or does not recites it. ■

Eretz Hemdah has begun a participatory Zoom class - "Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe" - an analytical look at the sources, methodology, and considerations behind our rulings, with Rav Daniel Mann. Contact info@eretzhemdah.org to join.

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If you have further questions, please contact Danny Taragin, 052 8464249 (also whatsapp). We will be starting Masechet Temura shortly.



RABBI GIDEON

**Machon Puah for Fertility and
Gynecology in Accordance with Halacha**

WEITZMAN

The Adopted Embryo

Last time we introduced Molly Gibson, the baby born from an “adopted” embryo that had been frozen for 27 years. Her case was heralded as a “breakthrough” since this was the longest time that an embryo had been frozen, used and resulted in a live birth.

This case, and similar ones involving using frozen embryos, raises a number of halachic questions. To understand these we must supply some background as to why anyone would want to use such embryos.

In almost all cases of in-vitro fertilization hormonal treatment is used to create what is called superovulation. A woman will regularly ovulate one egg every month. This is, of course, a generalization since women may not ovulate at all, and sometimes a woman ovulates more than one egg, which may result in fraternal twins, as opposed to biological twins, where one egg was released and fertilized and then split into two (or more) embryos.

In order to increase the success of fertility treatment, hormonal ovulation induction enables a woman to ovulate more than one egg, the so-called superovula-

tion. Giving hormonal treatment, mostly injected, creates a controlled hyperstimulation of the ovaries and more than one egg is released.

These released eggs are then retrieved and fertilized in the laboratory. Their development is carefully monitored to ensure that they divide and grow in a healthy manner. After a few days of development the fertilized eggs are transferred back to the body. This will hopefully lead to a pregnancy.

In the past, the assumption was that putting back as many fertilized eggs as possible would enhance success rates and lead to more healthy pregnancies. Large numbers of eggs were transferred, from one to eight or even more.

More recently this practice has ceased, for a number of reasons. First, it did not lead to more pregnancies and success rates remained around the same figure when one or two eggs were transferred, or many more. Secondly, there were many more multifetal pregnancies, twins and above, sometimes well above. These pregnancies are often considered high risk and, in many

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cases, leads to a miscarriage of all the embryos with the tragic result of no baby at the end of the process.

Due to this, the current practice is to transfer fewer eggs. In some places it is mandated by law that the lab must only transfer one egg, called single embryo transfer. Only in rare cases can a special dispensation be given to transfer two. In some countries this is not legally binding but is considered best practice.

More on this next week. ■

The Puah Institute is based in Jerusalem and helps couples from all over the world who are experiencing fertility problems. Offices in Jerusalem, New York, Los Angeles & Paris. Contact (Isr) 02-651-5050 (US) 718-336-0603 www.puahonline.org



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Preparing The Garden For Shemita, #2: *Melachot Derabanan* During Shemita

Last week, we learned about four or five *melachot* pertaining to shemita, which are forbidden by the Torah.

However, there are many more *melachot* that do not appear in the Torah. The Mishna (Shevi'it chap. 2) enumerates 17 *melachot* and the Rambam (Shevi'it 1,5) includes them too. Rav Kook lists more than 20 *melachot* in his book *Shabbat Ha'aretz* (1,5), as does the Chazon Ish (Shevi'it 17, 19).

The well-known *melachot* are the following: watering and irrigation, weeding, fertilization, mowing (grass), spraying and crop-dusting. Are they forbidden *derabanan*, or permitted?

Ukmei ilana and avruyei ilana

The Gemara (Avoda Zara 3) writes that

any *melachah* directed toward keeping the tree alive (in Aramaic, “*ukmei ilana*”) is permissible, but a *melachah* to improve or strengthen the tree (*avruyei ilana*) is forbidden.

For example; there are many plants that will die if they don't receive water during the summer. Therefore, watering these plants fall into the category of *okmey ilana* and is permissible during Shemita. On the other hand, it is forbidden to cut old branches of a tree so that the tree will grow better. Why? Because the goal is to “improve” the tree, to make it grow better. Fertilization is usually *avruyei ilana*, thus forbidden, because generally the tree or plant will survive without fertilization. **Chazal didn't want that our plants would die during shemita, but only that we do the minimum needed to ensure their survival.**

Ukmei ilana or ukmei peira (fruits)

Rav Kook believed that only actions taken to preserve the **tree** are permitted, while activities to preserve the **fruits** are forbidden. By contrast, the Chazon Ish was lenient with regards to the fruit as well. For example, spraying trees against pests that attack the tree's fruit, would be forbidden to Rav Kook but acceptable to the Chazon Ish. *Lema'aseh*, the general custom is to be lenient like the Chazon Ish.

Given the above, any *melacha* whose goal is to avoid loss of a plant or its yield – is permitted during shemithah.

There are activities that are sometimes permissible and sometimes forbidden. It depends on whether the activity is directed to strengthen the tree, or merely to keep it tree alive.

In light of these principles, there are many *melachot* that we must perform **before** shemithah, during the end of the sixth year. We will discuss this next week. ■



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Winner Of The World Bible Quiz Has Something To Say To Us

I have a news scoop regarding this year's winner of the World Bible Quiz: he competed in the competition four (!) times. I called Gilad Avrahamoff, 17 years old, from Netanya, in order to hear all the details. He competed in 9th grade and took 9th place in the regional quiz. In 10th grade, he tried again and took 3rd place in the regional quiz. But he did not give up and wanted to try again. However, because of the coronavirus,

they restricted the number of participants and he was left behind. He thought about leaving the competition, but decided to go for it a fourth time. As a result, Gilad is the winner of the World Bible Quiz. I asked him what kept him going and he quoted three Bible passages to explain how he prevailed despite several disappointing setbacks.

"Because I have fallen, I will rise" – (Micah 7:8) "If you draw the proper conclusions from each time you fail, you will learn that failure is a prerequisite for success".

"A continuous fire shall burn upon the altar; it shall not go out" – (Leviticus 6:6) "It's unrealistic to begin studying for the Bible quiz a month before the competition. You need to study all year long. So what's important is not finding the best study guide, but perseverance - 'a continuous fire.'"

"For it is your life" – (Deuteronomy 32:47) "The Tanach (Bible) is our book, our foundation, our common language, our compass. The entire world draws inspiration from it. In any case, it's found on a shelf in all our homes, and I recommend that everyone should read it. Walk in the Land of Israel with Avraham, cross the Jordan River with Yehoshua, rejoice in Yeshayahu's prophecy of Jerusalem's revival, grow wise with the brilliant proverbs of King Solomon, return with Naomi and Ruth from Moav to

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Bethlehem, rebuild the walls of Jerusalem with Nehemiah. The Tanach is the only book from which a child in kindergarten and a professor in a university can both learn and then learn some more, not in order to win a Bible quiz but in order to enjoy a much greater privilege: a connection with eternity." ■

Sivan Rahav-Meir is a media personality and lecturer. Married to Yedidya, the mother of five. Lives in Jerusalem, and formerly served as the World Mizrachi Shlichah to North America. Sivan lectures in Israel and overseas about the media, Judaism, Zionism and new media. She was voted by Globes newspaper as most popular female media personality in Israel and by the Jerusalem Post as one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world.

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BY REBBETZIN ZEMIRA OZAROWSKI

Director of OU Israel L'Ayla Women's Initiative



ה' שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך

Rav Dovid Shlomo Eibishitz (1800's) ערבי נחל, brings down in his Sefer, the following Mashal (parable):

There was once a king who wanted to have a beautiful new crown made for him. He called for the three most talented craftsmen in the country to each take a turn at attempting to construct a perfect crown, under his direct supervision.

The first craftsman arrived at the palace and listened carefully to the king's instructions. He then proceeded to create an exquisite crown which fit the king's exact description. Much to everyone's surprise, instead of praising the artist's work, the king ordered that his hands be chopped off! He explained that he was shocked to see how calmly and serenely the man worked while standing in front of him. He would have expected for him to be shaking as he nervously worked in the presence of royalty; the fact that he was so calm attested to his complete disrespect for the king.

When the second artisan began his hand at creating a crown, he indeed began to tremble and shake. His hand was so unsteady that he simply could not continue. The king promptly sent him home.

The third craftsman was just as nervous as the second. As he began his work, he felt himself trembling with fear. But then he took a hold of himself and realized that he would need to relax himself in order to succeed in creating a crown. He approached the king and said – “Your highness, I greatly fear and revere you. I do not deserve to take on this tremendous task. But I want to fulfill your will and therefore, I am asking your permission to relax and let down my guard in order to be able to be calm enough to do as you have asked. Please give me the working conditions that I need in order to be able to fulfill your will”. The king was indeed happy with this request and the mission was successfully accomplished.

When we arrive at Shemoneh Esrei and are about to approach HaKadosh Baruch Hu “face to face”, we should be filled with fear and trepidation. How could it be that mere mortals are able to speak with G-d? If we jump right into our Tefilla without any hesitation, we are like the first craftsman who didn't feel any apprehension at all as he worked in front of the king. On the other hand, we can't get stuck in our fear like the second man. Rather, like the third artist, we need to gather up our courage and ask – “ה' שפתי תפתח ופי יגיד תהלתך” – *Hashem, please open our mouths so that we can say your praises.* We know that we are completely inadequate to daven before You. We rec-

ognize the absurdity of us standing before You. We are scared and humbled by the monumental task in front of us. Help us out, open our mouths, and give us the confidence. Only then we will be able to fulfill Your will and daven properly.

In addition, many commentaries point out an additional meaning to these words. They explain that as we begin Shemoneh Esrei, we are worried that we might not formulate our words properly. We might not know the right words to say or the right kavanot (thoughts) to have as we recite those words. We ask Hashem to please open our mouths for us, make the right words come out, together with the appropriate accompanying thoughts. Give us the *kochot* (strength) needed to concentrate,

connect, and interact with You, the King of all Kings. Let's try to take a moment before taking our three steps back to really think about what we are about to do and to feel the meaning behind these words.

Just to close with one thought outside the realm of Tefilla, I have been inspired numerous times when various Rabbis and teachers (and Chidon haTanach contestants) recited these same words before beginning to speak, asking Hashem to help put the right words in their mouths. We too can pause before any important conversation, be it with a spouse, co-worker, or child, and recite these words, offering a silent prayer to Hashem to help us formulate our thoughts coherently, sensitively, and effectively. ■

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Asher Manning
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Cain and Ableism

Of the many themes in this week’s Parshah one stands out in its apparent dissonance with modern sensibilities.

The Torah very clearly rules that any Kohen with a physical disfiguration or disability is disqualified from participating in the ritual service of the Beit HaMikdash (Vayikra 21:17-23).

Today with our progressive values this notion seems terribly discriminatory and totally unjust. Modern western morality has fine-tuned our sensibilities to be ever more aware and compassionate with regard to all those who find themselves inhibited or unable.

And yet the Torah is unequivocal on the matter. We, who live in both worlds simultaneously, find ourselves between a rock and a hard place. We accept the Torah as Dvar Hashem, guiding us on the path of life, Chessed and Mishpat and yet the social

messaging that we face 24/6 bombards us with a new moral code of equity, diversity and inclusion.

A possible solution lies in the story of Kain & Hevel and their disparate sacrifices. Kain meant well and yet it was not enough. We cannot ignore reality and pretend that deficiencies and disparities do not exist. The Mikdash is a place of Godly truth – “Netzach Yisrael Lo Yeshaker” – and you cannot pretend before God.

Hierarchies are built into nature. So too in the realm of the super-natural and spiritual. A Cohen can serve where a Yisrael cannot and though they may be equal before the law, in the realm of Kedusha we follow a higher code.

Our striving for equality must not blind us from reality.

Indeed, acknowledging difference saves us from indifference. We must be compassionate and sensitive to all, especially to the less fortunate (Vayikra 19:14). And yet, when it comes to serving Hashem, we face him with the Truth. Reality can be challenging but we cannot ignore it.

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We must constantly strive to better and improve the things in us which can be changed. But when we reach the limits of human ability, we must face our immutable disabilities and handicaps, both physical and spiritual, with humility and acceptance.

In a human world we can choose to renounce rejection but in the spiritual world we have no choice but to strive for perfection.



Yosef Zinger
Efrat, 11th Grade

The Origin and Meaning of the Sefirat Haomer

In this week's Parasha there are many things mentioned, but one thing that I thought was most relevant and interesting to me was Sefirat HaOmer.

When we take a closer look at Sefirat HaOmer we find two main reasons for the Mitzva:

1. The Sefira demonstrates our thrill for the upcoming receiving of the Torah on Shavuot. The whole process is in many ways a preparation of spiritual growth

and happiness. Just like a child can't wait for school to end so that they can go on vacation, so too we feel like we can't wait, and so we count down every day.

2. When the Jews left Egypt, they had unfortunately collected a lot of immoral values and bad habits from their surroundings. In the desert they went through a radical "49 days" of spiritual transformation and development in order to turn into holier people. Their transformation was so great that they went from being a lowly people to being compared to angels!

So, we see that the Sefira prepared us to receive the Torah, and through the 49 days of transformation we learned to really appreciate it. Be'ezrat Hashem may we all strive to truly appreciate Torah and gain the ability to become more and more holy in 49 days, just like our ancestors did! ■

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Saving a Life In A Cemetery

On Monday evening, just before 6:00 p.m., a 43-year-old man had gone to The New Cemetery in Be'er Sheva to visit his mother's grave when he suddenly suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed. United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Ariel Pahima works at the cemetery as a logistics and maintenance worker during the day. However, Ariel, who had been home that day, had left his house a short time earlier in order to respond to a different medical emergency that had occurred nearby on Hartsit Street. He had just finished treating his patient when he received the emergency alert about the cardiac arrest at the cemetery.

As he passed off his patient to the ambulance team, Ariel didn't waste a minute before jumping onto his ambucycle and rushing to his place of work.

Arriving just three minutes later, Ariel pulled up just ahead of the ambulance that was responding to the incident and led the team through navigating the narrow roads of the large cemetery to locate the collapsed man. Ariel and the ambulance team found the 43-year-old unconscious on the ground. After checking his vital signs, Ariel could not find a pulse and saw that the man wasn't breathing.



Ariel began chest compressions as the team launched into CPR. A defibrillator was attached and two shocks were administered. 10 minutes after the second shock, and after additional rounds of chest compressions and assisted breathing, the man's pulse returned.

As the man was loaded onto the ambulance, he regained full consciousness. Ariel's familiar face comforted the patient, who he recognized from his mother's burial, as he was taken to the hospital. As the ambulance drove away, United Hatzalah volunteer EMT Avi Heiman, who was coming from the other side of the city, arrived at the scene. Ariel briefed Avi on what happened, and the two joked about the irony before each returning to their homes.

"In the five years I've worked at the cemetery, I have never had an incident of cardiac arrest on the grounds themselves. I find it ironic that the first time that there was one, I wasn't there to help immediately," Ariel said. "Honestly, I was afraid that the one time I wasn't at the cemetery to respond to the emergency, it could end in a fatality. Thankfully, I wasn't too far and was able to make it back on time."



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