

Candle lighting and havdala times for Shabbat and Yom Tov (Acharei-HaGadol, first day of Pesach, Shabbat Chol HaMoed, last day of Pesach, K'doshim) can be found in the Pesach Pull Out Section. Rabbeinu Tam times for the 5 dates for Jerusalem are: 8:24, 8:26, 8:30, 8:32, 8:36pm

Chameitz times - search, ISUR ACHILA, ISUR HANA'A - are also in the Pull out section.

The "other z'manim" in the box to the right cover the range of dates from Wednesday, April 13th through Friday, May 4th - as indicated. This is a span of 24 days. Times for dates within the range can be found by interpolation, but should be padded by a couple of minutes to play it safe.

Note to Zichron people: We've left you out this week because we have not yet reached the Mo'eitza Datit to clarify the issue of your times. We will put you back in when we get things clear.

Ranges are 24 days. WED-FRI
9 Nisan - 2 Iyar • April 13 - May 6

Earliest Talit & T'filin	5:22-4:55am
Sunrise	6:14-5:50am
Sof Z'man K' Sh'ma (Magen Avraham: 8:49-8:43am)	9:26-9:12am
Sof Z'man T'fila (Magen Avraham: 9:59-9:47am)	10:31-10:20am
Chatzot (halachic noon)	12:39¼pm-12:35¾am
Mincha Gedola (earliest Mincha)	1:12-1:10pm
Plag Mincha	5:45¼-5:57½pm
Sunset (based on sea level: 7:06-7:22pm)	7:11-7:27pm

www.ttidbits.com
for PDF files of TT (whole, lite, XL), ParshaPix, text file, Palm version, Torah Tidbits Audio mp3 files... and more!

📖 A little tug can bring in a great ship.

From "A Candle by Day" by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

A Candle by Day • The Antidote • The World of Chazal
by Rabbi Shraga Silverstein

Now available at 054-209-9200

Lehava concludes them both

Solder

(pronounced sodder)

Soldering iron is a מַלְחָם

Soldering gun = אֶקְדָּח־הַלְחָמָה

No nuts - yes nuts

My name is Poki Safari

A FINE KOSHER MANSION

Aboriginal name meaning "gentle firestick"

Acharei is Shabbat HaGadol 10.53% of the time - in 13-month years that begin on THU.

Did you notice that Purim was the same day of the week this year as last? And so is the Seder and all of Pesach? It happens during and following a full 13-month year, which has 385 days - exactly 55 weeks.

On for Ram"a; off for Ari z"l

LEAD TIDBIT Chad Gadya-a-a-a, Chad Gadya!

Parshat Acharei is Shabbat HaGadol 10.53% of the time, on average. It happens when Rosh HaShana is Thursday and Friday in a 13-month year.

It just works out like that, but it does give us a chance to take two special days of the year that are on opposite sides of the year and examine them together - Yom Kippur and Pesach.

Acharei's theme is the Yom Kippur service in the Beit HaMikdash. The bulk of Acharei is the Torah reading for Yom Kippur, morning and afternoon. And this year, the Yom kippur sedra ushers in Pesach.

The two traditional, major drashot of the year are Shabbat Shuva (right before YK) and Shabbat HaGadol (right before Pesach). Our Yom Kippur davening culminates with L'SHANA HABAA BIRUSHALAYIM HAB'NUYA. So does the Pesach Seder. Many men wear a kittel on Yom Kippur... and at the Pesach Seder.

Most significantly, Yom Kippur epitomizes T'SHUVA MI-YIR'A, repentance which is motivated by Fear of G-d; Pesach is characterized as the time for T'SHUVA MEI-AHAVA, repentance that is motivated by Love of G-d.

Yom Kippur and Pesach complement each other.

And another common factor between Pesach and Yom Kippur is the GOAT.

One of the major components of Seder Avoda on Yom Kippur in the Beit HaMikdash is the drawing of lots over two identical goats, to determine

which one will one of the most "intimate" of communal sacrifices - its blood will be brought into KODSHEI HAKODADHIM, the Holy of Holies, and which goat will be the SA'IR LAA-ZAZEIL, the "scapegoat".

Korban Pesach can be a not-yet-year old goat as well as it can be a lamb. But Pesach's connection to a goat is older than its candidacy for Korban Pesach. We might say that a goat started the ball rolling on our Egyptian enslavement and oppression, years before we actually got down to Egypt.

The Hagada acknowledges that the beginning of Egyptian experience was Lavan's deceit of Yaakov, by giving him Leah as a wife in place of Rachel. The sowed the seeds of jealousy between the sisters that blossomed with the hatred of Yosef by his brothers, specifically, Leah's sons.

When the brothers grabbed Yosef, stripped him of the multicolored, striped coat that Yaakov had given him, and tossed him into a pit, they took that coat and dipped it into the blood of a goat in order to deceive their father into thinking that Yosef had been killed by a wild animal. The Sale of Yosef, according to the Midrash, caused our descent into Egyptian slavery. Some sources suggest that the goats of Yom Kippur are yearly acts of atonement for the Sale of Yosef.

Pesach and Yom Kippur are linked - Acharei-HaGadol brings that point home. Chag Samei'ach.

Acharei

29th of 54 sedras;
6th of 10 in Vayikra

Written on 154 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 44

15 Parshiyot; 3 open, 12 closed

80 p'sukim, ranks 45th; 6th in Vayikra

1170 words, ranks 43rd; 6th in Vayikra

4294 letters, ranks 45th; 6th in Vayikra

Overall, it is a small sedra

Acharei & K'doshim are combined in all 12-month years and read separately in all 13-month years. As mentioned, Acharei is Shabbat HaGadol 10.53% of the time.

MITZVOT

28 of the 613, 2 positive + 26 prohibitions

Aliya-by-Aliya Sedra Summary

[P> X:Y (Z)] and [S> X:Y (Z)] indicate start of a parsha p'tucha or s'tuma respectively. X:Y is Perek:Pasuk of the beginning of the parsha; (Z) is the number of p'sukim in the parsha.

Numbers in [square brackets] are the Mitzva-counts of Sefer HaChinuch AND Rambam's Sefer HaMitzvot. A=ASEI (positive mitzva); L=LAV (prohibition) - Rambam counts positives (248) and prohibitions (365) separately. X:Y is the perek and pasuk from which the mitzva is counted.

Kohen - First Aliya 17 p'sukim - 16:1-17

[P> 16:1 (34)] The first part of the sedra deals with the Yom Kippur service in the Beit HaMikdash - SEDER HaAvoda. An emotional element is introduced when the Torah tells us that G-d gave these commands "after the deaths of Aharon's two sons". We cannot help but be struck by the combination of the Kohen Gadol performing the loftiest of spiritual tasks with the background of personal grief. These feelings are especially powerful as we listen to this reading on Yom Kippur morning.

Before the Service is described, the kohanim in general are warned not to enter the Beit HaMikdash other than when they have tasks to perform there [184,L68 16:2]. (It is hard to miss the additional connection to Nadav and Avihu, who entered the Mikdash for the performance of an "improper" task.)

The entire Yom Kippur service, with all of its details, constitutes one mitzva [185,A49 16:3]. Aharon is to take a bull as a sin-offering and a ram as a burnt-offering. He is to wear his special garments (the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur alternates between his full set of eight garments and a special set of four pure white garments which he wore when he entered the Holy

of Holies).

The Kohen Gadol washes his hands and feet ten times throughout the day and immerses in a mikveh five times. "From the People", Aharon takes two goats for sin-offerings and a ram as an Olah. The bull is an atonement for Aharon and the kohanim. Lots were cast to determine which of the two (identical) goats was to be offered as a korban and which was sent out alive into the wilderness as the scapegoat.

SDT: *There are two very different styles of sin - rejecting what G-d says and distancing oneself from the Divine, and violating His commands in an attempt to get closer to Him. Most sin is of the former type; that of Nadav and Avihu was of the latter kind. Corresponding to these two opposite motivations for sin, we have two special offerings on Yom Kippur - one that was offered inside the Beit HaMikdash, its blood actually being brought into the Kodshai Kodoshim, and the other being sent completely away from the Beit HaMikdash. Note that both goats were identical; sins can be both qualitatively different and very similar at the same time.*

The Kohen Gadol performs all of the duties of the Day, with minimal assistance from other kohanim. The Holy of Holies filled with smoke from the incense offering when the Kohen Gadol entered. The service of Yom Kippur is complex; it is detailed in the repetition of the Musaf Amida on Yom Kippur as well as in the Torah reading.

Levi - Second Aliya 7 p'sukim - 16:18-24

This portion continues to describe the complex service of Yom Kippur. Among the many tasks of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, is VIDUI on behalf of all the people of Israel. His confession of sin must be accompanied by that of each Jew, if complete atonement is to be achieved. Rambam says that there is "communal forgiveness" for "minor" offenses, but major sins require that the individual do his own T'shuva, so to speak. Even when there is "communal forgiveness", an individual still has to be part of the community in order to benefit from it. He who distances himself from the community does not receive the benefits of communal prayer, repentance, and atonement. (Over simplified, to be sure, but there is a point here.)

Shlishi - Third Aliya 10 p'sukim - 16:25-34

The Torah continues detailing the Yom Kippur service. It concludes with a reiteration of the rules of Yom Kippur for each of us, and the statement that the Day of Yom Kippur helps bring atone-ment to the People. It is thus the Day itself, the Temple service, communal prayer, AND our indi-

vidual prayer, T'shuva, confession, and fasting that combine to attain true forgiveness for ourselves and all of Israel.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya

7 p'sukim - 17:1-7

It is forbidden to slaughter an animal that is to be offered as a korban, outside the area of the Beit HaMikdash [186,L90 17:3].

Similarly, it is forbidden to slaughter an animal for personal use within the precincts of the Temple. A korban slaughtered outside is invalid and must be burned, "personal" meat inside is likewise forbidden. Both are wasteful, hence sinful, acts which can even be construed as a form of bloodshed, because they are worse than senseless. Note that Judaism does not forbid the slaughter of an animal for korbanot, food, and other benefits to humankind. But it takes a very dim view of useless and destructive killing.

Chamishi 5th Aliya

14 p'sukim - 17:8-18:5

The Torah reiterates the prohibition of slaughtering korbanot "outside" and states emphatically that it is forbidden to eat blood. Blood symbolizes life. When one slaughters a bird or a "wild" animal (e.g. deer - as opposed to the domesticated farm animal for which this mitzva does not apply), it is required to cover the first amount of blood with "dust" (sand, sawdust, etc.) [187,A147

17:13]. The prohibitions relating to blood are repeated and stressed. Blood of korbanot goes on the Altar as an atonement; blood of animals that are not eligible for korbanot must be covered.

Clarification... Mammals divide into two categories: B'HEIMA and CHAYA. Kosher B'HEIMA - cow, goat, and sheep - are "fit for the Altar". They are not included in the mitzva of KISUI DAM, covering the blood. Their blood is considered to be "atoning". No CHAYA is fit for the Mizbei'ach. Among the birds, only two types - the dove and the turtledove - are ever used as korbanot. All other birds cannot be korbanot. Therefore, the rule for birds follows the majority, and covering the blood applies to all birds (including doves - when not being offered as korbanot).

In our "everyday" experience, when a cow is slaughtered for food, the blood of the Sh'chita is not covered. When chickens are slaughtered, the additional mitzva of covering the blood (additional to the mitzva of Sh'chita) applies. It is forbidden to slaughter a chicken without covering the first gush of blood with sand or sawdust.

[P> 18:1 (5)] Chapter 18 contains the many forbidden sexual relationships. First there is a general warning against copying the negative practices of Egypt (from whence we came) and those of the peoples of Canaan (to where we are going). We have only to

follow the laws and statutes of G-d and live by them.

Observation... Looking at the first few p'sukim of Vayikra 18, the following thought jumped out: This reads as another way to understand the statement of Akavya ben Mahalaleil in the first misha of Avot 3 - Know from where you came (Egypt), to where you are going (Canaan), and before Whom you will have to give an accounting, if you copy the abominations of either.

SDT: *From the term V'CHAI BAHAM, "and live by them", we are taught two important concepts. Judaism is not just a religion; it is a way of life. Furthermore, this pasuk is (one of) the source(s) of the concept that many mitzvot are to LIVE by, not to die by, and therefore may (must) be violated in life-threatening situations. Remember though, that this does not apply to all mitzvot - we also have the concept of "be killed rather than violate" for a select few mitzvot and extreme situations.*

Shishi - Sixth Aliya

16 p'sukim - 18:6-21

[S> 18:6 (1)] It is prohibited to be intimate with any of the forbidden relations [188,L353 18:6].

[S> 18:7 (1)] Homosexual relations are forbidden with one's father [189,L351 18:7], (in addition to the general prohibition of homosexual conduct).

One may not have sexual

relations with his mother [190,L330 18:7],

[S> 18:8 (1)] his father's wife (even if she is not his mother) [191,L331 18:8],

[S> 18:9 (1)] his sister (from same father or mother or both) [192, L332 18:9],

[S> 18:10 (1)] his granddaughter from a son [193,L334 18:10] or from a daughter [194,L335 18:10], his daughter [195,L336 18:10],

Note: This prohibition is derived by KAL VACHOMER, the logical reasoning that if a man is forbidden to have relations with his granddaughter, how much more so is he forbidden to his daughter. Without explicitly saying so, this is still counted as one of the Torah's prohibitions. And some commentaries suggest that it was purposely taught to us this way to teach us the power of KAL VACHOMER.

[S> 18:11 (1)] The Torah singles out the daughter of one's father's wife and forbids relations with her [196,L333 18:10] although she is his sister, already being forbidden to him by mitzva #192. There are different opinions as to the significance and ramifications of this "seemingly" extraneous prohibition. (This prohibition is definitely not a father's wife's daughter that is not a child of the father, what in today's terminology is a step-sister, because halachically there

is no prohibition in that case.)

[S> 18:12 (1)] One may not have relations with his paternal aunt **[197,L340 18:12]**,

[S> 18:13 (1)] nor his maternal aunt **[198,L341 18:13]**,

[S> 18:14 (1)] nor may a man have homosexual relations with his uncle **[199,L352 18:14]** or relations with his uncle's wife (his aunt) **[200,L342 18:14]**.

[S> 18:15 (1)] One may not have relations with his daughter-in-law **[201,L343 18:15]**,

[S> 18:16 (1)] his brother's wife **[202,L344 18:16]** (except for the unique circumstances of YIBUM, in which case it not only is permitted, but it is a mitzva).

[S> 18:17 (14)] A man is forbidden to have relations with his wife's mother or daughter **[203,L337 18:17]**, or grandmother or granddaughter from son or daughter **[204,205; L338, 339 18:17]**.

A man may not have relations with his wife's sister, during the wife's lifetime - even if he divorced her first **[206, L345 18:18]**.

Relations with a woman in a state of NIDA is forbidden **[207, L346 18:19]**.

Relations with a married woman is forbidden. (This prohibition is counted elsewhere, but restated

here with all the other forbidden relationships.)

It is forbidden to give one's child to the pagan rituals of Molech **[208,L7 18:21]**; it is the (ultimate) desecration of G-d's name.

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya **9 p'sukim - 18:6-21**

Homosexual acts are forbidden **[209, L350 18:22]**. Sexual behavior with animals is forbidden for men, women **[210,211; L348,349 18:23]**.

We must not defile ourselves by doing any of the above. These abominable practices defile the Land and result in expulsion therefrom. We must scrupulously shun these practices.

Note: In addition to the Torah's prohibitions, there are many other relations that the Sages forbid in the spirit of the Torah's prohibitions.

Haftara 21+1 p'sukim **Mal'achi 3:4-24**

Unlike the four recent special Shabbatot, when we read a special Maftir in a second Torah, for Shabbat HaGadol that is not the case. We use only one Torah for Parshat HaShavua. We do read a special Haftara. Some say to read this haftara only when Shabbat HaGadol is Erev Pesach. Others say to use this haftara only when Shabbat HaGadol is NOT Erev Pesach. Common practice is to read it on Shabbat HaGadol in all

cases, preempting the regular Haftara.

The haftara speaks of faithfulness to Torah and the promise of the coming of Eliyahu HaNavi as the harbinger of the Complete Redemption. That the second, to some extent, depends on the first can be seen in the closeness of the following two phrases: ZICHRU TORAT MOSHE... (remember the Torah, and keep it), and HINEI ANOCHI SHOLEI-ACH LACHEM... and if you do, then I will send Eliyahu...

Note: The penultimate (next to the last) pasuk is repeated as the concluding pasuk of the haftara. This is done to end Trei-Asar on a positive note.

K'doshim

30th of 54 sedras; 7th of 10 in Vayikra

Written on 109 lines in a Torah, ranks 49th

4 Parshiyot; 3 open, 1 closed

64 p'sukim, ranks 49th; 9th in Vayikra

868 words, ranks 49th; 9th in Vayikra

3229 letters, ranks 49th; 9th in Vayikra

K'doshim is a very short sedra - only 5 sedras are shorter. But it is the most mitzva-dense sedra in the Torah. And it even has many more mitzvot than its already large numbers indicate.

MITZVOT

51 mitzvot, 13 positives + 38 prohibitions

Aliya-by-Aliya **Sedra Summary**

Kohen - First Aliya **14 p'sukim - 19:1-14**

[S> 19:1 (22)] BE HOLY! - HOW? In light of the exceptionally large number of mitzvot in this sedra, one can fairly assume that the answer to that question is - by the observance of mitzvot. This means more than "just going through the motions". It means a Torah way of life, mitzvot for the right motives and with the right KAVANA and enthusiasm.

One must revere his parents **[212, A211 19:3]**, yet keep the Shabbat, meaning (among other things) that if one's parents tell him to violate the Shabbat (or any other mitzva - Torah ordained or rabbinic), he may not listen to them. (Neither may he be disrespectful in his refusal to obey them.) Parents and their children are all commanded to keep the Shabbat (and all mitzvot).

We may not "turn towards" idolatry in thought or words **[213,L10 19:4]** nor may we make idols **[214,L3 19:4]**. This specifically prohibits making idols for others. Both these mitzvot are among the many that are designed to keep the Jew far away from idolatry.

Korbanot must be offered in the Beit HaMikdash in a proper and pleasing manner. Specifically, one must keep to the time limits presented for eating sacred meat [215,L131 19:8]. Violation carries a death penalty from heaven.

Watch this next set of mitzvot: Leave the corner of your field uncut, so that poor people might come and find grain to reap [216,A120 19:10]; do not reap your entire field [217,A210 19:9]. A positive mitzva and a prohibition that basically say the same thing. Here's another pair: Leave the gleanings of the field for the poor [218,A121 19:10]; do not take the gleanings [219, L211 19:9]. And then these two pairs of mitzvot are doubled again - each pair of mitzvot is counted separately as applied to a vineyard [220-223; A123-124, L212-213 19:9-10].

One senses that the Torah is using this compounding of mitzvot to emphasize at least two aspects of these mitzot: [1] that we are not the real owners of the land - G-d is; we are the land's guardians. We must do His bidding without "cutting corners" (pun intended). [2] that poor people have to be taken proper care of, by following the mitzvot and being inspired to do even more for them.

Stealing [224,L244 19:11], denying holding that which belongs to someone else [225,L248 19:11], and swearing to that effect [226,

L249 19:11] are all forbidden.

Swearing falsely [227,L61 19:12] is forbidden.

Observations: "A" lent "B" his laptop and later B denies that he has A's laptop, and then swears that he doesn't have it. One might think that there are two violations here. But actually, there are three. Mitzva [226] overlaps both [225] and [227].

On another note... That the Torah says one who swears falsely disgraces G-d's name by doing so, is echoed by Rambam when he distinguishes between "serious" sins and "light" sins. Rambam puts into the serious category all sins that carry a death penalty... and swearing falsely. So destructive are false and vain oaths to the underpinnings of society, that it is placed with the capital offenses, even though false oaths are not, per se, capital offenses.

Withholding someone's property [228,L247 19:13], robbery [229, L245 19:13], and delaying payment of a laborer [230,L238 19:13] are prohibited. Most people would probably rationalize the situation and not consider delaying payment as a form of theft. The Torah implies that one is (can be?) as serious as the other.

Something to consider concerning the prohibition of delaying payment to a worker (and the positive mitzva to pay on time). There are many situations in our everyday life where this mitzva-pair are present, usually

without our realizing it. You take a taxi ride. Paying the fare at the end of your ride is a mitzva. The taxi driver has worked for you and you are obligated to pay him on time and not to delay payment. In such a mundane situation, one hardly thinks of the mitzva, nor does one run afoul of these commandments - so have KAVANA for these mitzvot when you pay the driver.

It is forbidden to curse a fellow Jew [231,L317 19:14]; and one may not place a stumbling block before the blind [232,L299 19:14], meaning [not exclusively] that one may not mislead or entrap others. Care must be taken not to mislead anyone, even inadvertently. This can include stretching the truth or saying something that is not actually a lie, but it will convey to others that which is not really so. (Helping someone do the wrong thing is part of this prohibition - even if the other knows what he's doing and wants to do it anyway.)

Levi - Second Aliya 8 p'sukim - 19:15-22

Do not pervert justice [233,L273 19:15], nor show honor to a prominent person during a trial [234,L275 19:15]. We must always carry out true justice [235,A177 19:15]. Once again, notice that we have a positive mitzva which, in essence, is the "flip side" of several prohibitions,

the violation of which results in distorting and perverting justice.

Neither gossip nor slander (no difference whether what you say is true or false) [236,L301 19:16]; do not stand by while your fellow is in danger of life, limb, or property [237,L297 19:16]. Do not hate your fellow Jew in your heart [238, L302 19:17]; reproach *sensitively* your fellow [239,A205 19:17] being careful to avoid embarrassing him [240,L303 19:17] (even when reproaching).

Do not take revenge [241,L304 19:18] nor bear a grudge [242, L305 19:18]; "Love thy neighbor..." [243,A206 19:18]. Notice the constant reminder: "I am G-d", or words to that effect. Being nice to others is not just nice; it is part of Torah and the fulfillment of G-d's commandments.

It is forbidden to cross-breed animals of different species [244, L217 19:19], to sow mixed seeds [245,L215 19:19], and to wear Shaatnez, mixtures of wool and linen in a garment.

Next we find the complicated issue of the atonement for improper relations with a maid-servant who is partially freed and partially still a slave.

Shlishi - Third Aliya 10 p'sukim - 19:23-32

[P> 19:23 (10)] Fruits of the first three years of a tree's life are

forbidden, i.e. ORLA [246,L192 19:23]. The fourth year's yield is sacred [247,A119 19:24] and must be eaten only in Yerushalayim, or redeemed and the money used for food and drink in Yerushalayim. From the fifth year on, the fruits are permitted. One may not eat gluttonously [248, L195 19:26]. One may not consult and rely on omens, divination, conjuring, or astrology predictions for the future [249,250; L32,33 19:26]. Shaving the temple area of the head is forbidden [251, L43 19:27] as is shaving the face with a razor [252,L44 19:27].

Permanent tattooing is forbidden [253,L41 19:28]. Protect your daughters from loose behavior. Keep the Shabbat and respect the place of the Mikdash (even when no Beit HaMikdash stands there) [254,A21 19:30]. Ov and Yid'oni (mediums and wizards) are forbidden [255,256; L8,9 19:31]. One must rise and otherwise respect the elderly and Torah scholars [257, A209 19:32].

This last parsha has been purposely presented here as one run-on paragraph to give the flavor of the way these mitzvot "fly at you" without the parsha-breaks you might expect. One gets the feeling that there is something holding these diverse mitzvot together. K'doshim Tih'yu, Be Holy, perhaps.

R'vi'i - Fourth Aliya 5 p'sukim - 19:33-37

[S> 19:33 (5)] One must not take advantage of the newcomer to the Land (convert and/or stranger). The convert shall be treated with love; we must learn from our Egyptian experience. It is forbidden to cheat with any false measures [258,L271 19:35]; one must be honest in weights and measures [259,A208 19:36]. The parsha finishes with another summary type of pasuk - Keep all of G-d's statutes and laws. This, as mentioned earlier, is how one strives to heights of holiness and spirituality.

Chamishi 5th Aliya 7 p'sukim - 20:1-7

[P> 20:1 (27)] The punishment for Molech worship (a perverse idolatrous practice involving child-sacrifice) is death by stoning. G-d will cut off the one who serves Molech. If society does not punish the violator, G-d will. So too for the practice of Ov and Yid'oni.

Here again we find a summary pasuk, this time focusing on K'dusha, holiness, rather than the keeping of mitzvot.

Sanctify yourself and be holy, says G-d, for I am HaShem your G-d.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya 15 p'sukim - 20:8-22

Preserve the statutes and do them, for G-d sanctifies us

because of our deeds.

Cursing one's parents, even after their deaths, is forbidden [260, L318 20:9], a capital offense.

The Torah next reiterates the forbidden relationships that were taught at the end of Parshat Acharei. They are capital offenses. The specific death penalties vary, but it is in the context that Rambam learns the command to Sanhedrin to carry out the punishment of "internal burning" when called for [261,A208 20:14].

Again, the Torah commands us to preserve all of the mitzvot, thus preventing the Land from expelling us. This raises the stakes, so to speak. We are presented with a negative result if we fail to remain faithful to G-d. G-d's plan for the People of Israel was/is to bring us to Eretz Yisrael and there we will live lives of Torah and Mitzvot. We really cannot say to Him, thanks for the Land, but no thanks as far as commitment to mitzvot is concern. (Nor does it work vice versa.)

Sh'VII - Seventh Aliya 5 p'sukim - 20:23-27

It is forbidden to follow the practices of the nations amongst whom we find ourselves [262, L30 20:23]. This ISUR applies to idolatrous practices, immoral and

immodest acts, and that which has no apparent reason. Not forbidden would be things like medical personnel wearing white.

In order to inherit the land of Israel, we must not behave in the abominable ways of nations who preceded us. We must distinguish between kosher and non-kosher animals (and life-styles); we must be holy and distinct from others. We are not automatically different from anyone else. Torah makes us different. Torah gives us our unique identities.

Maftir is the final 3 p'sukim - a powerful summary of all the mitzvot of Acharei-K'doshim.

Haftara 15 p'sukim Amos 9:7-15 very short haftara

The haftara basically clarifies the "deal part" of the command to be holy. Amos stresses that we will be just like all other of G-d's children on Earth... if we don't remain faithful to G-d. Because if we do, and keep the mitzvot sincerely, then the promises of the Torah will be realized and we will be unique among the nations. It's up to us. That's our challenge.

Divrei Menachem

It is not often that Parshat Acharei occurs on Shabbat HaGadol, as if to usher in Pesach. Even as we prepare to rid ourselves of Chametz, both physical and spiritual, the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, poignantly described in the sedra, reminds us that we were created with the propensity to be forgiven and for our sins to be carried away like discarded Chametz - especially at the point where the goat was sent to Azazel.

The long process of the Avoda consisted of a number of sacrifices and ceremonies, each of which atoned for a different sin of which the people or kohanim were culpable - including desecrating the Mishkan or harboring improper thoughts (Artscroll). The responsibility of the officiating Kohen Gadol was of untold proportions, for his confession (while leaning on the doomed he-goat) had the power to (partially) atone for the rebellious sins of the people.

Blessed are the people whose leader declares his sins publicly before asking penitence for the community. Blessed are the people whose leader offers up incense in the holiest of places as a penitence for slanderous talk, without which none of the other ceremonies would be effective (Yoma 44a).

May Chodesh Nissan usher in a year of renewal and brotherhood so that by next Yom Kippur there will be less need for such rituals.

VEBBE REBBE

QUESTION: *I know that we are supposed to eat less than a k'zayit of karpas, but I am not clear why. What happens if someone does have a k'zayit?*

ANSWER: This question features the overlap of a few areas of halacha.

The first question is whether it is indeed enough to eat less than a k'zayit of karpas, as in general, such an amount is not considered halachic eating. Rambam (Chametz U'Matza 8:2) actually requires eating a k'zayit, but we accept the Rosh's opinion that it is unnecessary because the mitzva is not a classic one of eating karpas but of incorporating it in the order of observances (see Beit Yosef, Orach Chayim 473).

We prefer not having a k'zayit to avoid two doubts regarding b'rachot. If we ate a k'zayit, it would be unclear if we would need a b'racha acharona after eating it for the following reason. Usually one makes a b'racha acharona on what he eats before a meal (Mishna B'rura 176:2). However, one of the exceptions is when the b'racha he made before that food exempts him from a b'racha on a food that would normally take a b'racha during the meal. That linkage connects the two eatings and allows Birkat HaMazon to relate to the food before the meal (ibid.). Regarding our case, there is a machloket about the reason for the consensus that there is no b'racha of

Borei Pri Ha'Adama on Maror. The Rashbam (Pesachim 114b) says that it is because the b'racha made on karpas covers it. This is not simple given that the (hopefully) long section of maggid separates the two. If it does cover, then karpas is connected to the meal, making a b'racha acharona on it unnecessary, even if he ate a k'zayit. Indeed, the Shulchan Aruch (OC 473:6), while suggesting to eat less than a k'zayit, says that no b'racha acharona is made even if one ate a k'zayit of karpas (see Mishna Berura 473:56).

The GRA (to OC 473:6) claims that the Rama would not agree to connect karpas and maror because he considers the delay for Maggid a halachic break. Evidence of this is the Rama's ruling requiring a new b'racha for the second cup of wine (see Shulchan Aruch and Rama, OC 474:1). According to this approach, the Rama does not require Borei Pri Ha'Adama on maror because of the Ri's opinion (Tosafot, Pesachim 115a) that, since it is eaten after HaMotzi, maror is subsumed under the meal. Thus there is no connection between the b'rachot on karpas and on maror and if one were to eat a k'zayit of karpas, he would need a b'racha acharona. Another reason to require a b'racha acharona is that the break is too long for Birkat Hamazon to relate back to it (Ohr Zaru'a, cited in Chazon Ovadya 18). Even after a full meal, one should normally bentch within 72 minutes of the end of the eating (Shulchan Aruch, OC 184:5). Because of all of these varied opinions and the

fact that we strive to avoid doubt especially regarding b'rachot, it is better to have less than a k'zayit of karpas. (On less than a k'zayit there is a b'racha rishona but not a b'racha acharona - Shulchan Aruch, OC 210:1).

Based on what we have already seen, there is another benefit for not having a k'zayit of karpas. If we were to believe that a b'racha acharona was called for on the karpas, then most agree that it ends the efficacy of the b'racha rishona (the Magen Avraham 190:3 is a notable exception). Therefore, the Borei Pri Ha'Adama on karpas would not cover the maror, which is pertinent if we do not accept the aforementioned Ri, that maror is subsumed under the meal. It would be improper to unnecessarily require an extra set of b'rachot, and we would not want a doubt as to whether there should be one (see Chazon Ovadya, op. cit.)

Another interesting point is that having less than a k'zayit makes it questionable whether there is a need for netilat yadayim before it (see Bi'ur Halacha to OC 473:6). However, since we anyway do not make a b'racha on the netilat yadayim (because it is only on a dipped vegetable, not bread), this doubt does not concern us.

Rav Daniel Mann, Eretz Hemdah Institute

**PARSHAT PARA,
PARSHAT HACHODESH,
SHABBAT HAGADOL [3]**
by **Dr. Meir Tamari**

"It is a mitzvat aseï, incumbent on men and women, to slaughter a sheep or a goat on the 14th of Nissan, even on Shabbat, after 6 (halachic) hours of the day [which is the time that Israel left Egypt]" (Rambam, Hilkhos Korban Pesach 1:1). Imagine the spiritual, emotional and religious feelings of elevation and simcha that were aroused by the spectacle of thousands of our fathers and mothers streaming from all over the country with the sheep and goats to Yerushalayim to fulfill this mitzva; perhaps it could be compared only to the scenes in the Temple during Avodat Kohen HaGadol on Yom Kippur.

That very first Pesach in Egypt we took a lamb [the Egyptian god] on the 10th of Nissan, keep watch over it until the 14th day [an act of provocation and bravery] then the entire assembly of Israel slaughtered it in "between the two evenings" [thus giving vast publicity to their action]. We took some of its blood and placed it on the doorposts and on the lintels of the houses. Later when Israel crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land but before they made any conquest there, they also celebrated Pesach with suitable spiritual preparation. Yehoshua circumcised the male children that had been born in the desert, since it would have been

immoral to take possession of the Land while they were not brought into the covenant of Avraham, to whom the Land had been promised. Some 400 years later, in the days of Hezkiyahu, Israel kept the Pesach with great gladness after he had returned Judah to its political, economic and spiritual glory of the time of David and Sholmo. He fortified Yerushalayim, secured its water supply by building a tunnel [Shilo'ach], restored the sanctity and beauty of the Mikdash, and cleansed the country of idolatry. "And thus did Hezkiyahu throughout Judah, and he did all that was 'tov' - between Man and G-d, yashar - between Man and Man, emet - in his thoughts" (Malbim, Divrei Hayamim Bet 31:20-21).

Korban Pesach presents a spiritual perspective to these preparations that we commemorate by studying it on Erev Pesach.

"When the time came for God to fulfill His promise to Avraham Avinu, Israel had no mitzvot to justify their redemption, so He gave them two mitzvot, that of Mila and that of Korban Pesach' (M'chilta). Rabbi Elazar taught they were redeemed in the merit of four mitzvot - no sexual immorality, no murder, no needless hatred and they did not change their names and their language. However, these are negative mitzvot and merely not committing them is insufficient for redemption. This requires complete eradication of the sins for which they required the addition of Mila and Korban Pesach. Brit Mila entails three mitzvot: mila which completes the

body by sanctifying it, p'riah, 'to uncover', which enhances and reveals the mind that uncovers the unknown, and hatafat dam that is the completion of the nefesh, 'blood is the nefesh'. The Korban Pesach, as the Tzelem Elokim, unites nefesh, body, and mind. That is why the mitzva of Pesach is fulfilled by taking a lamb which had to be roasted whole - head, body and feet intact - for each family, and it is as though the whole of Israel fulfilled it with one lamb" (Shem MiShmuel, Haggadah shel Pesach).

"With this korban, the Jewish Nation ratifies all its members, assembled in family groups, as being G-d's flock and at His disposal, and then, in eating it, they receive itself back again freed from physical and civic death. This bond between Israel and G-d has to be renewed eternally, a renewal that can only be done by those who belong to Israel, both by nationality and conviction [either by birth, choice or attachment], and only by one who bears the mila, the sign of belonging to this bond. This excludes the Mumar who has estranged himself from the Jewish bond with G-d, the uncircumcised, the non-Jew whose relation with us is only through domicile or contract; conversely, the proselyte and even the slave who have been circumcised take part in Korban Pesach with complete equality. In the midst of this list of who may or may not participate, there are instruction as to how it is to be eaten, so that right at very beginning it is clear that not individuals and not yet a nation but

homes united in families groups, form the basis on which G-d built His Nation" (Rabbi S. R. Hirsch, Shmot 12:43-46).

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:

The Great, But Not Yet Holy, Shabbat

There are many steps that we ascend on our journey towards the holiday of Pesach. It is as if it is impossible to just plunge into the holiday without proper preparation. These steps include the many special Shabbatot that precede the holiday. They include the Parshiyot of Shekalim, Zachor, Para, and HaChodesh, and they culminate this week with Shabbat HaGadol, the Great Shabbat, the final Shabbat before Pesach.

I fondly remember the wise old rabbi whose little shul I frequented before I became a shul rabbi myself, back in Baltimore. His name was Rav Yitzchok Sternhell, may he rest in peace. He had many astute observations, only a few of which I recall.

In one of these insights, he pointed out that when one has a question about some aspect of Torah study and finds a single answer, then, essentially, there is no longer a question. It is answered, plainly and simply, once and for all.

But when one has a question and there are many answers, then the question remains as strong as when

it was posed. There is no need for many answers when there is one correct answer. The multitude of answers indicates that not one of them was sufficient enough to completely resolve the question posed.

One question that has received many answers over the centuries is, "Why is this Shabbat called the Great Sabbath, Shabbat HaGadol?" One answer points to the closing phrase of this week's selection from the Prophets, the Haftara, which reads:

"Behold, I will send you Eliyahu the Prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of G-d." (Malachi 3:24)

Since we read of the "the great day", we call it "the Great Shabbat."

Another approach emphasizes that on the days preceding the Exodus, the Jews were finally able to prepare lambs and goats for the paschal offering. They did so in the face of their Egyptian slave masters, for whom those animals were considered divine. To be able to fearlessly defy their former slave masters was a "great miracle." Hence the term "the Great Shabbat."

The list of answers goes on, and space does not allow even a small sample of the others. But I would like to share with you, dear reader, a very creative approach to the term "Shabbat HaGadol". This approach is creative because, contrary to all the other interpretations with which I am familiar, this approach sees this

week's Shabbat not as greater than all the others of the year, but as lesser.

The creative commentator to whom I refer is the Chassidic Rebbe, Rabbi Shaul of Moditz, may he rest in peace. He was known for his prodigious repertoire of musical compositions. The musical creativity of Rabbi Shaul was expressed in his ability to surprise the ear of the listener. His homiletic creativity also contains the element of surprise, of divergent thinking. Using this same divergent thinking, he held a very unique and thought-provoking approach to the Pesach Hagada.

Most of the reasons that are given for the fact that this week's Shabbat is called the Great Shabbat insist upon the superiority of this particular Shabbat over all the others of the year. Rabbi Shaul diverges from all these other explanations and provocatively suggests that this week's Shabbat is inferior to all the others.

Therein he asks the question, "Why do we praise this Shabbat as 'great'? Is every Sabbath not 'great'? In the special blessing that we incorporate in Birkat HaMazon, every Shabbat, we refer to 'this great and holy Shabbat... this day which is great and holy before Thee...'"

His surprising answer is that every Shabbat of the year is both "great and holy", but this final Shabbat before Pesach is, in a certain sense, merely "great", but not "holy".

For every Shabbat, argues Rabbi Shaul, has two components. We might refer to them as the physical component and the spiritual component. The former is built in to the cosmos and can be traced back to the verse in B'reishit 2:3. There, God blesses and hallows the Shabbat as part of the process of creation. That is the Shabbat of the physical rest and gives recognition to God's creative powers and omnipotence. It is "holy", but only potentially so.

The second aspect of the Shabbat is a spiritual one; ZEICHER LITZI'AT MIZRAYIM, a memorial day celebrating the Exodus from Egypt. This has to do with the experience of freedom, of becoming a nation, of undertaking an historical mission.

On this last Shabbat before Pesach, the Exodus had not yet taken place. And so, the Shabbat was merely GADOL, great. On that Shabbat, the Jew could only celebrate his freedom from utter bondage and his ability to defy his former slave master. That was "great" but not yet "holy". He did not yet have a sense of spiritual freedom and religious destiny.

Only after the first day of Pesach, with the actual departure from Egypt, and the march into the desert and towards Mount Sinai, could the Jews begin to sense that something "holy" was in store for them. Only then could they begin to anticipate not just "great" freedom, but "holy" freedom, in order to sense that something spiritual and "holy" was in store.

After that first Pesach day, and with every ensuing Shabbat since, the Jewish people experienced not just "a great Shabbat", but a "great and holy Shabbat."

Shabbat prior to Pesach is "great", but not yet fully "holy". After Pesach, every Shabbat is transformed and is not only "great", but "great and holy". Pesach and all that it symbolizes adds a new dimension to every Shabbat that follows it.

This week, then, we remember a Shabbat long ago that was the last of the merely "great" Shabbatot: A Shabbat only of respite from slavish toil, of relief from physical slavery. Next week, after we told the full narrative of the Exodus and experience all of the Seder night's rich symbolism and profound lessons, we will be able to celebrate a complete Shabbat, a Shabbat of spiritual freedom and full religious significance. Not just "Shabbat HaGadol", but "Shabbat HaGadol v'haKadosh".

The Song of the Sea's Euphoria turns Bitter

Guest article by

Rabbi Ephraim Sprecher

Dean of Students, Diaspora Yeshiva

After Shirat Hayam, the Song of the Sea praising G-d (Sh'mot 15:1-18) has been sung, the nation - and the reader - are in a state of euphoria; thus, neither the nation nor the reader is prepared for the series of failures that Israel

encounters in the second half of Parshat B'shalach: "And Moshe led Israel onward from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water. And they came to Marah and could not drink the waters because they were bitter." The Baal Shem Tov explains because the people were bitter, therefore, the water tasted bitter. And the people murmured against Moshe, saying: "What shall we drink?" (15:22-24).

The Children of Israel proclaim their demand for water, and after the problem of the shortage of water is solved, they again begin to complain, this time for food: "And the children of Israel said to them: 'Better that we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, when we did eat bread to the full; for you have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger'" (16:3).

The People of Israel are refined and purified from the 49 levels of impurity, and of being Egypt's slaves to a single entity that is born in, and then ejected from, Egypt, through the Red Sea, into the desert. Now, Israel reacts just like any newborn whose needs - the satisfaction of hunger and thirst - must be met. G-d fulfills the function of a parent, supplying the newborn with food and providing precise instructions regarding it: The manna will be given every day, and thus one must not try to save any manna for the next day. On the Shabbat, no manna will be given

and thus one must save some of the manna collected on Friday for the next day, which is the Shabbat.

Like any parent feeding his child, however, G-d gives more than food; He also teaches fundamental rules concerning how one must behave in this world. First of all, G-d teaches His child the natural order of time: Each day is allotted its daily portion of manna, so that every day is a new day, which is different from the previous one. Therefore, one must not save any manna from one day to the next.

The focus of the teaching is the prohibition of work on the Shabbat: "Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day is the Shabbat, in it there shall be none" (16:26). The nature of the Shabbat is different from that of the other days in the week. It is a day on which nothing new must be created and on which the work carried out during the other days of the week must cease; that is why some of the manna collected on Friday must be saved for Shabbat. In B'reishit, the Torah concludes its description of the creation of the world with the words, "And the heaven and the earth were finished [vaychulu], and all the host of them" (B'reishit 2:1). The word VAYCHULU has a violent connotation: The noun K'LAYA, which is from the same root, means "destruction". It is as if the text is telling us that the week must be thoroughly consumed, must be destroyed, in order to enable the new week to germinate from its ruins. Perhaps this is the principle that G-d

wants to teach His children with the help of the manna: Destruction is necessary so that the world can continue to exist. A seed must rot in the earth in order to produce lucious fruit.

The Children of Israel have just left Egypt. They have undergone the supremely total experience of the victory of good over evil, a victory so total that it seems to have no contradictions. In fact, the Song of the Sea ends with the famous verse that affirms eternity: "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever" (Sh'mot 15:18).

Through the instructions concerning the gathering of manna, G-d wishes to teach His children something about life being cyclical, about the fact that abundance is invariably replaced by scarcity. The fact that abundance invariably germinates from scarcity and about the fact that not everything is black and white, as seemed apparent only a moment before at the Red Sea. Perhaps this is the reason that Parshat B'shalach concludes with the Amalek terror attack. Amalek appears at Refidim and attacks Israel there; the Children of Israel conduct a war against Amalek, a war in which victory is uncertain: "And it came to pass, when Moshe held up his hand, that Israel prevailed; and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed" (17:11). To a certain extent, the war against Amalek is a mirror image of the war against Par'o. But, whereas the latter ended in absolute victory, the victory over Amalek is not conclusive. As a direct continuation of the passage on

the manna and G-d's teaching concerning events being cyclical, the story of the war against Amalek shows how not every war against evil ends in total victory. How evil can terrorize the weak and defenceless Israelites only days after the Song of the Sea, and can continue to exist even after it has been defeated. This world is like a rollercoaster with ups and downs, and the wild ride will only end in the Messianic Era. Until then we must hang on tight to our Torah and not waver in our Emunah in G-d.

Excerpted with permission from
Silver from the Land of Israel
A New Light on the Sabbath and Holidays
From the Writings of
Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook
by **Rabbi Chanan Morrison**
URIM PUBLICATIONS, J'lem • NY
website: ravkooktorah.org

The Strong Hand and the Outstretched Arm

Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. II, pp. 279-283

Remember... the strong hand and the outstretched arm with which the Eternal your God brought you out [of Egypt]. (D'varim 7:18-19)

We are familiar with the phrase HAYAD HACHAZAKA V'HAZ'RO'A HAN'TUYA from the Hagada, read every year on Pesach. But what exactly do the "strong hand" and "outstretched arm" refer to?

Strong Hand – Dramatic Transformation

If the objective of the Exodus had been only to liberate the Israelites and raise them to the level of other free nations of the world, then no special Divine intervention would have been necessary. By the usual laws of nature and history, the Jewish people would have gradually progressed to a level of culture and morality prevalent among nations.

However, God wanted the newly freed slaves to swiftly attain a high moral and spiritual plane. In order to prepare them for their unique destiny, they required God's "strong hand". This metaphor implies a forceful intervention that neutralized the natural forces of the universe. God's "strong hand" dramatically raised the Jewish people from the depths of defilement and degradation in Egypt to the spiritual heights of Sinai.

We commemorate this sudden elevation of the people, the "strong hand", by eating the rapidly-baked matza. This rationale for eating matza is stated explicitly in the Hagada: "Because there was not time for the dough of our ancestors to leaven before the King of all kings, the Holy One, revealed Himself to them and redeemed them."

Outstretched Arm – Toward the Future

The "outstretched arm", on the other hand, implies an unrealized potential, a

work in progress. The Hebrew word for "arm" is ZERO'A, from the root ZERA (seed), indicating future growth. Even today, the ultimate goal of the Exodus has still not been fully achieved. The process of perfecting and redeeming the Jewish people is one of gradual progression.

If matza commemorates the sudden redemptive quality of God's "strong hand", which Pesach mitzva symbolizes the "outstretched arm"?

That would be the MAROR, the bitter herbs. The maror reminds us of the bitterness of slavery. The very fact that we felt this bitterness is an indication that servitude contradicts our true essence. By virtue of our inner nature, we will slowly but surely realize our true potential.

While the "strong hand" gave the initial push, it is through the "outstretched arm" that we steadily advance toward our final goal. This gradual progress is accomplished through the mitzvot, which refine and elevate us. It is for this reason that all mitzvot are fundamentally connected to the redemption from Egypt.

From **"OzTorah"**
by **Rabbi Dr Raymond Apple**
AO RFD, Emeritus Rabbi of
the Great Synagogue, Sydney
www.oztorah.com

Chad Gadya...

Long after the questions have been asked, after the meal and the final cup

of wine, we come to that curious song, Chad Gadya. It is one of the liveliest, most popular parts of the night. We all have our favourite melody, our own way of increasing the tempo and ending up breathless.

Yet when we look at it more closely we find that it piles on paradox after paradox until there are at least four paradoxes to consider and puzzle over.

The first paradox is that it concludes a very ancient ritual while it itself is quite a recent innovation. The essentials of the Seder go back to the annual celebration held in the wilderness by the generation who were redeemed from Egypt. Much of the text of the Hagada is found in the Mishna and is at least 2000 years old. The songs of the Seder, however, are much less ancient. Chad Gadya is less than 400 years old.

The second paradox is that the song is part of a sublime religious occasion - yet, ridiculously, it is about a goat. The sublimity of Pesach night is seen in the fact that one need not say the usual night prayers since this is Leil Shimurim when God watches over us with special love. What has a song about goats, cats, dogs, sticks and butcher shops to do with Pesach?

The third paradox is that though Chad Gadya is a nursery rhyme, the adults all love it. It probably entered the Hagada precisely as a nursery rhyme. On Pesach, children must be stimulated to ask questions and parents must ensure they can answer. But as the Seder continues long after bedtime, something must be done to keep the children awake. Hence the lively songs

that lead to Chad Gadya. But how to explain its appeal to adults?

An answer comes with the fourth paradox, which is that the song aims to keep the children awake, yet its theme is no kinderspiel. One event follows another with heartless cruelty. No one escapes unscathed. The kid is harmless and innocent, but the cat consumes it. The dog takes revenge on the cat, but the dog gets a beating. The stick beats the dog, but the fire burns it. And so it proceeds. Perhaps it is the realism of this process which attracts the adults. Who does not have moments of despair when they see how the world stumbles from one crisis to another? A cold, heartless, fate seems to drive the inexorable course of events. Chad Gadya gives the process expression.

In case all this should leave one a despondent fatalist or a cynical pessimist, the last line, the finale of the whole Hagada, has a triumphant crescendo: "Then came the Holy One, blessed be He, and smote the angel of death, that slew the slaughterer, that slaughtered the ox, that drank the water, that quenched the fire, that burned the stick, that beat the dog, that bit the cat, that ate the kid, that father bought for two zuzim. One only kid. One only kid."

Chain songs are known in many cultures. Chad Gadya is unusual in that it brings God into the story, it brings God into history. It shows that actions have consequences, that every being must find that there is a higher power, that there is no deed which in the end does not lead up to God. Every deed,

even as ordinary as buying a goat in the market, is part of a chain. Somewhere that chain leads to God, and those involved must answer before His throne of justice.

On the surface, it is not an ethical, a moral or a theological question when one makes an ordinary business deal. It is simply a matter of striking the best bargain. But somewhere or other, the effects of what a businessman does begin to matter in earnest. In the end he will have to answer to God who knows the deeds of men.

In politics the same applies. One nation might appear to prosper on a policy of discrimination against a portion of its population. Another nation or group of nations might seem to succeed in threatening the survival or the security, freedom or integrity of another nation. An oppressive, bullying ruler or regime might seem, for a while, to enjoy the fruits of success. But, in the end, none can escape when the Holy One, blessed be He, comes to call the slaughterer to account.

The sobering, significant lesson of Chad Gadya, as Longfellow put it, is that "though the mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small; though with patience He stands waiting, with exactness grinds He all."

Seder vort: The child "who does not know how to ask" is not just a lollipop sucking little boy, as pictured in the Barton's candy hagada. He/she is anyone of any age who knows at least one answer to a question. With that knowledge, he or she "does not know to ask" because they already know an

answer. The problem is, they won't get other answers which enrich our understanding and appreciation without further asking. And, as

the Hagada tells us to do with the שאינו יודע לשאול, we - with more answers - should try to elicit a new question. Sometimes, that will work. Otherwise, we can add some new answers and insights. For example: Why do we use three matzot at the Seder? The "chacham" knows that. He'll tell you that one will be broken and the two remaining whole matzot are for LECHEM MISHNA in honor of Yom Tov. He knows. He has no questions to ask. Show him a diagram of (or tell him about) the GRA's Seder plate. Point out that the Vilna Gaon has only two matzot. Does he break one? Yes, of course. So what about LECHEM MISHNA? Good - new - question! The שאינו יודע לשאול becomes the Chacham again. The answer? Why does LECHEM MISHNA require whole loaves? What's wrong with a broken or started loaf (or matza)? Whole loaves have a higher status, so to speak, in our eyes. It better honors the bracha. But at the Seder, the broken piece does not lack status. It is the piece that the story of the Exodus is told upon. It is LECHEM ONI. It is the matza of the mitzva. On that night, it honors the bracha very well.

וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִרְהֶם אֶת-שֵׁם-בְּנֵו הַזֶּוּלָד-לוֹ
אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָהּ לוֹ שֵׁרָה יִזְנוֹק: בַּר כֹּהֵן

בַּיּוֹם הַרְאִשׁוֹן מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ כָּל-מִלְאֲכֶת
עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּ: בַּמִּ כְּחֵיח

First pasuk is about the birth of Yitzchak. Second pasuk is about the first day of Pesach, Yitzchak's birthday. The two p'sukim have the same gimatriya.

ParshaPix explanations

- ☞ Kohen Gadol is the main individual in Parshat Acharei, because of his obligations in doing all of Avodat Yom HaKippurim.
- ☞ Below the Davka Graphic of the Kohein Gadol are two identical goats, upon which the KG drew lots to determine which one was to be a korban whose blood was brought into the Holy of Holies and which goat would be sent out into the Midbar alive to be dashed to piece in its tumble down a mountainside.

The rest of the ParshaPix relates to Parshat K'doshim.

- ☞ Shabbat candles are reminder to keep the Shabbat, which is attached to Reverence for parents and to Reverence for the Mikdash.
- ☞ B'samim is for Havdala, not from Shabbat to Chol but between kosher and non-kosher animals and between us and other nations - mentioned at the end of the sedra. [Some hold that this IS the source of the mitzva of havdala on Motza"Sh.]
- ☞ Mickey Mouse in his famous role as the Sorcerer's Apprentice represents the prohibitions of divination, omens, and other "black arts". (No offense, Mickey)
- ☞ The heart in the Torah is a pictogram for Love thy fellow being a great Torah rule.
- ☞ Lifesaver is for the mitzva not to stand

by idly while someone is in danger. When this can be done with not too great risk, it is a Torah obligation. When there is a significant risk to the potential rescuer, there is no requirement, but it is considered praiseworthy to take the risk in order to save the other person. If the risk is very great, it would be forbidden to give up your own life to save another's.

- ☞ Grapes and wheat refer to many agricultural mitzvot in the sedra - PE'AH, LEKET, and others.
- ☞ Thief is various prohibitions related to theft.
- ☞ The camel with the monkey-head is a reminder of the prohibition of cross breeding animals.
- ☞ Scales of justice knocked over are for the prohibitions related to perverting justice.
- ☞ The scale is weighing a 1 kilo weight, but reads less than one. Either the weight is off or the scale is. Whichever, that would be ASUR, to use false weights and measures or even to possess them.
- ☞ Razor blade for the prohibition of shaving one's face with one.
- ☞ The first three trees with fruit stand for ORLA, then the fourth year has an asterisk - the fruit is KADOSH. 5th year's fruit is to eat.
- ☞ Picture is of the actor Herve Villechaize who played the character Tattoo on Fantasy Island - "De plane, boss, de plane". Here he reminds us of the prohibition of tattooing.

☞ In the lower-right is a picture of a mule. This is a more practical illustration of the prohibition of cross-breeding animals than the monkey-headed camel. If a horse and a donkey mate on their own, there is no prohibition in raising the resulting mule and benefiting from it. In fact, even when the prohibition is violated, there is no issur in using the mule. The prohibition is the actual causing of the two different animals to mate. There might be problems of "encouraging another to sin", but that is for another time.

☞ The 15¢ stamp above the mule is of Helen Keller and her teacher, Annie Sullivan. Helen Keller was both deaf and blind, which we find in a figurative sense in the pasuk that prohibits cursing the deaf and placing a stumbling block before the blind.

☞ Between the goats and the stamp is hot brick oven. This can represent the baking of matzot, but it actually is meant to refer to the haftara for Shabbat HaGadol, which speaks of a great judgment day, represented by a hot oven that will burn the wicked people, who are compared to straw.

☞ The Tzedaka box also points to the haftara. In it, G-d challenges - so to speak - people who don't give enough charity because they are afraid of becoming poor. G-d says to them: Go ahead, bring all the tithe to Me and see if I don't open the "windows of heaven" and rain upon you unimaginable blessings beyond your capacity...

MACHON PUAH

Non-Kosher Medicine

Last week we saw that conventional medicine is not an exact science and therefore we cannot really say that conventional medicine must be followed in all cases but natural medicine is prohibited. It is more correct to say that while we generally rely more on conventional medicine one is permitted to use natural and non-conventional medicine as well. However what about a case where these natural medicines involve some prohibition, are we allowed to use them?

Regarding conventional medicine, if it is in the case of a serious and life threatening disease, then one is permitted to take whatever medicine one can even if it is non-kosher meat or any similar ingredient. If we are obliged to break Shabbat to save such a person's life, then we are permitted to break other prohibitions of the Torah since saving life overrides Torah prohibitions.

In the case of a non-life-threatening disease, in certain cases one is permitted to break rabbinic prohibitions, such as asking a gentile to do work on Shabbat, or taking medicine on Shabbat. Many poskim hold that the same is true when taking medicine that has a rabbinically prohibited ingredient. We have cases of this every Pesach when people ask whether they are permitted to take medicine that is not kosher for Pesach.

In cases where the medicine contains kitniyot, there is no problem taking the medicine if it is necessary, since this is only a custom and not a prohibition. However, when it contains a chametz

mixture, in many cases this is a rabbinic prohibition and not a Torah one since the mixture was in existence prior to Pesach and does not contain a significant amount of chametz. In cases of a non-life-threatening but still serious illness, many authorities will permit consuming medicine if there is no kosher for Pesach alternative.

This should not be seen as a psak - each person must consult with their own Rabbi before taking medicine, since not every medical condition warrants taking medicine and many times there are kosher for Pesach alternatives.

Let me give one example, most pregnant women take iron during the pregnancy, however the iron is produced from a chametz source and therefore is problematic during Pesach. There are certain companies that produce iron tablets that can be taken on Pesach but this is not available everywhere. On the other hand, for most pregnant women not taking iron for one week of the pregnancy will have no adverse effect and so they should not use the chametz iron tablets. But for some women their iron is so low that it is medically necessary for them to continue taking the iron every single day. So each case must be examined and decided individually.

More on natural medicine next time.

Chag Pesach Sameach

Portion from the Portion Pesach, Women, and Fish

The Rabbis teach that it was in the merit of our righteous women that our

nation was redeemed from the slavery (Sota 11b). The women went out to meet their tired husbands in the field after a long hard day of work. They beautified themselves in order to encourage their husbands to bring forth another generation of Jews. The men had lost faith in the future - if the women had also, all would have been lost. Because of their determination the redemption was possible.

I thought this week it would be appropriate to write something related to the Hagada. When looking over my shelves of Hagadot, I decided that since the women played a major role in Pesach, this week's portion will be taken from one of my favorite Hagadot called "Women at the Seder" by Joel Wolowelsky. In this Hagada, Rabbi Wolowelsky shows how women in this century continue in the footsteps of their matriarchs from Egypt. They are able to have an active role in the study of Torah without abandoning in any way their central role as the cornerstone of the home and family. Ever since I bought this 100-page Hagada a number of years ago, I have always found something from its rabbinic comments on women associated with the Exodus, discussion of relevant aspects of Jewish law that apply to women, and/or homilies - divrei Torah by women in it to share with the family at the Seder. Do you think I'm partial to it because I'm a woman?

Now comes the problem - which commentary from the Hagada should I write about? I guess I'll start at the beginning - with setting up the Seder plate.

We all learned in school that the ZERO'A (meat) and BEITZA (egg) on the Seder plate are placed there to remind us of the PESACH and CHAGIGA sacrifices, respectively. But Rav Shriria Gaon, quotes Rabbi Eliezer of Worms saying that they are reminders of the two leaders that G-d sent to the Jewish nation, Moshe and Aharon. He adds something interesting that there are some people who add a fish as well. Then the three food items commemorate Moshe, Aaron and Miriam as we read in the book of Micha (6:4) "I brought you up from the land of Egypt... and I sent you Moshe, Aaron and Miriam." These three cooked foods correspond to the three types of food that we will eat in the times of Mashiach: fish, corresponds to the leviathan; the egg corresponding to ZIZ (an enormous bird); and meat, corresponding to SHOR HA-BAR.

Fish are also appropriate to place on the Seder table. The Talmud relates that the Jewish women who went to their husbands in the field and they drew water to give them to drink, Hashem arranged that small fish would fill up half their jars. These fish the women served to their husbands which increased their fertility.

Let us pray that in the merit of the righteous women of this generation, including young ones like Tamar Fogel, Hashem will bring Mashiach speedily.



Last issue's (METZORA) TTTriddles:

[1] Zot Tihyeh or S'gira

After the familiar and popular pasuk that begins Parshat Metzora, we have the words ZOT TIHYEH TORAH HAMETZORA, "This shall be the law of the one afflicted with TZORAAT..." The common name of the sedra is METZORA. But we can find some s'farim that refer to the sedra as ZOT TIHYEH. Apparently, the author(s) felt that the word METZORA was not a "pleasant" enough word to serve as a sedra name, and chose the phrase at the beginning of the second pasuk. Or - and we've never seen this - we could have borrowed the word for METZORA from Targum Onkeles, which is S'GIRA. Which probably means "quarantine". R' Eliyahu KiTov in his commentary on the Torah, writes that TEIMANIM (Yemenites) call the sedra ZOT TIHYEH (verified by an actual Teimani) and S'faradim call it TAHARA or TAHAROT (unverified).

[2] We've done this. We've been there!

As the TTTriddle says, we've probably had a TTTriddle on the same two p'sukim each time Metzora rolls around. The p'sukim we are referring to are the two consecutive 3-word p'sukim in Parshat Metzora. (The TTTriddle consists of two consecutive 3-word sentences.)

[3] Sometimes it's big

This refers to Parshat Metzora, which sometimes coincides with Shabbat

HaGadol (big). Specifically, in all plain (12-month) year-types, Shabbat HaGadol is Shabbat HaGadol. In the 13-month years, HaGadol is sometimes Metzora, sometimes Acharei.

[4] Water for you from our hearts

Water = MAYIM = 40+10+40 =90.
For you = LACHEM = 30+20+40 = 90.
Our hearts = L'VAEINU = 30+2+2+50+6 = 90.
Parshat Metzora has 90 p'sukim.

[5] Rabbi Shmuel & Tzippy Fuss

...are the co-directors of the Chabad house in Riverside, California. If you would want to call them, you'd need the area code for Riverside, which is 951, as in Torah Tidbits number 951.

[6] Vladislav Tretiak, Gilles Gratton, Steve Buzinski, Michel Belhumeur

These fellows are four hockey goalies, men who are SHO'ARIM. In Biblical Hebrew, SHO'EIR is a gatekeeper. In modern Hebrew, it still means the same, but another definition has been added: goalkeeper, goaltender, goalie. SHAAR is a gate, but it is also the goal in sports such as soccer and hockey. The haftara of Metzora consists of a story from Melachim Bet about four men who were METZORA'IM who were at the gates of the city, because TZORAAT requires the afflicted ones to leave the (walled) city and dwell outside it. This week's ParshaPix contains a graphic of four afflicted men at the opening of the goal (PETACH HASHAAR). This TTTriddle consists of the names of four hockey goalies. But

not just any goalie. These are four people who were candidates for being ostracised and might be treated as METZORA'IM (in a TTTriddles sense). VT was a great goalie for the Soviet Union, who - because of the political climate of his day - would not have been allowed to play in the NHL. He is listed as the "Best goalie who never played for the NHL" and as such, is counted here as one of the METZORA'IM who live "outside". GG is listed as the flakiest goalie: "...claimed he was a Mayan priest in a past life and that his latest existence as an NHL goaltender was cosmic punishment for the ills he'd committed in his prior go-round." SB was known as "known as Puck-goes-in-ski for his lamentable inability to stop rubber discs from entering his net... allowed 32 goals in his first four games..." Certainly, one who was probably treated like a leper. MB is listed as "worst goalie on a bad team" played in 35 games, posting an abysmal record of 0-24-3.

[7] "She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life."

Third pasuk of "EISHET CHAYIL" - Mishlei 31:12. The gimatriya of that pasuk is 951 - k'minyan TT 951 - the only pasuk in Tanach with that gimatriya.

[8] First he leaves town, then who?

First the METZORA leaves town during his period of TUM'A. As part of the purification process, the bird of the two that remains alive is released

into an open field. It is this still-live bird that then leaves town.

[9] The oil's is approx. 2.5965971

This one parallels one of the ParshaPix elements - specifically, the Lincoln Logs and the oil can. For this TTriddle, we look for LOG HASHEMEN by finding the log of the gimatriya of the word HASHEMEN. $5+300+40+50 = 395$. log 395 is (rounded to 7 decimal places) 2.5965971. At some point after a kid verifies this with his fancy scientific calculator, a member of the older generation should tell the youngins about log tables and interpolation and how we were tortured with logs in high school. (Don't expect too much sympathy.)

[10] narrow nation or bitter tree

The name of Parshat Metzora is spelled MEM-TZADI-REISH-AYIN (no VAV). Narrow nation is an AM TZAR, an anagram of METZORA. EITZ MAR, a bitter tree, is also an anagram of Metzora. No significance is attached to this other than anagrams.

As of this writing, MM/Bklyn is the only one to submit a solution set - and a fine one. Kol HaKavod, Moose.

ACHAREI Adapted from
Unlocking the Torah Text
by **Rabbi Shmuel Goldin**

Communal Confession

Context: The communal VIDUI, confession, recited by the Kohen Gadol over the SE'IR HAMISHTALEIACH is a central feature of this Yom Kippur

Temple ritual:

"And Aharon shall place his two hands upon the living he-goat and he shall confess upon it all of the iniquities of the children of Israel and all of their rebellious sins in all of their sins, and he shall place them upon the head of the he-goat and he shall send it at the hand of a designated man to the wilderness."

Questions: What is the implication of the confession uttered by the Kohen Gadol over the "sent goat" on behalf of the entire nation?

What role does this communal confession play in the atonement divinely granted on Yom Kippur? Aren't confession and t'shuva private, personal processes best experienced individually rather than communally?

Approaches:

A. Before turning to the specific vidui associated with the se'ir hamishtaleiach, we must first examine the Rambam's approach to the general phenomenon of confession and its place in Jewish thought and law. The Rambam opens his review of the laws of tshuva with the following halacha:

"With regard to all the precepts in the Torah, whether positive commandments or negative ones, if a person transgresses one of them, either willfully or unknowingly, when he does t'shuva and returns from his sin, it is his duty to confess before God, blessed be He... *and this confession is an affirmative precept* [my italics]..."

Numerous later authorities raise two questions concerning the Rambam's formulation of the t'shuva process. Firstly, they ask, why doesn't the Rambam depict t'shuva in obligatory

terms, choosing instead to state "when he [the sinner] does t'shuva"? Secondly, the Rambam's delineation of confession as a positive biblical precept seems counterintuitive. At first glance, they argue, confession would appear to be only a means to an end, a first step on the path towards the mitzva of full t'shuva. Why, then, does the Rambam list confession itself as a mitzva?

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (the Rav) pointed out that numerous sources within the Torah plainly define t'shuva as a mitzva. Furthermore, the Rambam's own language on a number of occasions supports this view. Most tellingly, the very heading of the section in his Mishneh Torah that summarizes the laws of t'shuva lists repentance as a mitzva.

Clearly, the Rambam views repentance - and not confession alone - as a mitzva. Why, then, does the Rambam, as noted above, focus so distinctly on the obligation of confession, going so far as to label confession itself an affirmative precept?

The Rav explained that the first halacha in the Rambam's laws of t'shuva focuses upon the physical action through which the mitzva of return is performed: the concrete act of verbal confession. This entire section of law is introduced by a heading that reflects both tangible performance and psychic fulfillment: "The Laws of Return: One positive precept - that the sinner shall repent of his sin (fulfillment) before the Lord and confess (performance)."

The Rav lists two main reasons why the Torah obligates a penitent to make confession.

1. Confession serves to complete the t'shuva process. Verbalization forces the

penitent to crystallize both his remorse over the past and his commitment to future change.

2. By forcing us to admit the facts, confession robs us of the ability to fool ourselves. Through verbalization, we compel ourselves to examine not only our sins, but the nature of our sins. Acts that we might have written off as unintentional are scrutinized anew and we are compelled to admit motivations that we would have rather ignored.

At this level, the Rav maintains, confession becomes a wrenching act of personal "sacrifice" which moves man beyond remorse to shame. The penitent's will is broken as he is forced to act against his very nature.

B. Having briefly reviewed the general role of confession in the process of return, we can now turn our attention to the specific vidui pronounced by the Kohen Gadol over the se'ir hamishtaleiach.

In the first chapter of his laws of t'shuva, the Rambam writes:

"Since the se'ir hamishtaleiach brings acquittal for all of Israel, the Kohen Gadol confesses over it in the name of all Israel....

"The se'ir hamishtaleiach brings acquittal for all the sins mentioned in the Torah, the venial and the grave, those committed with premeditation and those done unintentionally, those which become known to their doer and those which do not - all are granted acquittal by means of the se'ir hamishtaleiach, provided only that the sinner has repented.

"If, however, he has not repented, the scapegoat can bring acquittal only for

the lighter sins."

The Rav raises a series of critical questions, including the following.

1. What innovation does the Rambam introduce with his initial declaration, "Since the se'ir hamishtaleiach brings acquittal for all of Israel, the Kohen Gadol confesses over it in the name of all Israel"? The classification of the sent goat as a communal sacrifice is obvious and emerges from the Torah text itself.

2. Immediately before his passage dealing with the se'ir hamishtaleiach, the Rambam lists a litany of potential means of atonement which are effective only when accompanied by repentance. How can he now suddenly claim that the ritual of the se'ir hamishtaleiach effects atonement for specific sins even in the absence of such repentance?

3. What is the delineating line between "lighter" sins for which the se'ir hamishtaleiach is automatically effective and more severe sins which require tshuva as well?

C. The Rav answers these questions with one bold, imaginative stroke. Based on sources in the Written and Oral Law, he posits that on Yom Kippur two essential types of atonement are potentially granted to man: individual and communal.

Individual expiation is open to each and every Jew who is strong enough to undergo a full, heartfelt process of return. Such acquittal is achieved in solitary fashion as the penitent plumbs the depths of his own heart and soul.

Communal atonement, however, is different. This expiation is granted globally to Knesset Yisrael, the community of Israel, "in its entirety and

as a separate mystical kind of self, as a separate entity in its own right." Once granted to the collective, this acquittal is automatically afforded to each individual who remains linked to Knesset Yisrael through an unbreakable bond.

On the one hand, man must travel alone and in solitary fashion along the path to individual repentance. At the same time, however, "'Repentant Man' will not reach his goal and the completion of his mission - salvation - as a lonely man of faith, but only as part of the community of Israel." ❖

Maharal on the Sedra

Blood is to Sprinkle, not to Drink

Vayikra 17:11 - For the soul of the basar [creatures, flesh] is in the blood, and I put it on the altar for you to atone for your souls, for it is blood that atones for the soul.

Rashi: The soul of all creatures depends on blood, therefore I have put it on the altar to atone for man's soul. Let blood come and atone for blood.

Gur Arye: This cannot mean "the soul of the flesh", for the flesh has no soul. Here, basar means "creatures" as is found in scripture. It also does not mean, as it seems to say, that the soul is actually in the blood, so Rashi is careful to say "depends on the blood". What is the significance of saying "the soul depends on the blood"? It tells us why it is forbidden to us, for Hashem has designated it to be put on the altar

to atone for us, and we have no portion in it.

MDK: R' Arye Kaplan z"l in The Living Torah, ad loc., notes that the life force of all animals, that which drives them to conduct their lives, is composed of hormones responsible for fight or flight, reproductive drive, food seeking, etc., borne by the blood, pumped by the heart to the target organ. Now consider that man has a highly developed pre-frontal cortex just anterior to the fontanel where the tefillin shel rosh sits that monitors behavior. When Phineas Gage survived a railroad construction accident in 1873, in which his prefrontal cortex was ablated by a steel bar, he suddenly became an amoral criminal. We place our TEFILLIN SHEL YAD facing the heart, the pump of our animal nefesh, and the SHEL ROSH facing the part of the brain that makes us human.

Column prepared by Dr. Moshe Kuhr

From Rav Soloveitchik's Livingroom

Remembering

Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik זצ"ל
on his 18th yearzeit, 4th day of Pesach

by *Rabbi Elan Adler*

I had the privilege of serving as an aide (mesharet) to Rav Soloveitchik during his last years at Yeshiva University. As one of a small cadre of students who accompanied the Rav from morning until late evening, I was mostly in the Rav's presence in the privacy of his

apartment. Every Tuesday and Wednesday from 2:00-7:00pm, for two years in the early 1980s, I stayed with the Rav, as University officials, Chief Rabbis of Europe and Israel, top leaders of American Orthodoxy and even plain folk came to see this highly revered Gadol HaDor. I was never in the Rav's shiur at YU, but I was touched, personally and professionally, by this Torah personality. The Rav so embodied the values of our faith that, upon seeing him at the YU Beit Midrash prior to a dedication ceremony, former Israeli Chief Rabbi Avraham Shapira זצ"ל ran to the Rav with an affectionate embrace and a kiss saying, "Mitzva lenashek Sefer Torah", it is a mitzva to kiss a Torah scroll.

One afternoon, a grandson of the Rav's came to say hello, saying he was leaving to give a shiur in a shul that night. The Rav, noticing the grandson had nothing in his hand, asked, "Do you have any notes?" "No, Zeidi, I've given this shiur several times and I know it cold." Anxious to instruct the next generation, the Rav gave advice I practice until this day: "Even so, always take a few notes in your pocket, you never know."

I traveled to Winnipeg, Manitoba for Yeshiva University one year, and the assistant principal of the liberal day school shared something that weighed heavily on his mind. He was a rabbi, a shomer Shabbat and the unofficial Halachic authority, but most of the students in the school were from traditional though not observant homes. A Shabbaton was being

planned where all the students had to stay within walking distance of the school, and many parents asked if they could drop off their kids later on Friday night, after family or social functions. He was sympathetic, but ruled that this would violate Shabbat and the spirit of the Shabbaton and therefore all students had to come for the entire Shabbaton. His popularity sank among the kids and their parents. He shared his disappointment while feeling he lost their respect. He was now lonely and isolated.

When I returned to YU, I mentioned this to the Rav, who shared with me a couple of rulings in Boston which made him feel the same way. "Rebbe", I asked, "would the Rav have a moment to perhaps call this Rabbi in Winnipeg and give him chizuk?" Without hesitation, I dialed the number, and the two spoke for quite a while. I'll never forget the kind and supportive words with which the Rav lifted this Rabbi out of the valley of despair, using examples from his own life and career when he made unpopular Halachic decisions. Imagine getting such an unexpected call from the Rav? The rabbi in Winnipeg felt vindicated, and through the Rav's incomparable personal chizuk, was able to regain his confidence, as well as his previous stature in the school. The Rav's empathy, masterfully communicated, made all the difference.

Rabbi Elan Adler has been a guest lecturer at the OU Center, hosts "The Derech Eretz Hour" on israelnationalradio.com and you can learn more on his website, ElanAdler.com

Parsha Points to Ponder

Acharei

1) Why does the Torah identify Aharon as Moshe's brother (ACHICHA) when telling Moshe to command Aharon about the rules of entering the Holy of Holies (16:2)? Doesn't Moshe know that Aharon is his brother?

2) Why is the person who leads the goat to the desert on Yom Kippur called the ISH ITI (loosely translated as MAN OF MY TIME - 16:21)?

3) Why does the Torah conclude the Yom Kippur service with the seemingly extra words BEFORE G-D BECOME PURE (LIFNEI HASHEM TITHARU - 16:30)? This entire process has been in the Temple before G-D, so isn't this point obvious?

Parsha Points to Ponder
by **Rabbi Dov Lipman**

Suggested answers

1) The Kli Yakar answers that G-D was instructing Moshe to make sure that Aharon knew that he could not rely on his close relationship with Moshe and assume that he was protected from punishment in Moshe's merit. He was being commanded not to enter the room despite the fact that he was Moshe's brother.

2) The Rashbam explains that this man was an expert in the roads and the desert and was able to help at any TIME he was called upon for help.

3) The S'forno teaches that these words emphasize that even if we follow all the commands for the service, true

purity and forgiveness will only be achieved if the people sincerely confess and repent BEFORE G-D and they cannot rely solely on the Temple service.

CHIZUK AND IDUD
*Divrei Torah from the weekly sedra
with a focus on living in Eretz Yisrael -
Chizuk for Olim & Idud for not-yet-Olim*

"After the doings (k'ma'asei) of the land of Egypt where you dwelled (ye shav tem) you shall not do, And after the doings (k'ma'asei) of the land of Canaan where I bring you (meivi etchem), you shall not do" (Vayikra 8:2,3)

Of what value are these instructions, if we do not know exactly what were these "doings" of the lands of Egypt and Canaan and why they were so insidious as to warrant a special prohibition?

Perhaps "Egypt" here stands for all of the lands of the Golah to which Jews over the centuries have been driven or have wandered. And the "land of Canaan" here stands for Eretz Yisrael, Zion, and Jerusalem which ever since we left, there has always been present in our prayers and subconscious as the place where all of us naturally belong.

It is to both the historic Egypt and by extension to every galut and to the Holy Land whether called Canaan or State of Israel, that the above text is referring. So that when the text speaks negatively of a ma'asei eretz

Mitzrayim or a ma'asei eretz Canaan, it is alluding to certain undesirable behavior traits associated with the lands of the Diaspora generally and with the general question of the return to Zion.

And what are these undesirable behavior traits? In regard to the Golah, it is that "you dwelled there (yashavtem) "after a while you would adapt to the new conditions, begin to prosper, find solutions to your religious needs, sink deep roots into your exilic culture and consider yourself a toshav. This is the ma'asei eretz Mitzrayim, the attraction of the Golah which already started in ancient Egypt, which is something you must guard against. Similarly the ma'asei eretz Canaan which you must also eschew is the dismal fact that I, says the Lord, must always "bring you there" (meivi etchem). You rarely come voluntarily. The Lord must exert all sorts of pressures. Where is your love and allegiance to the Land?

To those who suffer from the ma'asei eretz Mitzrayim syndrome, the Torah says (Vayikra 18:4,5): True, you may be able to perform mitzvot in the Diaspora, but in Eretz Yisrael performance of Mitzvot takes on a special quality. It becomes lalechet bahem, "to walk in them" and "to live in them" (v'chai bahem). They acquire a dynamic character and their spiritual significance is deepened. So do not allow the galut lethargy to dull the homing instinct that every Jew possesses. Come home!

Rabbi Shubert Spero, Jerusalem