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PARSHAS ACHAREI MOS-KEDOSHIM EDITION – VOLUME 15, ISSUE 15 - IYAR 12TH, 5785/MAY 10TH, 2025

WEEKLY TORAH QUESTION BY RABBI MOSHE KLEIN: ACHAREI MOS-KEDOSHIM: SELF-CONTROL IS THE KEY TO HAPPINESS

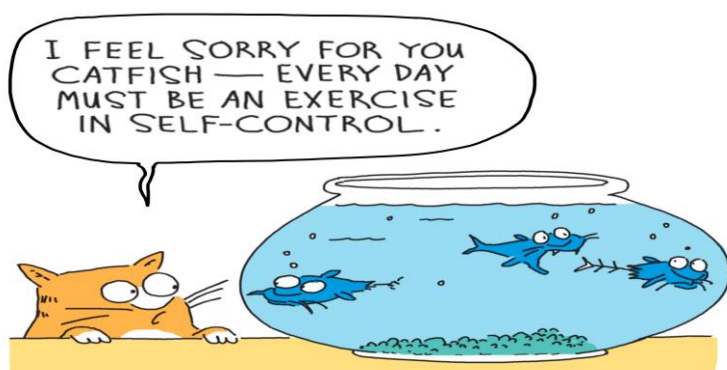
Last week's question: What is Kedusha and how does one look at kedusha in a positive light when, at first glance, it sounds restrictive and so abstract?

Answer: Our Parsha, Acharei Mos-Kedoshim, opens (Vayikra 19:1-2) with Hashem telling Moshe to speak to the entire Jewish community and say to them: "You shall be holy, for I, your G-d, am holy." Let's try to understand what Kedusha means. **Rabbeinu Bachye** explains (ibid.) by citing a Pasuk from King Shlomo (Mishlei 13:19): "Desire realized is sweet for the soul; it is an abomination to the wicked to abandon evil." He writes that Shlomo Hamelech warns man not to give in to his physical urges but to suppress and vanquish them. Anyone who succeeds in banishing his physical urges is on the spiritual level of an angel. Conversely, anyone who follows his physical urges and wants to indulge them is on the spiritual level of an animal.

In the simplest terms, we know man is comprised of a soul and body. Our bodies are animalistic; animals also have bodies and desires. We don't hold animals responsible for not having self-control, to lose weight, or to spare endangered species. If a person just follows their base desires, they need to strengthen their resolve. When a person is in touch with their soul, and they connect and give existence to it, their soul takes control over their body.

Rabbeinu Bachye continues that when we look at the creatures created on the sixth day of creation, He created angels, and then He created animals, whereas a man contains both creatures – angel and animal. As long as the first man, Adam, did not sin, he was an angel although he possessed a body. He was all intelligence, unblemished. Because he was angelic, he had the capacity to live forever like angels. That's why he was put into Gan Eden and ate fruit created by Hashem (angel food).

Once Adam sinned, he was expelled from Gan Eden and required food that animals eat. This is why Shlomo used the unusual word נהיה (realized) in that Pasuk, which is similar in construction to נהיית ונחלית - "I was broken up and ill". When someone manages to break their desire, then it is sweet for the soul. Now we can explain why the angels (Yeshaya 6:3) say "Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh - the whole earth is full of His Glory." The angels are Kadosh and they understand that Hashem is Kadosh; that's why they can say it. Why, though, do we say it before Shema?



JOKE EXPLAINED: YES, CATFISH LIKE TO EAT OTHER CATFISH!

The answer is that this is a message to us: we have a spiritual part of our being and that G-dliness connects us to Hashem, since we got that G-dliness from Hashem. As such, we mention this because we have that angelic aspect to ourselves, and we need to keep reminding ourselves of that.

Let's get practical. The Gemara (Gittin 13a) speaks about a slave who becomes free, "stating that in the case of a slave, a life of licentiousness is preferable for him." A slave wants no restrictions. Yet, a slave is one who follows his desires and has no self-control, whereas a free being exercises restraint.

There is always going to be an internal fight – every single person, every single day, whether to follow their bodily desires (being a slave to the body) or being in touch with their soul (the angel part of themselves). What usually happens is when someone falls for their body's cravings, the soul complains that it is hurt, and no one wants to hear that. So, the body screams louder than the soul, and the soul reciprocates by screaming even more loudly. This is how people's feelings of guilt and shame are born.

This doesn't actually mean that one can't enjoy themselves, G-d Forbid. It also doesn't mean that just because something is permitted one should be doing it. The **Ramban** (in our Parsha) explains that one can live a life called *naval b'rshus haTorah* – an abomination within the parameters of the Torah. Let's explain. Let's say one has the money, all the food, every vacation is available to him – he can live life complete with pleasure in a kosher way – it's also considered living an unrestricted life. He managed to beat the system, but he is still not feeding his soul. →

The soul desires having self-control and to be free from doing every single need of the body. The challenge is that we live in a world that is inundated with society telling us to do whatever we want – there are no restrictions. “If you hold yourself back, you will feel choked – you won’t be able to breathe and live.”

This message is being broadcast by those who’ve completely quashed any G-dliness inside of them, so being that they’re not touching their soul, they feel completely suffocated by any form of structure or self-control. They’re promoting this very experience to anyone willing to listen.

How do we get away from that if we are living in such an environment - and spirituality is the only part of our life that we can’t see – we could get lost in that message and feel that self-control is an impossibility. People feel they NEED all their bodily needs met. Also, it’s not a fight between body and soul, since the soul is not seen and the peer pressure to be like all non-spiritual beings is so strong and the refrain that self-control is too painful is intense.

The way to start putting oneself into a more G-dly place and feeling “separated” – which is the simple definition of being Kadosh – is by reinforcing the truth that we are G-dly beings with a soul. We have a Neshama inside of us. There is a G-d in the world Who gave us a *chelek Eloka mi'maal*, a piece of Himself. When one lives in that space and with that message inside of them, they are living in a totally different dimension. They’re not feeling like they are choking the moment they feel they can’t get what their body wants.

Rather, they are living with the awareness that they are special and elevated. They say to themselves, “I merited to have a great and lofty Neshama that I may not see but do feel from time to time.” When one tells this to themselves daily, being an animal following every single whim starts to hurt them. Such a person opts to enjoy even the material world and its pleasures in a spiritual way, living with focus and a semblance of self-control.

In review, we have a body and a soul, which is always talking to us and making itself present. When we connect with that message and free ourselves from being trapped in the needs of our bodies, we can live a much sweeter and happier life, since it’s a life that is replete with meaning and purpose.

This week’s question: What are tumah and taharah (spiritual impurity and purity) on a practical level? Why do Kohanim have a thing that they can’t become impure? Are they somehow dirty?

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In this week’s Parsha, Hashem gave instructions to Moshe Rabbeinu on how the Yom Kippur service should be executed so that it will be for an atonement for Beni Yisroel. The Torah (Vayikra 16:34) tells us, “*This should be to you an eternal decree to bring atonement upon the children of Israel for all of their sins once a year and he did as Hashem commanded Moshe.*” In his commentary on this Pasuk, **Rashi** tells us that when Yom Kippur arrived Aharon performed the service exactly according to the order Hashem commanded. Rashi continues, telling us this Pasuk was praise to Aharon that he did not wear the garments of the Kohen Gadol for his own greatness but rather for the sake of one who fulfills the decree of the king.

This is an unbelievable insight that we can apply to our marriages. Rashi has given us Aharon’s motivation. He wore the *Bigdei Kehuna* to fulfill Hashem’s commandments. It must have been difficult for Aharon not to feel elevated and above when he wore the special clothing of a high priest. Rashi tells us he kept his thoughts focused on his service to Hashem. We can learn from Aharon Hakohen to scrutinize our motivations. Are we going about our day with the wrong motivation? What is the right motivation?

Everything a person experiences in life starts with his thought process. Aharon HaKohen had the right thought process, he did not feel better than or above anyone else, even when wearing the *bigdei kahuna* on Yom Kippur. Aharon’s sole motivation was his desire to become close to Hashem. He deeply understood and internalized that the only reason he was in his exalted position was because Hashem put him there. So too, if we could focus on the fact that Hashem has put us in our marriage with our children to grow closer to Him, we would embrace the challenges we face easily. If we could refocus our thought process, that could change our emotions, which could in turn affect our actions.

What does this look like in a marriage? In marriage there is fertile ground for endless growth. Thinking about what motivates us can help us to refocus. Marriage requires actions that we do not want to do. From carpooling to errands, endless chores to crushing financial burdens, we can motivate ourselves the same way Aharon Hakohen motivated himself and we can do it all in service of Hashem!

If, in our thoughts, we can focus on all the gifts Hashem gives us, and implant thoughts of gratitude and appreciation for Hashem in our hearts, then that will fuel our emotions and drive our actions in service of Hashem. It all starts with our thoughts. Instead of thinking about doing carpool as an unwanted burden, we could take a moment to refocus and appreciate that we are married and have young children to do the carpool for.

Next, we can appreciate that we have a car to do the carpool with! Finally, we can motivate ourselves to want to serve Hashem in the position he put us in, by driving with an attitude of gratitude and simcha (joy). We can apply this formula to every task we do during the day. Errands become a pleasure when we change our thought process to appreciating that we are healthy and can do the errand.

Financial responsibilities can bring us closer to Hashem when our thought process is one of gratitude that we have the merit of having a family and we are conduits to build Klal Yisroel. Let us scrutinize what motivates us and try to emulate Aharon HaKohen whose sole motivation was for the sake of serving Hashem. It takes effort to notice and change our thoughts, but the dividends are worth the effort.

May Hashem fill our homes with the light of Shalom Bayis!

Rabbi Greenfield, MS MFT, is the author of the Torah marriage toolbox course. Create more Shalom Bayis in your home by visiting torahmarriage.com or email rabbigreenfield@gmail.com



ACHAREI MOS – THE LAND OF ISRAEL

The second half of the Parsha discusses the *to'eivah* – abominations that Hashem does not want us to do. It is introduced (Vayikra 18:3), “*You must not imitate the practices of Egypt, where you dwelt, and you must not imitate the practices of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You must not follow their social conventions.*”

These were evil places with wicked activities. Then, after telling us what those abominable behaviors were, the Torah concludes with (ibid. 18:27) telling us not to do this *so that the land (of Israel) does not vomit you out for having spiritually defiled it, just as it vomited out the nations who preceded you.* That’s kind of rough – the land will vomit a sinner out? What’s being taught here?

To understand, Eretz Yisrael is like the palace of the King of the Universe, Hashem. If one wants to break the rules and be bad, one should go someplace else and sin. Similarly, people occasionally have children whose behavior is “problematic”, so the parents tell them, “I am not stopping you from what you are doing but at least don’t do it here in our home.” Hashem told the seven Cana’anite nations that He will not accept their repulsive conduct and told them to leave. The Gergoshite people accepted it and got a nice place in Africa. The other Cana’anites decided to stay and fight - not a good idea when Hashem can drop an ocean on them.

When the Jewish people came in, Hashem told us the same thing. Israel is very sensitive and aristocratic. A wealthy princess can’t tolerate disgusting food. Israel has a delicate system and as such, can’t handle anything evil – it will spit out the one who dares to defile it with their wicked actions. When we come to Israel, we must realize we are coming to a holy place and *tumah* (impurity) will be spit out).

When a person has a *zechus* (merit) to live in Israel, they must always remember they live in a place that the Mishna (Keilim 1:6) states: There are ten grades of holiness: the land of Israel is holier than all other lands. When we are in the Holy Land, we must make sure we are holy enough to live or visit the palace of the King.

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KEDOSHIM – LOVE YOUR FELLOW AS YOURSELF

There are many schools and seminaries where the students don’t learn Sefer Vayikra, and only learn Bereishis, Shemos, Bamidbar, and Devarim. However, if/when they do learn Vayikra, the Parsha they invariably learn is Parshas Kedoshim, and now we will focus on one of the most famous Pesukim. Rabbi Akiva was once asked, “What is the greatest principle in the Torah?” Rabbi Akiva answered, “*v’ahavta l’reicha kamoacha, zeh klal gadol b’Torah* - Love your neighbor as yourself is the greatest principle in the Torah.”

This saying doesn’t have too many halachic ramifications. One implication is when someone is put to death, it’s upon the Sanhedrin and the executioners to give them the nicest death. Yet, it’s a rule that encompasses everything because it applies to everything, which is why Hillel restated it when he said, “That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow! That is the whole Torah”. Treat others how you want to be treated. This implies that there is a *kamoacha* – one has to love themselves. Most people want to live and generally have some sense of self (and love themselves) even though they may engage in self-loathing behaviors.

The **Mesilas Yesharim**, in his discussion about bearing a grudge in Chapter 11) writes that the *Yetzer Hara* (Evil Inclination) “*advances and stokes the heart, seeking constantly to leave at least some remembrance of the wrong. If he is unsuccessful in leaving a large remembrance he will attempt to leave a small remembrance. For instance, he will say to a person: ‘if you want to give this person that which he did not want to give you when you were in need, at least do not give it with a smile. Or ‘if you do not want to hurt him at least do not do to him a great favor or help him greatly.’*”

Or ‘even if you want to help him greatly, at least do not do so in his presence or do not resume associating with him and continuing your friendship with him. If you forgave him and do not show yourself as an enemy, this is enough’. Or, ‘even if you want to continue being his friend, at least do not show him as much affection as before’. The Torah therefore came and stated a general principle which includes everything: ‘*you shall love your neighbor as yourself*’ with no difference whatsoever.”

It takes all kinds of people to make up the world and some people are very limited. It’s just a fact. You can spend your life rejecting people because of their flaws. Loving your fellow as yourself obviously refers to good people who make mistakes and mess up. When they apologize, let’s learn to accept them and build relationships. We need all of Klal Yisrael, for as Benjamin Franklin once quipped, “If we don’t hang together, we shall hang separately.” We should all try to do our best to love all the Jews around us as much as we can.



**TORAH LIFE – INFUSING LIVES WITH
HOLY MEANING
BY MICHAEL SZPILZINGER**

KEDOSHIM – MISSION AND RESULT



In Parshas Shemini, we examined at how the laws of Kashrus potentially give us the opportunity to inject thought and intention into what otherwise would be an instinctual and physical activity. The challenge is that as our communities grow in size, means, and cultural uniformity, being around dazzling arrays of food has become more commonplace. This puts us at risk for falling right back into eating becoming an animalistic pursuit.

Kashrus is a technical definition that defines the item that we are looking at. The **Ramban** in his definition of “*Kedoshim Tihyu*” cautions us against becoming a “*Naval Bershus HaTorah*”. You can do everything correctly from an *Issur V’Heter* standpoint and still be an individual who is totally devoid of spiritual moisture. When you recognize this, you are ready to start understanding the paradigm of Kedushah.

While Kashrus is about the makeup of the item, Kedusha is about the person and purpose. “*Sanctify yourself from that which is permitted to you,*” writes the Gemara (Yevamos 20a). On one level what this means is that the way to Kedusha is to withhold yourself from things, even if they are permitted. But where do you draw the line? That part is very subjective. Perhaps, it unlocks a deeper understanding of what the phrase means.

Take what is Mutar to you and use it for your Kedusha. When you eat, eat with a higher purpose. When you do things for your health or enjoyment, have your higher purpose in mind. When you do that, you can then be in tune with which activities are bringing you more Kedusha and which ones are more indulgent and could be reduced or eliminated. This can even be the case with a specific behavior or pleasure.

Sometimes, the very same activity can bring Kedusha, while at other times it does not. Detecting this is part of a lifelong self-education. What can be helpful in this is mindfulness, curiosity, and a healthy mindset of compassion as you self-reflect. Being hard on yourself can lead to dissatisfaction and *yiush* (hopelessness), G-d forbid. We’re not meant to get it right all the time but to keep growing. *Tihyu* can be understood as a directive or a promise. They are both true at the same time.

Kedoshim Tihyu - it's a mission and a result!

**CHIZUK ON THE PARSHA
BY RABBI YANIV MEIROV**

KEDOSHIM – HASHEM IS ALWAYS OUR G-D



No matter how far we have fallen or feel far away from Hashem, we should remember that Hashem will always be our G-d. **Rabbi Yechiel Spiro** (citing the **Alshich**) offers an incredible insight. Parshas Kedoshim begins with a series of repetitions, “*You shall be holy; I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy. Every man shall fear his mother and his father, and you shall observe My Shabbos, for I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy. You shall not turn to worthless idols, nor shall you make molten deities for yourselves I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy.*” Why does every Pasuk need a repetition?

Wouldn’t it be simpler to just list all the commandments and then end off with “I, Hashem, your G-d, am holy” one time? This is the Torah we are speaking about, in which there is not even a single extra letter. The answer is as follows. There are three types of people, *tzaddikim* (righteous), *beyinanim* (average folk), and *reshaim* (wicked). The first part to be holy is speaking to the *tzaddikim*. Even the righteous need to remember, Hashem is our G-d. The second part of honoring parents and keeping Shabbat is speaking to the average folk; they too need to remember Who Hashem is.

Finally, the third Pasuk about not doing idol worship is speaking to the wicked – they also need to remember that Hashem is their G-d! **Rav Meilech Biderman** asks: if you take a hundred-dollar bill and you crumple it up, throw it on the floor, stomp, and spit on it, is it still a hundred-dollar bill? Clearly, the answer is yes. The same logic goes for a Jew, who is still a Jew no matter what, even if he was crumpled, pushed down, or spit on. We must remember that no matter what, Hashem is our G-d and we are His people forever!

"With this shall Aharon come into the Sanctuary: with a young bull for a sin-offering and a ram for an elevation-offering" (Vayikra 16:3)

The Midrash notes that the gematria of "bezos" is 410, the number of years that the first Beis HaMikdash stood. With this word, Hashem was hinting to Aharon that he would serve as Kohen Gadol and perform the service on Yom Kippur for 410 years. The Midrash asks: *"How can this be? We know that Aharon did not live that long?! The answer is that the office of Kohen Gadol remained in Aharon's family and was passed down from father to son for 410 years."*

As long as his children were faithfully executing the duties of the Kohen Gadol, it was as if Aharon himself were still serving in that capacity. Similarly, Chazal teach that *"As long as the student is alive, the teacher is alive."* Teachers live on through their students and fathers live on through their sons. The idea of succeeding generations assuming the role of their forebears is a central theme of our tefillos. We begin each Shemonei Esrei by invoking the merit of our forefathers: Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov.

We ask Hashem to remember these great people and remember that we are their descendants and have taken their places. In their merit, we ask Hashem to be kind to us. In fact, the Midrash continues that the different animals that were sacrificed on Yom Kippur also represented the three Avos. The cow represents Avraham, who ran to the cattle to serve the angels. The ram represents Yitzchak, who had a ram sacrificed in his stead at the Akeida. The goat represents Yaakov, who received the blessings from his father after serving him two goats.

On the most important day of the year, we seek Hashem's mercy and forgiveness by reminding Hashem of our illustrious ancestors. Our status as descendants of the Avos, the chosen ones of Hashem, comes with great responsibility as well. We should remember that we have taken their place and are responsible for executing the task that Hashem assigned to them in this world. If we remain conscious of this and follow Hashem's commandments, we will truly deserve to be protected by *"zechus avos."*

"You shall not curse the deaf, and you shall not place a stumbling block before the blind; you shall fear your G-d - I am Hashem." (ibid. 19:14)

The Gemara (Moed Katan 5a) says that the prohibition against creating a stumbling block hints to the communal responsibility to mark off graves so that Kohanim do not become impure. The **Torah Temimah** writes that this teaches us the extent of this prohibition. Not only is one forbidden to actively cause a person to stumble, but one must remove a stumbling block if someone will trip over it. We learn that everyone has the responsibility to prevent his fellow from sinning. Obviously, this obligation must be approached in a sensible manner, but the Torah warns that we cannot just turn a blind eye if we see someone engaging in a forbidden activity.

"Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, Hashem, your G-d" (ibid. 19:2)

The command to become holy was given to every member of the Jewish people. Many people mistakenly believe that they are incapable of becoming holy. However, the Torah tells us that every person has this ability. We just must know ourselves and learn how to tap into that ability. The **Rambam** writes that everyone is born with the capability to reach the level of Moshe Rabbeinu.

It is just a matter of putting in the effort and making the right choices. Hashem does not ask anything of us that we cannot do and so we must work on attaining a level of holiness, each person on his own level. Chazal tell us that the Mitzvos of Parshas Kedoshim were said to all the Jewish people together: men, women, and children. This teaches us that we must also train our children for this calling to become holy. The best way is to start early.

The **Sifsei Kohan** writes that this message is conveyed by the next Pasuk, *"a man should fear his father and mother."* This Pasuk can also be read as "a man, his father and mother should be frightened." This means that parents must recognize that their child will become a man and this should concern them. Children grow into adults very quickly. Parents should not squander the opportunities that they have to educate their children from a young age.

There is no such thing as starting too young because soon enough the children will leave the house, and the parents will no longer be able to have to educate their children from a young age. There is no such thing as starting too young because soon enough the children will leave the house, and the parents will no longer be able to have the same level of influence in their lives. The parents should take advantage of the time that they have and be concerned that they are not doing enough.

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Summary: We are currently discussing how to honor Hashem beyond the basic level as a Chassid seeks to do. Now, the Ramchal is going to discuss the topic of honoring Torah sages. The Ramchal writes: **“Regarding those who study the Torah, scripture states: ‘you shall rise before an elder and respect the face of the learned’ (Vayikra 19:32). From which we learn all ways of honors that it is possible to confer to Torah scholars, which are certainly proper for the Chasid to do.”** (Mesilas Yesharim, Chapter 19)

The **Shulchan Aruch Harav** writes: **“One is required to respect one’s Rebbe/Teacher, Torah scholar, and elderly people. One must respect anyone who is greater than him in Torah even if he is not exceptionally greater in Torah than the common folk. It is a grave sin to shame Torah scholars or to hate them, and whoever shames the Sages does not have a portion in the world to come. One is to respect Sages and elders, also in terms of their seating arrangements during events and festivities, having them sit at the head of the table and having them delegated to speak first for the crowd. It’s forbidden to make use of one who studies Halachos and surely one who learns the Gemara (even if he’s not a Rav).”**

Furthermore, the **Tur** teaches (Yorah Dei’ah 242) that one is obligated to honor and revere one’s rebbe to an even greater degree than he honors and reveres his parents. Parents bring a person into this world, but one’s rebbe teaches him Torah, enabling him to be worthy of the World to Come. Our sages say: **“Fear your Rebbe like you fear Hashem”** (Avos 4:12).

Let’s analyze a fundamental question. Why should we show honor to a Torah scholar? Do they need the Kavod or stroking of their ego? **Rabbi Efreim Goldberg** explains that the Mitzvah to honor them is not for the sages; it’s for us. When we accustom ourselves to honor Torah Sages, we inculcate the importance of being connected to the Torah.

The Ramchal continues: **“Our Sages of blessed memory expounded (Kesuvos 103b): ‘he honors those who fear G-d’ (Tehillim 15:4) - this refers to Yehoshafat King of Yehudah, who, whenever he saw a Torah scholar, would rise from his throne, hug him, kiss him, and say to him: ‘Rebbi, Rebbi, my teacher, my teacher’”.** (ibid. Ch. 19)

Even though Yehoshafat was a king, and everyone was obligated to respect and fear the king, nevertheless, the king went out of his way to demonstrate how much he honored Torah Sages.

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The Ramchal continues: **“When Rebbe Zeira was weak from his studies, he would sit at the entrance of the Beit Midrash (house of Torah study), to perform the Mitzva of standing up for Torah scholars.”** (ibid. Chapter 19)

One who finds himself in the presence of a Torah sage MUST rise out of respect for him. Nothing, however, obligates a person to seek out such situations. As such, Rav Zeira certainly went beyond the call of duty and practiced Chassidus in this area. The *Way of the Upright* illustrates this message with a story. At an advanced age and in frail health, **Rav Elya Lopian, ZT”L**, made the lengthy journey from Kfar Chassidim to Jerusalem to attend the Knessiah Gedolah of Agudas Yisrael in 1964. This was surprising since he was not identified with the organization and always avoided anything that took him away from his yeshiva. He explained that he had come so that he could rise in honor of **Rav Moshe Feinstein, ZT”L**, and recite the blessing that one makes when seeing an extraordinary Torah Sage.

The Ramchal concludes: **“All these are things which the Creator, blessed be He, has shown us that He desires in, and has revealed to us His exalted judgment in this. Since it is so, one who wishes to bring gratification to his Maker, should walk in this path, and increase strategies for doing what is just before the blessed G-d.”** (ibid. Chapter 19)

To conclude, Hashem has appointed the Rabbis as His mouthpiece and His ambassadors, telling us to listen to them. When we rise and acknowledge them, it reflects our love of Hashem and the Torah and our priorities in life (especially in comparison to those who run after vain Hollywood celebrities and sports stars). *We will continue next week, B’Ezras Hashem.*



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“Rabbi Chananiah ben Hakinai said: ‘one who wakes up at night or walks on the way alone and turns his heart to idle matters, behold, this man should pay with his life.’” (Avos 3:4)

Rabbi Irving Bunim, ZT”L, points out that Rabbi Chananiah lived during the time of the Romans, and it was illegal to study Torah during the day. So, when someone is alone at night on the road and it’s quiet, so this is the perfect opportunity. If someone misses that chance, he is putting the purpose of his existence in the irrelevant column, so to speak. Today, learning Torah is not illegal.

Still, many people are busy, with a lot of pressures from work, responsibilities, and errands to take care of. If one finds themselves at night when things are more relaxed, and one doesn’t take that time to learn Torah, to meditate, or to do *Chesed*, one is wasting the gift of life – hence the Mishna’s drastic comment. The point of life is to connect to Hashem. During the day there are justifications, but what’s the excuse at night or during downtime? Shouldn’t we grab every opportunity made available to us?

Rabbi Bunim points out a beautiful understanding of the Mishna that is so relevant to us today. When one is awake at night or traveling alone on the road – when all others are asleep, and he is aware that there’s darkness – his obligation is to share the light with others. We live in a time of so much distraction, confusion, anxiety, worry, and stress. If one has access to clarity when all around them is darkness and doesn’t take advantage of that opportunity, then they are certainly guilty with his *nefesh* (soul).

There is an amazing story about someone who survived the horrific concentration camp known as Auschwitz for three years. Someone once asked him, “How did you manage to survive for so long when the life expectancy in Auschwitz is 2-3 months?” The man replied, “You know, I actually was very close to ending it. I lost everything in the camp – my family, my friends. I was hungry and cold and ready to throw myself against the electrified fence. Then, the **Bluzhever Rebbe**, ZT”L, saw me and spoke to me. He said, ‘You need to look at things differently. If you’re looking for warmth and food, this is not the place. However, if you are looking to do others a favor, there is no other place in the world like this. This is a place where a warm smile or a kind word can save a life.’” The man explained he grabbed many opportunities to be there for others.

We live in a world where there are many scenarios where we can bring light. If we are in the darkness and we are alone, let’s not waste our opportunity and fulfill our purpose of spreading light to others and to the whole world. Let’s keep plugging away until everyone is walking together towards the Final Redemption.

Rabbi Aaron Eisemann is the Director of Meor NYU.

Is it permitted to put a challah, wrapped in foil, into the oven before Shabbos (and the oven is either on or off)?

The problem of totally wrapping a challah is the issue of *hatmana* – meaning enwrapping. In Siman 257:1 we find that it is permitted to do *hatmana* before Shabbos in towels, etc. if there is no heat source present. Therefore, the answer to this common question must be divided as follows:

1. If the challah is not fully enwrapped in the aluminum foil it is permitted even if the oven is turned on.

2. If the challah is entirely enwrapped in foil, then it depends: a. If one’s intention is to enhance the heat, it is forbidden even if the oven is turned off. b. If one’s intention is only to prevent the challah from drying out, it might be permitted. However, the correct way is to leave the foil a little open and not enwrap the challah entirely.

What is the halacha regarding switching on an electric Shabbos urn close to Shabbos?

One is forbidden to put a pot of raw food or uncooked water on an open flame close to Shabbos, unless there is a sizable piece of meat in the pot, which will not be ready for the night meal. Since an electric urn does not incorporate a *blech* it is considered an open flame. Therefore, Sephardim must fully boil the water before Shabbos. There are, however, poskim who hold that water heated to the degree of *yad soledes bo* is considered fully cooked, and when there is not enough time before Shabbos to bring it to a boil, it is sufficient. Ashkenazim should also *l’chatchila* fully boil the water before Shabbos.

If boiling water was poured onto tea leaves, may one drink the tea?

The **Mishna Berura** writes that pouring hot water from the urn onto tea leaves involves an *issur* Torah, and therefore, the tea is *assur* to drink.

How does one prepare tea essence before Shabbos?

The ideal method is to make tea essence before Shabbos by placing tea leaves in a small kettle and cook them on the fire, or at least to pour boiling water onto the tea leaves, stirring the leaves while pouring the water. On Shabbos, one pours hot water into a clean, dry cup and adds the tea essence to the water.

If one forgets to prepare tea essence before Shabbos, how can one drink tea on Shabbos?

1. Borrow from a neighbor.

2. According to the poskim who hold that *ein bishul bik’li sh’lishi*, one may put the teabags into a *k’li sh’lishi*. i.e. Pour water from the urn into a cup, pour it into another cup and then put the teabag into the water.

3. However, many poskim are of the opinion that items that cook easily may not be placed even into a *k’li sh’lishi*, or any other *k’li* that is *yad soledes bo*. Accordingly, he will have to forgo a hot cup of tea that Shabbos. *Summary: Options 1&3 are preferred; 2 only if your Rav rules so.*

SHORT STORY OF THE WEEK **BY YONI SCHWARTZ**

Many years ago, in Eastern Europe lived **Rabbi Yeshaya Zinkovitz**, who loved to fulfill the Mitzvah of *hachnasas orchim* (welcoming guests). One Erev Shabbos, merchants were passing by his house on their way back from the fair in Lithuania without anywhere to stay for Shabbos. Rav Yeshaya was excited by this golden opportunity to fulfill his favorite Mitzvah. With enthusiasm, he rushed over to them, warmly welcoming them into his house. Rav Yeshaya said that he'd love to have them over for Shabbos - all they had to do was pay fifty golden rubles per person.

The merchants had money, but still, that was a very hefty price. Nonetheless, without any other options, they conceded. Throughout Shabbos, Rav Yeshaya treated them like kings, bringing them as many delicacies as they wanted. They enjoyed the most expensive fruits on the market, ate only the highest-quality cuts of meat, and satiated themselves on all the treats their hearts could desire. They truly enjoyed an incredible Shabbos.

On Sunday morning, as they were about to leave, they approached Rav Yeshaya to pay the fee. However, Rav Yeshaya said, "There's no way I can accept a single coin from you, for Hashem has graced me with a Mitzvah about which Chazal said, '*Greater is hachnasas orchim than greeting the Divine Presence.*' How could I trade this Mitzvah in for money?"

Puzzled, they asked, "Why did you request before Shabbos that we pay you?" He responded, "So that you would enjoy your Shabbos as much as possible. I knew that if you felt you were taking too much from me or didn't deserve it, you wouldn't have treated yourselves as much."

Comment: In this week's parshios, Acharei Mos-Kedoshim, we learn about the importance of caring for others and loving our fellow as we love ourselves. Perhaps, one reason why hachnasas orchim is greater than greeting the Divine Presence is that when we do the latter, we sanctify G-d's Name, but when we do the former, we show others how beautiful it is to be connected to the Mitzvos, causing others to sanctify G-d's Name as well.

SUGAR RUSH ON THE 613 MITZVOS BY R'ELI REIT **MITZVAH # 162 - SHAVUOS**

We are required to refrain from working on the Yom Tov of Shavuos. As the Pasuk (Vayikra 23:21) says, "*You shall call this day holy*". Work is defined as the types of work forbidden to do on Shabbos. However, there are some exceptions. This Yom Tov celebrates the giving of the Torah on Har Sinai, over 3,000 years ago. We are required to enjoy food and wine on this Yom Tov, in honor of the Torah.

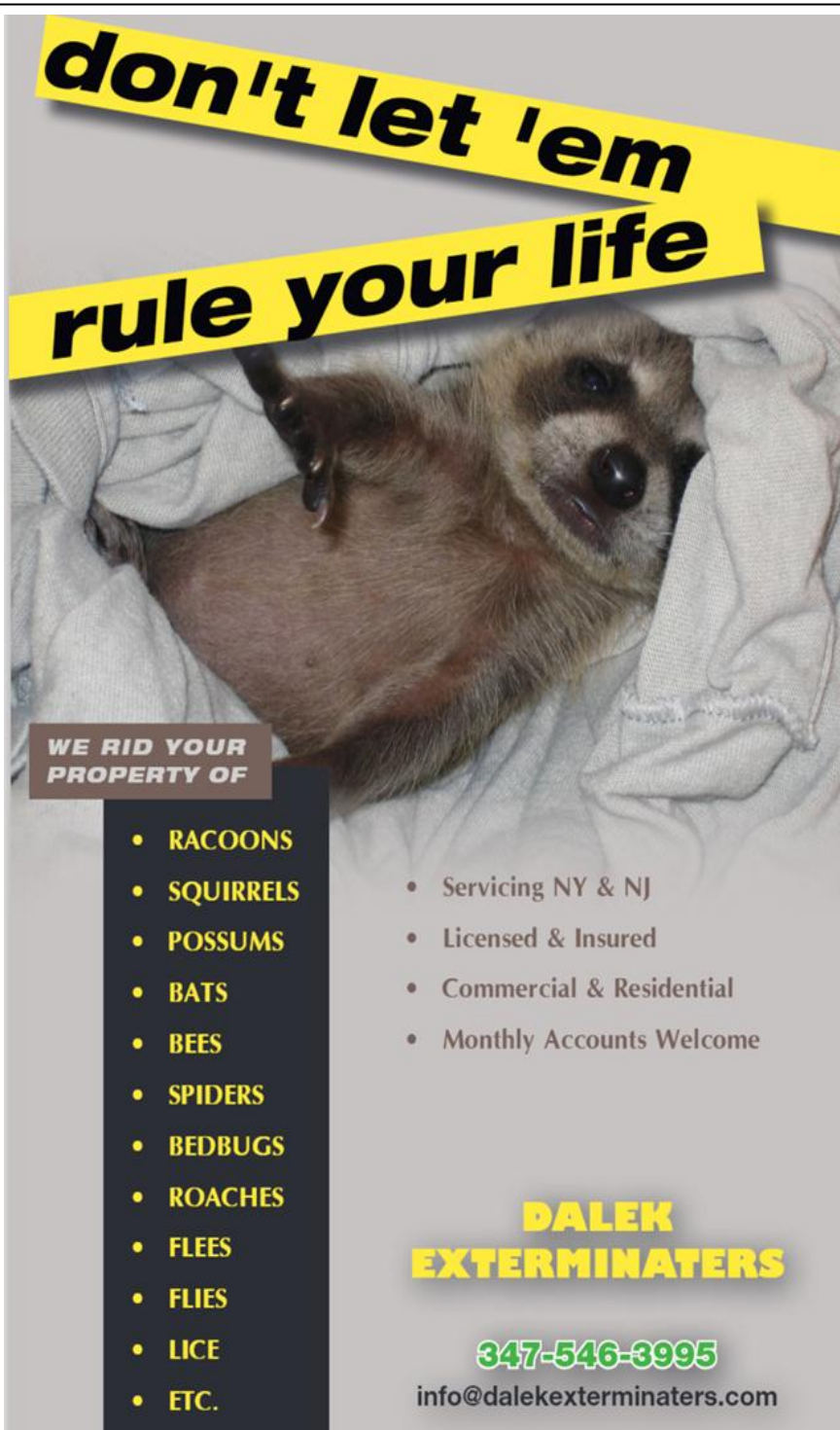
In davening, on Shavuos, we say "*Zman Matan Toraseinu*" - the Yom Tov is in celebration of the giving of the Torah. Normally, a *korban mincha* (flour offering) is made as Matzah, but on Shavuos an exception is made. The *Shtei Halechem* brought was chometz.

SPLENDID QUOTE OF THE WEEK **BY RABBI MENACHEM LOMNER**

"Hashem expects the world from us, but we know we can do it."

It is a tall order that we are commanded not to take revenge. Mention this to any non-Jew and they will say that it is an impossible task. Add onto this the fact that there is another mitzvah not to even bear a grudge. Impossible times ten. Yet, as we try to live by this amazing ideal, we see that we succeed many times.

Of course, we stumble sometimes, but success can bring more and more success. We become greater each time and we can separate from other nations more and more by having this greatness. Of course, our efforts will help bring Mashiach closer, as well!



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