

# O H R N E T

SHABBAT PARSHIOT ACHREI - KEDOSHIM - EMOR · 24 NISSAN - 10 IYAR 5763 · APR. 26 - MAY 10, 2003 · VOL. 10 NO. 29

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### Acharei Mot

## THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

*"After the death of the two sons of Aharon..." (16:1)*

Sometimes in our great enthusiasm to follow our heart's desire, we can twist logic into something resembling a pretzel.

The Midrash tells us that Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu died because they entered the Holy of Holies without dressing in the long robe-like garment of the *Kohen Gadol* (high priest).

This Midrash is difficult. Why should Nadav and Avihu have dressed themselves in the *me'il*? They weren't *kohanim gedolim*. They were regular *kohanim*. So why should they have worn the garments of the *Kohen Gadol*?

The answer is that if Nadav and Avihu gave themselves permission to enter the Holy of Holies and offer the *ketoret* incense which was an offering exclusive to the *Kohen Gadol*, perforce, they must have seen themselves as *kohanim gedolim*. According to their own logic, then, they should have "dressed for the part." They should have worn the clothes of the *Kohen Gadol*.

The fact that they didn't was indeed a valid allegation against them.

But maybe, there's another way to understand why Nadav and Avihu didn't dress for the part.

There can be no question that Nadav and Avihu's actions came from an overwhelming desire to serve G-d. It was this unbridled love that led them to make serious – and fatal – errors. Maybe the fact that they didn't dress in the clothes of the *Kohen Gadol* revealed that, in their own heart of hearts, they themselves knew the nakedness of their claim.

• Based on *Shailot u'teshuvot HaRosh, klal 13*

### Kedoshim

## EAT, MY CHILD!

*"Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Yisrael and say to them 'You shall be holy, for Holy am I, Hashem, Your G-d.'" (19:1)*

I come from a generation of Jews who assumed that synagogue worship consisted of middle-aged ladies with badly-dyed blue hair standing outside the synagogue and almost-kissing each other on the cheek, whilst saying "Lovely to see you too, dear!" Concluding that this was the sum total of Judaism, and finding this particular mode of worship some-

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## PARSHA OVERVIEW

### ACHAREI MOT

G-d instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan*. On Yom Kippur, the *kohen gadol* is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and wearing special clothing. He brings offerings unique to Yom Kippur, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is "for G-d" and is offered in the Temple, while the other is "for Azazel" in the desert. The Torah states the individual's obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and

marital relations. Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman's monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

### KEDOSHIM

The nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught: *Prohibitions:* Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft

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## THE PERPETUAL SCAPEGOAT

### Acharei Mot

The *sa'ir l'azazel* – the scapegoat – plays a special role in the Yom Kippur service of Beit Hamikdash days which is the main subject of the Torah portion which Jews will read on this, the first Shabbat following the Pesach holiday. This goat symbolically carried the sins of the entire community out into some remote location where its death climaxed the atonement process of that holy day.

It is striking that this is the first Torah reading following Pesach, a holiday historically associated with blood libels against Jews who were turned into scapegoats for whatever bothered the gentile community. And didn't the Nazi propaganda machine blame the Jews for all of Germany's economic woes?

To our deep regret this pastime of making the Jew a scapegoat is not a thing of the past. How many voices have we heard, even in the U.S., that it was Israel and the Jews in high places who instigated the war against Iraq. And how else can we understand the twisted logic of those European countries who blame the Middle East unrest on Israeli intransigence except to conclude that we are once again playing the role of scapegoat.

The original scapegoat represented atonement for sin. Perhaps if we take to heart the need to improve our spiritual situation we will merit Divine protection from being stigmatized as the perpetual scapegoat and can enjoy peace and security forever.

## STUMBLING BLOCKS ON THE ROAD MAP

### Kedoshim

The "Road Map" proposed by President Bush as a solution to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is a subject of hot debate these days. While almost all Israelis are prepared to ascribe to the patron of this plan good intentions, some serious reservations are being expressed as to how it will affect the long-range security of Israel.

Perhaps the Bible-loving president should be reminded of two passages in the Torah portion which will be read this week in the synagogue. In the first (*Yayikra 19:14*) we are warned against putting a stumbling block in the path of a blind man. Our Talmudic Sages point out that this warning includes offering advice to someone which will be counterproductive to his interests. There are many people in Israel and in the world who are so weary of a seemingly endless conflict that they are prepared to clutch at straws and blind themselves to

the dangers of any settlement made with an enemy who continues to sponsor terror and to indoctrinate its youth with murderous hatred for the Jewish state. The American president and political leaders in Israel who support his "Road Map" without reservations should avoid putting a "stumbling block" in the path of these "blind ones" which threatens their security.

The other passage (*ibid. 19:18*) is the one about loving your neighbor like yourself. This has been interpreted by the Sage Hillel as a warning "not to do to others what you don't want done to you". President Bush has powerfully demonstrated that he cannot tolerate terrorism. It is therefore incumbent upon him to assure that any "road map" he proposes must show the way for Israel to also be safe from terror forever.

## COUNTING THE DAYS

### Emor

When you are looking forward to something in the future - a holiday, a vacation or a wedding - you impatiently count the days. In this week's Torah portion a special sort of counting is mandated to the Jewish people - keeping track of the days and weeks between the festivals of Pesach and Shavuot. Each evening for seven weeks observant Jews make a blessing and then declare which day of the Omer it is.

This bridge of time between the Festival of Freedom and the Festival of the Giving of the Torah, one which we are currently traversing, conveys a most important message for all who value the freedom of Israel as a Jewish homeland. On both festivals flour-based offerings were part of the service in the *Beit Hamikdash* — the omer of barley on Pesach and the two loaves of wheat on Shavuot. Barley is classified in the Talmud as a grain principally used for animal consumption, while wheat is

the prime human food. The symbolism suggested by the commentaries is that Pesach, the Festival of Freedom, represented a physical liberation from Egyptian bondage which was only a "barley level" of animalistic freedom. Only when this freedom was guided by the Torah given to them by their Divine liberator did the freed Israelites reach the "wheat level" of human reason and responsibility which is the ultimate freedom.

As we now count the days towards Shavuot, in reliving the excited anticipation of our ancestors on their way from one level of freedom to another, we should apply the message of this transition to our own period of history. Achieving independence from the British Mandate and establishing a Jewish state must be viewed as only the "barley level" of physical freedom which must be followed by a national return to Torah values in order to achieve a "wheat level" of spiritual freedom which alone can guarantee the success of Israel forever.

## FOREIGN FOOD AND WATER

On two occasions the Torah relates that the Israelites on their way from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael offered to purchase food supplies from the nations whose borders they neared. First we find the Divine command in regard to the descendants of Esav who lived in Sair: “You shall purchase food to eat from them with money, and you shall purchase water from them to drink.” (*Devarim* 2:6) We later find Moshe sending messengers to Sichon, king of Cheshbon, with a similar request: “Sell me food to eat for money, and give me water to drink...as did the descendants of Esav.” (*ibid.* 2:28-29)

The latter passage is cited in our *gemara* as the source for the ban on eating food cooked by a non-Jew even if the ingredients are all kosher. On the assumption that the water mentioned here has been boiled by a non-Jew Rabbi Yochanan suggests that this provides the Torah guideline for which items are prohibited. Since water is not visibly changed in any way, it was permissible to purchase this from those nations, while anything whose form is changed comes under this prohibition.

The conclusion of the *gemara* is that the prohibition against food cooked by a non-Jew is of rabbinical origin, either to discourage intimacy in dining with non-Jews which may lead to eating their non-kosher food (Rashi) or to discourage the social contact which may lead to intermarriage (*Tosefot*). The passage cited by Rabbi Yochanan serves only as an *asmachta* – a Torah hint to such a ban.

But how do we understand this passage as it was first presented as a Torah source when it mentions not only water but food as well? *Targum Yonatan ben Uziel* solves this by translating food as uncooked food. But if the food they purchased was not cooked, but rather raw fruits as Ramban explains, what moved Rabbi Yochanan to assume that the water mentioned in that passage was boiled and a source for the ban on gentile cooking?

Perhaps the answer lies in this Sage’s choice of the later passage rather than the earlier one. There is a subtle difference between the two. In the first the term *purchase* is applied both to food and water, while in the second one Moshe asks for food to be *sold* to him but water to be *given* to him. Analyzing the term “give me water” we must eliminate the connotation of a gift with no compensation for this would not be consistent with the purchase of water mentioned in the first passage. It can hardly be referring to water rights sold to a thirsty nation of millions. Our Sages therefore concluded that the water involved was actually boiled and presented to them upon purchase.

It should be noted that there are exceptions to the rule

prohibiting food prepared by a non-Jew. (See *Shulchan Aruch Yoreh Deah* 113 or consult a halachic authority for guidance.)

• *Avoda Zara* 37b

## THE FISHY IDOL THAT FELL

When the Philistines defeated the Israelites in battle and captured from them the Holy Ark, they took it to their temple in Ashdod and placed it before their fish idol “Dagon”. Upon waking the following morning they found that their idol had fallen from its place and lay flat on its face before the Ark. They restored the idol to its place only to find it the next morning in the same collapsed condition except that this time its severed head and hands lay on the threshold.

“Therefore the priests of Dagon and all who enter the temple of Dagon do not step on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod to this very day..” (*Shmuel* I 5:5)

What is the meaning of the reverence shown by these idol worshippers to the threshold of their temple with the head and hands of their idol on it?

Two different approaches are offered in our *gemara*. Rabbi Yochanan’s view is that they continued to worship the severed parts of the idol. He therefore cites this as support for his position that an idol which has broken into pieces is still considered an idol from which no Jew may derive any benefit since its worshippers have not expressed their abandonment by smashing it. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, however, contends that even though the idol fell by itself and smashed into pieces it no longer has the status of an idol forbidden for benefit. The worshipper of such a fallen idol, he argues, certainly abandons worshipping it because he feels that if the idol was incapable of protecting itself it is unlikely that it is capable of protecting him. Why then did the priests and visitors of the Dagon temple avoid treading upon the threshold where Dagon’s remnants lay?

The answer lies in the twisted logic of those idol worshippers. Rather than draw the obvious conclusion that the G-d of Israel was avenging the honor of His Holy Ark by smashing the neighboring idol, they assumed that the supernatural power which they believed once resided in the fishy idol of Dagon had now relocated to the threshold of the temple where its head and hands now lay. They were not showing reverence to those severed parts but rather to the threshold itself.

It was only after the Philistines in Ashdod themselves were severely afflicted that they finally decided to remove the Ark, whose eventual return to the Israelites was discussed in an earlier article (24b) of this *mesechta*.

• *Avoda Zara* 41b

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## PARSHA Q&A ?

### ACHAREI MOT

1. Why does the Torah emphasize that *Parshat Acharei Mot* was taught after the death of Aharon's sons?
2. How long did the first *Beit Hamikdash* stand?
3. What did the *kohen gadol* wear when he entered the Holy of Holies?
4. How many times did the *kohen gadol* change his clothing and immerse in the *mikveh* on Yom Kippur?
5. One of the goats that was chosen by lot went to *azazel*. What is *azazel*?
6. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the *kohen gadol*?
7. What is the penalty of *karet*?
8. Which categories of animals must have their blood covered when they are slaughtered?
9. What is the difference between "*mishpat*" and "*chok*"?
10. May a man marry his wife's sister?

### KEDOSHIM

1. Why was *Parshat Kedoshim* said in front of all the Jewish

People?

2. Why does the Torah mention the duty to honor one's father before it mentions the duty to honor one's mother?
3. Why is the command to fear one's parents followed by the command to keep Shabbat?
4. The Torah obligates one to leave the "*leket*" for the poor. What is "*leket*"?
5. In *Shemot* 20:13, the Torah commands, "Do not steal." What does the Torah add when it commands in *Vayikra* 19:11 "Do not steal"?
6. In verse 19:13, the Torah commands, "Do not wrong your neighbor." To what "wrong" is the Torah referring?
7. When rebuking someone, what sin must one be careful to avoid?
8. How does one fulfill the command "*v'hadarta p'nei zakein*"?
9. What punishment will never come to the entire Jewish People?
10. When the Torah states a death penalty but doesn't define it precisely, to which type of death penalty is it referring?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

### ACHAREI MOT

1. 16:1 - To strengthen the warning not to enter the Holy of Holies except on Yom Kippur.
2. 16:3 - 410 years.
3. 16:4 - Only the four linen garments worn by an ordinary *kohen*.
4. 16:4 - Five times.
5. 16:8 - A jagged cliff.
6. 16:23 - They must be put into *geniza* and not be used again.
7. 17:9 - The person's life is shortened and his offspring die.
8. 17:13 - Non-domestic kosher animals and all species of kosher birds.
9. 18:4 - A "*mishpat*" conforms to the human sense of justice. A "*chok*" is a law whose reason is not given to us and can only be understood as Hashem's decree.
10. 18:18 - Not during his wife's lifetime.

### KEDOSHIM

1. 19:2 - Because it contains the fundamental teachings of the Torah.
2. 19:3 - Since it is more natural to honor one's mother, the Torah stresses the obligation to honor one's father.
3. 19:3 - To teach that one must not violate Torah law even at the command of one's parents.
4. 19:9 - "*Leket*" is one or two stalks of grain that are accidentally dropped while harvesting.
5. 19:11 - The Torah in *Vayikra* prohibits monetary theft. In *Shemot* it prohibits kidnapping.
6. 19:13 - Withholding wages from a worker.
7. 19:17 - Causing embarrassment.
8. 19:32 - By not sitting in their seat nor contradicting them.
9. 20:3 - "*Karet*" — the entire Jewish People will never be "cut off."
10. 20:10 - "*Chenek*" (strangulation).

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

### LIFESAVERS ON THE HIGH SEAS

“We hovered meters above the high waves and lowered the rescue team to the life rafts in the sea below.”

This is how Lt. Col. D., commander of the elite Israel Air Force Rescue Unit 669, summed up the daring and tricky rescue operation which saved ten Turkish seamen from drowning the other month. The cargo ship they were on had broken anchor as a result of high winds and waves forcing the ship out

to sea from its mooring at Ashdod Port. About ten miles out the boat sank and the Turkish sailors entered life rafts.

“We identified a fairly large vessel lying on its side about to go down, and two life rafts bobbing like fig leaves in the middle of a rough ocean,” reported the commander. Helicopters then lowered cables with rescue teams to the rafts and within an hour and a half the rescue mission was successfully completed.

## PARSHA Q&A ?

### EMOR

1. Which male descendants of Aharon are exempt from the prohibition against contacting a dead body?
2. Does a *kohen* have an option regarding becoming ritually defiled when his unmarried sister passes away?
3. How does one honor a *kohen*?
4. How does the Torah restrict the *kohen gadol* with regard to mourning?
5. The Torah states in verse 22:3 that one who “approaches holy objects” while in a state of *tumah* (impurity) is penalized with excision. What does the Torah mean by “approaches”?
6. What is the smallest piece of a corpse that is able to transmit *tumah*?
7. Who in the household of a *kohen* may eat *terumah*?
8. If the daughter of a *kohen* marries a “zar” she may no longer eat *terumah*. What is a zar?
9. What is the difference between a *neder* and a *nedavah*?
10. May a person slaughter an animal and its father on the same day?
11. How does the Torah define “profaning” the Name of Hashem?
12. Apart from Shabbat, how many days are there during the year about which the Torah says that work is forbidden?
13. How big is an *omer*?
14. On what day do we begin to “count the *omer*”?
15. Why do we begin counting the *omer* at night?
16. How does the *omer* differ from other *minchah* offerings?
17. The blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is called a “*zichron teruah*” (sound of remembrance). For what is it a reminder?
18. What is unusual about the wood of the *etrog* tree?
19. Who was the father of the blasphemer?
20. What is the penalty for intentionally wounding one’s parent?

## PARSHA Q&A!

### Answers to this Emor’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 21:1 - *Challalim* — those disqualified from the priesthood because they are descended from a relationship forbidden to a *kohen*.
2. 21:3 - No, he is required to do so.
3. 21:8 - He is first in all matters of holiness. For example, a *kohen* reads from the Torah first, and is usually the one to lead the blessings before and after meals.
4. 21:10-12 - He may not allow his hair to grow long, nor attend to his close relatives if they die, nor accompany a funeral procession.
5. 22:3 - Eats.
6. 22:5 - A piece the size of an olive.
7. 22:11 - He, his wife, his sons, his unmarried daughters and his non-Jewish slaves.
8. 22:12 - A non-*kohen*.
9. 22:18 - A *neder* is an obligation upon a person; a *nedavah* is an obligation placed upon an object.
10. 22:28 - Yes. The Torah only prohibits slaughtering an animal and its mother on the same day.
11. 22:32 - Willfully transgressing the commandments.
12. 23:7-36 - Seven.
13. 23:10 - One tenth of an *eipha*.
14. 23:15 - On the 16th of Nissan.
15. 23:15 - The Torah requires counting seven complete weeks. If we begin counting in the daytime, the seven weeks would not be complete, because according to the Torah a day starts at nightfall.
16. 23:16 - It was made from barley.
17. 23:24 - The *akeidat* (binding of) Yitzchak.
18. 23:40 - It has the same taste as the fruit.
19. 24:10 - The Egyptian killed by Moshe (*Shemot 2:12*).
20. 24:21 - Death.

## LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

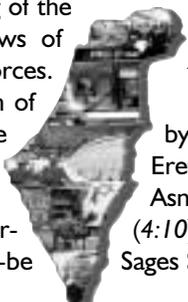
Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

### SANCHERIV – A TITLE FOR A TRIBUTE

“A land like your own” is what this mighty king of the Assyrian Empire offered the besieged Jews of Jerusalem if they would surrender to his forces.

Just as he had exiled the Ten Tribes of the Kingdom of Israel to some foreign land, he promised to do the same with the residents of the Kingdom of Judea, the last holdout against his conquest of the entire world.

Although he could have diplomatically tried to persuade them by offering them a better land, this would-be



conqueror of the entire Eretz Yisrael refrained from doing so because he could not bring himself to claim that any land could really be better.

Sancheriv’s mighty army was destroyed in one night by a Heavenly angel, but the respect he showed for Eretz Yisrael earned him the title of “the great and noble Asnappar” in a reference to him in the Book of Ezra (4:10). He also merited great Jewish descendants – the Sages Shemaya and Avtalyon.

## A RABBI

From: Brian F. in Fort Worth, TX

Dear Rabbi:

What does being a rabbi mean? What training is required to become ordained/certified? What does being a rabbi entail?

Dear Brian F,

Your question brings to mind a well-known story: Three elderly Jewish women were sitting on a park bench. One proudly proclaimed "my son is a lawyer". To which another replied "my son is a doctor". Turning to the third they asked, and what does your son do? Astonished by her response they asked, "What's a nice Jewish boy doing being a Rabbi?"

But seriously (which is something rabbis are supposed to be after trying to be funny), the word Rabbi comes from the Aramaic word *Rabi*, and is related to the Hebrew word for "great". *Rabi* was thus the title reserved for the great Talmudic Sages who received their ordination in an uninterrupted tradition going back to Moses. Unfortunately, this tradition was severed when the Jews were exiled from the Land of Israel.

Nevertheless, even in the Diaspora, the terms *Rav*, *Rebbe*,

and *Rabbi* were used for outstanding Torah scholars who by virtue of their piety and knowledge, were natural leaders of their communities. Historically, then, there was little formal rabbinical training. Rather, all Jews were expected to learn the sacred texts, which, through life-long study, perfect one's personality traits and sensitivity to human nature, while honing one's analytical skills and amassing knowledge of Jewish law. Individuals who excelled in their study and practice of Judaism were therefore recognized as Rabbis.

In recent times, it has become common for Torah scholars to undergo rigorous training in specific areas of Jewish law such as monetary matters, marriage and divorce, dietary laws, the Sabbath, and more. Upon completion of the program and successfully passing the exams, one receives rabbinical certification.

In light of the above, being a rabbi first and foremost entails being a good person, being considerate and sensitive to people's needs, and eager to perform acts of kindness. It also entails learning and practicing Judaism with a genuine enthusiasm that inspires others to do the same. As a leader, being a rabbi entails sharing one's knowledge with others, either by teaching them Torah, or by instructing them in the practical observance of Jewish law. Finally, a rabbi should also have the common sense and insight needed to help guide people through the myriad challenges in life.

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

### REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

## HONOR VERSUS SHAME

**Question:** A pupil who was guilty of disturbing his class was demoted, as punishment, to a lower class in which he has a younger brother. Is this form of discipline acceptable?

**Answer:** Embarrassing someone publicly is equated by our Talmudic Sages with murder in the gravity of the harm caused to the victim. No teacher or principal would consider murdering a pupil regardless of the problem he poses. In the same manner, extreme caution must be exercised in choosing the manner in which a pupil is disciplined. There are cases mentioned in the Talmud, and experiences of people in our own day, which testify to the terrible effects of shaming someone, ranging from abandonment of society to abandonment of life itself.

The flip side of this issue is the utilization of honor to

encourage a reluctant pupil to try harder. The Talmud (*Bava Metzia 85a*) relates that a particularly rebellious young man was placed by Rabbi Yehuda Hanassi under the tutelage of a great teacher of Torah and was granted the title of "Rabbi". At one point the youngster expressed a desire to leave his studies and return to his sinful ways. "You have been granted wisdom," his teacher reminded him, "and a golden crown of honor will accompany your title of rabbi – and you still speak of returning to your old shameful ways!"

This appeal to a pupil's desire for honor had the desired effect and the problematic youngster developed into a distinguished sage. Every capable teacher similarly has a number of ways in which he can motivate pupils with honor rather than shame and thus achieve the result that every educator desires.

לע"נ  
ר' דוד בן ר' אהרון ז"ל  
מת לאה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה  
שנהרג על קידוש השם הי"ד  
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## WEEKLY DAFootnotes

### Avoda Zara 44-50

## SEARCH AND DESTROY

The Torah commanded Jews to destroy all the idols in the lands which they conquered. Two passages are cited in our *gemara* as a source for this command: “You shall utterly destroy all the places in which the nations whom you are to dispossess served their gods.” (*Devarim* 12:2) “...you shall wipe out their name from that place.” (*ibid.* 12:3)

Both of these passages seem to be referring to the destruction of idols wherever they are located. Rabbi Akiva, in fact, interprets the phrase “utterly destroy” as a commandment to search and destroy idols everywhere and “wipe out their names” as an extra dimension of referring to the idols by shameful names.

Rambam (*Laws of Avoda Kochavim* 7:1) draws a distinction between the places where the above passages apply. Apparently following the approach of Rabbi Yossi ben Rabbi Yehuda he writes that the command to “search and destroy” applies only in Eretz Yisrael. In all other lands where Jews take possession they are required only to destroy the idols they encounter but not to conduct a search for them.

Rabbi Chaim ben Atar, in his Torah commentary “*Ohr Hachayim*”, finds support for this distinction in the very language of the two above-mentioned passages. The destruction mandated in the first passage is to be done wherever Jews dispossess the idol worshippers with no distinction made between Eretz Yisrael and elsewhere. Wiping out the name of the idols in this approach is a command to “search and destroy” and this is required only “from that place”, a reference to Eretz Yisrael alone. Because of the sacred nature of the Land, every effort must be made to rid it of contaminating idols.

• *Avoda Zara* 45b

## TREADING ON UNHOLY GROUND

“The son of saints walks upon them and we should refrain from doing so!” This is how Rabbi Yochanan brought support to his position that stones taken from the idol Markulis and used for paving a road were permissible to walk upon. This particular idol was made up of stones and it was worshipped by stones being thrown upon it. These added stones could be viewed as becoming an integral part of the idol or as offerings to the original idol. The difference between these two perspectives is what determined the status of the stones removed and placed in the road.

If an idol worshipper takes an action which demonstrates that he has abandoned an idol as an object of worship it is no longer forbidden for a Jew to derive benefit from it. In the case of offerings to an idol, however, such abandonment does not remove the ban on deriving benefit. This rule is based on the passage describing an incident of idol worship

of the Israelites on their way from Egypt to Eretz Yisrael. “They attached themselves to Baal Peor and ate the sacrifices of the dead.” (*Tehillim* 106:28) Just as one may never derive any benefit from the dead, so too are sacrificial offerings to an idol forever forbidden.

Those sages who viewed the stones cast upon the idol Markulis as offerings, in addition to becoming a part of the idol, could not be satisfied with the abandonment of those stones as an object of worship expressed in turning them into cobblestones. Since they considered them offerings as well, whose status could not be affected by abandonment, they avoided treading upon those stones in order to avoid benefiting from them. Rabbi Yochanan, however, defined the ban on benefiting from offerings to an idol as applying only to those made in a manner which somehow simulated the offerings made to G-d in the *Beit Hamikdash*. Since there was no service performed there with throwing stones, the stones cast upon this idol did not come under the category of offerings, and could be released from their status as idols by the abandonment process of paving the streets with them.

Who is this “son of saints” who is cited as support for this approach?

He is identified as Rabbi Menachem ben Yossi who gained this title by so distancing himself from anything related to idols that he even avoided looking at the human likenesses engraved on coins although this was not a halachic requirement. (See *Tosefot* here and in *Mesechta Shabbat* 149a) When this saintly sage passed away all the faces of the statues and on the coins in his area became flattened as Heavenly tribute to his piety. (*Mesechta Mo’ed Katan* 25b) The reason this piety is described in terms of a “son of saints”, explains *Tosefot* (*Mesechta Pesachim* 104a), is because Rabbi Menachem’s father was also an exceptionally holy man.

• *Avoda Zara* 50a

### Avoda Zara 51-57

## THE RETIRED STONES

In the northeast corner of the *Beit Hamikdash* courtyard was an office in which the stones of the altar defiled by the Greeks were stored. They were placed there because they were no longer fit for use as altar stones, nor for any secular use.

But why were they disqualified for use in rebuilding the altar when the Hasmoneans defeated their Greek oppressors and renewed the service in the *Beit Hamikdash*? Although the Greeks used these stones for idolatrous purposes they were Jewish property and one does not have the power to cause the property of another to become forbidden for use through his idol worship.

The answer, says Rabbi Papa, is to be found in the passage which prophetically foretells the Greek invasion of the *Beit Hamikdash*. “Robbers shall enter into it,” declared the Prophet Yechezkel (7:22), “and profane it.” Once the Greek

## WEEKLY DAFootnotes

bandits entered the *Beit Hamikdash* the stones of the altar lost their sanctity and were no longer considered Jewish property. The Greeks were therefore able to assume possession of the stones, and by using them for idol worship they became forbidden for use by Jews.

Our *gemara* describes the quandary facing the Hasmoneans. The only way to remove the status of idol worship material from the stones was to have an idol worshipper show abandonment of them by smashing them. But they would then be unfit for use in a new altar which the Torah states (*Devarim 37:6*) can be built only with “whole stones”. Smoothing these smashed stones to make them whole was also ruled out by the Torah command that “You shall not lift up any iron tool upon them.” (*ibid. 27:5*)

How about using the stones for a secular purpose since they already lost their sanctity with the Greek invasion? This was rejected as well because it was not proper that stones which had once served a sacred purpose should now be used for a secular one. The only thing left to do then was to retire them from any use and to store them away in that office.

• *Avoda Zara 52b*

### JEALOUS OR RESENTFUL?

What is the true meaning of the description given in the Torah of G-d as “a jealous G-d”? (*Devarim 4:24*) This was the issue behind two questions asked of Rabban Gamliel, one from a Roman philosopher and the other from a Roman general. The first asked why G-d vents the anger caused by His jealousy of the idols worshipped by the heathens on the worshippers rather than upon the idols themselves. The second challenged the Sage that such

Divine jealousy implied that there was real substance to the idols, “since a wise man is jealous only of another wise man, a powerful man of another man of power and a wealthy man of another wealthy one.”

Rabban Gamliel responded to both challenges with a parable. But before studying his explanation it is necessary to analyze the true meaning of the term *kanno* – literally translated as jealousy – as it applies to the human and the Divine. In human terms one is jealous of the wisdom, wealth or power enjoyed by someone else and which he would like to himself enjoy. This is obviously not the case in regard to G-d. When referring to the Divine Source of everything we are compelled to translate *kanno* as resentful towards idol worshippers for the reverence paid to false gods, rather than jealousy of the spurious deities themselves.

The philosopher, explains Maharsha, was intelligent enough to be aware that G-d is resentful rather than jealous. For him the problem was only why this resentment was directed towards the worshippers rather than the idols. The Sage’s reply was a comparison to the situation of a prince who called his pet dog by his father’s name. Does the king show resentment towards the dog or towards his disrespectful son?

The general, on the other hand, assumed that the word *kanno* really meant jealousy in human terms. He therefore inferred from this that there must be something to those idols if G-d is indeed jealous of them. To him the sage made the comparison to a man who takes a second wife who is of inferior status. The first wife is understandably resentful of the insult which she would not have felt had her competitor been superior to her. Rabban Gamliel was thus educating the general that G-d was not jealous but rather resentful that an inferior idol should be treated as a competitor.

• *Avoda Zara 54b*

## PUBLIC DOMAIN

### Re: Rice on Pesach (Ohrnet Pesach)

In your Pesach issue, you advised “Bonnie H.,” a vegetarian, that, according to Rabbi Huna (of Talmudic times), beets and rice can be used on the Seder Plate instead of cooked (meat) items.

Please advise her before she goes to the store that rice is acceptable for use on Pesach by Sephardim, but not by mainstream Ashkenazim. In fact, in Ashkenazic-dominated countries (with the exception of Israel), one cannot purchase rice that bears a “Kosher for Passover” certification.

• *David Schachter, Dresher, PA*

### Re: Lost and Found

*The following note was recently sent by M. S. to Ohrnet:*

“A friend of mine found a talit bag with a talit and 2 pairs of tefilin inside it. It was found in JFK airport on Sunday March 30. If anybody knows who it belongs to please email me [email address is with Ohrnet – Ed.]. If not, please forward this to everyone you know because it will probably get to the person who lost it. I’m sure you all know that it is a huge mitzvah to help return the tefilin.

Thank you.

what lacking, regrettably large numbers of my generation hitailed it off to the Himalayas where they are now watching their navels and waiting for something to happen.

I have news for them. Nothing happens when you watch your navel — except for getting a stiff-neck. (But then we always were a stiff-necked people.)

About those blue-haired ladies, however, they made a mistake. They failed to notice that lying dormant under those blue rinses was a kind of spirituality about which we could not even guess.

“Eat! He never eats!” How many Jewish jokes are there about eating! The caricature Jewish mother complains continually that her offspring are dying of hunger in spite of the fact that their daily calorie intake would support a thoroughbred racehorse.

Behind every joke lies a truth. It may be a distorted truth, but it is a truth nonetheless. Judaism is unique in that it views the body neither as an enemy nor as a bacchanalian banquet, but as a resource. The body is not only capable of spiritual elevation, but it is created for this purpose. The body’s deepest satisfaction comes from being correctly used in the service of the soul. To the secular mindset, however, holiness is synonymous with abstinence. The body is incapable of spiritual elevation and must be mortified or transcended.

This week’s parsha begins with G-d saying to Moshe: “*Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Yisrael and say to them ‘You shall be holy, for Holy am I, Hashem, Your G-d.’*” Since G-d instructed Moshe to speak to the entire assembly, we know that this commandment was to be spoken in public to all the Jewish People together. Why? What is it about the command to be holy that it needed to be communicated in this fashion?

The holiness that the Torah seeks from us is not a holiness of separation and denial, of monasticism and seclusion. Rather, it is a holiness which is to be lived in an assembly; a holiness where the body is elevated by the soul and where its greatest potential is only realized in our interaction with our fellow beings.

• Based on Chatam Sofer

## Emor

# BORED WITH BREATHING

“*And you will bring a new ‘mincha’ offering (meal offering) to G-d.*”  
(23:16)

**A**re you ‘burned out’? You seem to hear that phrase a lot these days. I’m ‘burned out’ from this; I’m ‘burned out’ from that; I’m bored with this; It’s just lost its excitement for me.

Why do people ‘burn out’?

Take two people working hard. One self-employed, the other working for a salary. There’s a big difference between them. Someone who works for a salary has no particular interest in the company, except that it provides him with a living. And his apathy only increases if the company doesn’t do well and there is no bonus to look forward to.

Someone who is self-employed, on the other hand, puts his very soul into his work. He *is* the company. He enjoys the moments of triumph and he grieves over the disasters, but bored and burned out? Never.

Unlike the salaried employee whose remuneration is fixed from the beginning with only limited scope for profit participation, the self-employed person knows that the sky’s the limit. The company’s success is his success.

When we learn Torah we should think of it like it was our own business. In your own business, if things aren’t going right, who is there to put them right? Only yourself. If it takes extra time at the office, we would certainly, and gladly, put in the extra hours.

When we sit down to learn, do we mentally ‘punch in’? Are we waiting for the next coffee break? For the check at the end of the month? Or do we feel the exuberance and challenge of our learning as though it was our own business?

How does the Torah refer to the monumental event of its being given at Sinai?

“*And you will bring a new mincha offering to G-d.*”

Why is the reference so oblique? It’s true that at the festival of Shavuot there is a command to bring a new *mincha* offering to G-d. But is that the most conspicuous aspect of Shavuot? How about the giving of the Torah? Wouldn’t it have been more appropriate to spell out that on this day the Torah was given at Sinai? And yet it is with these few covert words that the Torah hints to the central event of Judaism.

Why?

The Torah doesn’t specify the date of its giving because it doesn’t want us to feel that it was given as a ‘one-off’ event. *Rather, it wants us to feel like it’s being given to us every day, and for us to receive it every day as though we were hearing it for the first time at Sinai.*

The Torah is our life’s breath. Even though a person breathes millions of times in the course of his life, *does anyone get tired of breathing?* Why not? Because we understand that our life depends on breathing, it’s not a subject for boredom. Boredom can only set in when a person sees something as optional. Breathing isn’t optional; it’s obligatory.

This is the way we should feel about the Torah, for it is our life and the length of our days.

## PARSHA OVERVIEW

and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone's property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow Jew (especially one's parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; tattooing. *Positive:* Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating in Jerusalem the fruits from a tree's 4th year; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf. Family life must be holy. We are warned again not to imitate gentile behavior, lest we lose the Land of Israel. We must observe *kashrut*, thus maintaining our unique and separate status.

### EMOR

**T**he *kohanim* are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They may attend the funeral of only their seven

closest relatives: father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The *kohen gadol* (High Priest) may not attend the funeral even of his closest relatives. Certain marital restrictions are placed on the *kohanim*. The nation is required to honor the *kohanim*. The physical irregularities that invalidate a *kohen* from serving in the Temple are listed. *Terumah*, a produce tithe given to the *kohanim*, may be eaten only by *kohanim* and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight days old and is free from any physical defects. The nation is commanded to sanctify the Name of G-d by insuring that their behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender their lives rather than murder, engage in licentious relations or worship idols. The special characteristics of the holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain types of creative work during these holidays. New grain may not be eaten until the *omer* of barley is offered in the Temple. The Parsha explains the laws of preparing the oil for the menorah and baking the *lechem hapanim* in the Temple. A man blasphemes G-d and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.

## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

...thousands of Russian boys and girls have encountered Judaism for the first time in the schools which Ohr Somayach founded in the Ukrainian city of Odessa..

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