







Parshas Acharei Mos | Nissan 24 - 30 (Rosh Chodesh 1) | May 2 - 8





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# Ephrayim Yurowitz Tzvi Blech

This week we Bentch Rosh Chodesh Iyar.
The Moled will be Wednesday morning 41 minutes and 8 Chalakim after 11.
Rosh Chodesh is Wednesday and Thursday.

# Shabbos Zmanim

2024 **Early Friday Mincha,** 18 Main at מנחה גדולה and every 15 minutes from 1:30pm-5:00pm

7:37<sub>pm</sub>

7:30<sub>pm</sub>

7:47<sub>pm</sub>

7:55<sub>pm</sub>

Chabad Mincha

HARROS SHACHRIS MINYANIM

SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:									
5:10 <sub>am</sub>	8:00 <sub>am</sub>	9:15 <sub>am</sub>	9:15 <sub>am</sub> 10:00 <sub>am</sub>						
Vasikin, followed by a Daf Yomi Shiur 20↑	paf Yomi 'Snachris 2 Shachris 3 Ter		Shachris 4 Bais Chabad 20个	Shachris 5 18 main					
2:00 <sub>pm</sub>	7:45 <sub>pm</sub>	7:56 <sub>pm</sub>	8:36 <sub>pm</sub>	8:41 <sub>pm</sub>					
Pirchei	Mincha followed by Shalosh Seudos	Shkiya	Maariv 1	Maariv 2					

Late Maariv Motzei Shabbos Every 15 Minutes! 9:30 pm – 1200am | 18 Main

# Weekday Zmanim Zmanim for the week of May 5-1:

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz

Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)

Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag and more (see posted times)									
	Neitz	Shma Magen Avraham	Shma Gra	Tefila Gra	Chatzos	Plag	Shkiya		
Sunday	5:49 <sub>am</sub>	8:33 <sub>am</sub>	9:20 <sub>am</sub>	10:31 <sub>am</sub>	12:53 <sub>pm</sub>	6:29 <sub>pm</sub>	7:58 <sub>pm</sub>		
Monday	5:48 <sub>am</sub>	8:32 <sub>am</sub>	9:20 <sub>am</sub>	10:31 <sub>am</sub>	12:53 <sub>pm</sub>	6:30 <sub>pm</sub>	7:59 <sub>pm</sub>		
Tuesday	5:47 <sub>am</sub>	8:31 <sub>am</sub>	9:19 <sub>am</sub>	10:30 <sub>am</sub>	12:53 <sub>pm</sub>	6:31 <sub>pm</sub>	8:00 <sub>pm</sub>		
Wednsday	5:46am	8:30 <sub>am</sub>	9:19 <sub>am</sub>	10:30 <sub>am</sub>	12:53 <sub>pm</sub>	6:31 <sub>pm</sub>	8:01 <sub>pm</sub>		
Thursday	5:44 <sub>am</sub>	8:30 <sub>am</sub>	9:18 <sub>am</sub>	10:29 <sub>am</sub>	12:53 <sub>pm</sub>	6:32 <sub>pm</sub>	8:02 <sub>pm</sub>		
Friday	5:43am	8:29 <sub>am</sub>	9:17 <sub>am</sub>	10:29 <sub>am</sub>	12:53 <sub>pm</sub>	6:33 <sub>pm</sub>	8:03 <sub>pm</sub>		
Shabbos	5:42 <sub>am</sub>	8:28 <sub>am</sub>	9:17 <sub>am</sub>	10:29 <sub>am</sub>	12:52 <sub>pm</sub>	6:34 <sub>pm</sub>	8:04 <sub>pm</sub>		



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# Aharon's Loss

There is a *minhag* in Am Yisrael, namely by the Sefardim, not to cut challah or any bread with a knife, but rather to rip it by hand. The reason given is that bread represents life, and a knife represents the taking of life, so the two don't go together. The minhag by acheinu, the Ashkenazim, is to use a knife on the challah, and many Chasidim even sharpen the knife on Friday so it will be good and ready for Shabbat, despite the concern of putting a knife and bread together. I have adopted the *minhag* of Ashkenazim and use a knife for bread, and I even sharpen it on Friday. The reason why I do so is that I have discovered that there is something worse than death, and that is the waste of life. When I broke the challah by hand, I realized that much was going to waste, because it was less appetizing when ripped in an odd shape. It is more important to avoid the waste of something that supports life.

The Zohar on Daf 57a in Parashat Acharei Mos presents a question on the pasuk "Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they approached before Hashem, and they died." The pasuk already said the death of Aaron's two sons, why was it repeated at the end of the pasuk? The Zohar explained that they had two deaths; firstly, Hashem took them away, and secondly, they did not have children.

How sad it must have been for Aaron to live through this. How painful it is for a person who has never married and has no children. But there is something even more painful, and that is creating life and letting it go to waste; having children, and yet not helping them reach their potential. A wasted life is worse than no life.

As we say goodbye to the month of Nissan and the yom tov of Pesach, the lesson we should take away from Pesach is very clear. The beauty of the *chag* is our focus on the children. The holiday commemorates the birth of the Jewish people, and is a time when the emphasis is on the children. We need to engage them in the conversation via storytelling. We must understand that there were always four types of children, and each is different but very special. Even the question of the *Rasha* must be answered. Remember, it is "vehegadeta lebincha;" we mustn't fall into the trap of "vehegadta leavicha," that the child does all the talking and explaining.

Now that the holiday is behind us, we should carry this experience forward. It is our responsibility to educate, and we need to prepare and show an example. The challenge of having a school system like the one we have today is that we forget that it's not the obligation of the Rebbe, the Morah, or the principal to teach our children; it is ours.

May we be zoche to see much nachas from our children, and may they always follow the ways of Hashem.



# **Making the Days Count**

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

Rav Avigdor Miller z"l has a very unique explanation of the sin of shechutei chutz. The simple understanding is that a person was inspired and decided to sacrifice a korban to Hashem, but instead of bringing it to the Bais Hamikdash, he made an altar in his back yard and burnt the korban there. The punishment for this sin is very severe: kares. This needs explanation. Furthermore, the Torah equates shechutei chutz to shefichas damim – spilling blood. The question is, whose blood are we talking about? Is it the blood of the animal, and we're calling this sin a form of murder? That sounds very strange. Rav Miller says that the blood referred to here is that of the person who sacrificed the animal. The Torah considered this sin a form of spilling blood because it's referring to the person who could have brought the korban to the Bais Hamikdash and failed to do so. Tosfos in Baba Basra 21 says that bringing a korban to the Bais Hamikdash was a spiritually transformational experience. Therefore, one who does not do so is considered taking his own life, because of what they could have become through the Bais Hamikdash experience.

This novel idea has great implications, specifically now during the days of counting the days from Pesach to Shavuos.

When we count to Shavuos we need to make sure that each day isn't just counted; rather, we need to make it count. The goal of counting the 49 days, as the *Aruch Hashulchan* beautifully puts it, is to transform ourselves from animals to humans (the *korban omer* was brought from barley, which is what an animal eats, in contrast to the *korban* brought on Shavuos, which comes from wheat, which is human food).

The goal of these days is to transform ourselves into people who are ready to receive the Torah, which isn't just about the information in the Torah; rather, it's about the connection to Hashem and the experience of *Matan Torah*, when Hashem said we are his nation in the world

May we take advantage of each day during the *sefira* period, and be *zoche* to see the full *geulah*, *bimheira b'yameinu*.



# The Greatest Sanctity

What was the greatest project ever undertaken? No question, it was the creation of the cosmos. After all, that is the mother of any other project, big or small, undertaken by man or by nature. Our observable universe is a sphere around 92 billion light-years wide. We know of roughly octillion – 1 followed by 24 zeros – planets in the universe. The human body alone contains some 100 trillion cells. Within each cell is a nucleus. Within each nucleus is a double copy of the human genome. Each genome contains 3.1 billion letters of genetic code, enough if transcribed to fill a library of five thousand books. The greatest miracle of all time, without any close second, is the universe. It is the miracle of all miracles.

And yet, the Torah teaches there is something even greater than the universe.

### What?

In the beginning of Genesis, the Torah devotes 31 verses to describe how G-d created the entire world. "In the beginning, G-d created the heavens and the earth." In striking contrast, the Torah devotes 371 verses to describe how the Jews created the Tabernacle, or Mishkan, in the desert!

This seems profoundly strange. The universe spans some 176 Trillion Billion miles and is an infinitely complex structure. After millennia of research, we have not yet scratched the surface of its untold depth and unbound mysteries. We have not even mastered the secrets embedded in a single cell. The Tabernacle, on the other hand, was around 150 feet long and 75 feet wide, and was an impressive structure, but essentially a small tent; a mini mobile "shteibel."

Why would the Torah be so expansive about the creation of a humble albeit splendorous tent in the desert and vet so terse about the creation of the cosmos with its infinite depth, majesty, and grandeur? Does that make sense?

The answer is that the universe is the home G-d makes for man, while the Sanctuary is the home man makes for G-d. It may be smaller and simpler, but still more significant and prominent.

And yet, there is something even greater than the Sanctuary. Even the construction of the Sanctuary had to be suspended for something. For what?

The Shabbat! Even to construct the Sanctuary, we may not desecrate the Shabbat. The sanctity and preciousness of Shabbat trumps the Sanctuary, which trumps the universe. This tells us something about the infinite greatness of Shabbat. For even the Sanctuary, which serves G-d home on earth, is not as holy as Shabbat – the day of "rest," which transcends the entire creation, the entire universe, even G-d's "home" in our world. Shabbos is a day of intimacy with the Divine beyond the Rabbi YY Jacobson world, with G-d Himself.



But wait, there is something even holier than Shabbat! And for that, even Shabbos itself needs to be shattered and destroyed.

What is that? The Jew! The Shabbat must be violated to save a life. Even if there exists only a one percent chance that a life might be saved by violating the Shabbat, and to just prolong a life by a few minutes, all the laws of Shabbat must be broken. For the sanctity of life trumps even the sanctity of Shabbat, which trumps even the sanctity of the Temple, which trumps the very act of creation—the origin of all existence.

### The Shema

This, says the Chasam Sofer, is the meaning of the words "Shema Yisroel Hashem..." Shema consists of three letters, which are the acronym of "Shabbos, Mikdash, Olam."

שמע – שבת, מקדש, עולם.

The Shabbat, the Temple, and the world. These are in descending order the three most precious items of existence.

And yet above all three of them is (Shema) Yisroel—the Jew himself! For the Jew is literally one with G-d in His very essence, Yisroel is part of "Hashem Elokanu Hashem Echad."

> Womens Shiur <u>Tuesday</u> 9:30am (18 Main) Chassidus Shiur Monday & Thursday 7:45am (18 Main) Shabbos: Friday Night - before Barchu (20 Upstairs) Morning 8:40 (20 Upstairs) | After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs) Please Note: Rabbi Jacobson's Shabbos morning shiur will now begin at 8:40 am, followed by the Minvan at 10:00 am.

# **UFARATZTA**



# **Chassidim Ein Mishpacha**

The saying "Chassidim are ONE family," was coined by the Maharash, saying that the Alter Rebbe [the founder of the Chabad movement,] dedicated his life and invested his strength toward the goal that Chassidim should be like one family [care for and look after each other as a family].

==== The Rebbe Maharash P355.

Beis Iyar, Tiferes Sheb'tiferes, the Yom Holedes of the Maharash, Admor Shmuel, 4th Chabad Rebbe.





by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner, Night Kollel & Morning Kollel

The mitzvah of sefirat haomer is to count each of the 49 days from the day on which they brought the korban haomer in the Beis Hamikdash – the 2nd day of Pesach – until Shavuos. Today, when there is no Beis Hamikdash and we do not bring the korban haomer, there is a machlokes Rishonim if the mitzvah of sefirat haomer is min HaTorah or midrabanan. Many Rishonim – including Tosfos, the Rosh, the Ran, and the Baal Hamaor – rule that today, counting sefira is midirabanan. The Rambam, however, writes that even today, the mitzvah is min HaTorah.

# Differences If Counting Sefira Is Min HaTorah Or Midrabanan

There are many practical differences between these opinions, and we will mention some of them.

# 1) Counting during bein hashmashot (twilight)

Tosfos writes that since counting sefira today is midirabanan, a person can count during bein hashmashos. Although it is a *safeik* if nightfall has arrived, when it comes to a mitzvah midirabanan, we can be lenient, and even recite the brocha. According to the Rambam, since it is min haTorah, one would need to wait until the stars come out, when it is definitely nightfall, to count sefira.

The Shulchan Aruch writes that those who are extra careful wait until nightfall. The Mishnah Berurah explains that we pasken that the mitzvah of counting sefirah is midirabanan, so we can count sefira earlier, but it is better to wait until nightfall. The Biur Halacha adds that we must realize that besides the Rambam, there are many other Rishonim who hold that it is min haTorah, and that is why the minhag is to wait until nightfall.

# Reciting: "Likayeim mitzvas asei, kimo shekasuv baTorah"

We recite a brocha "asher kidishunu bimitzvosav," even on a mitzvah midirabanan. The Gemara in Shabbos (23a) explains that this is because *mitzvos midrabanan* that we do are also considered a commandment from Hashem, since He told us to listen to the chachamim.

The question is, if it is not a mitzvah min haTorah today, can a person recite the words before counting sefira: "Likayeim mitzvas asei, kimo shekasuv baTorah"? The



Klausenberger Rebbe (Divrei Yatziv O"C 214) adds that this can be a serious issue. The Rambam writes that if someone performs a *mitzvah midirabanan*, and has in mind that he is performing a mitzvah min haTorah, he may have transgressed the issur of bal tosif. So, can we say these words, if it is not a mitzvah min haTorah today? He suggests that it is possibly allowed because it just means the mitzvah was written in the Torah, even if today it is only *midirabanan*. Ray Shlomo Zalman also allowed saying the words "Likayeim mitzvas asei," as they can refer to a rabbinical mitzvah as well.

The Klausenberger Rebbe, however, writes that his custom was to leave out these words, and just say "Likayeim mitzvas sefiras haomer." The Or Litzion also writes that because of the aforementioned concerns, it is better not to say "Likayeim mitzvas asei, kimo shekasuv baTorah," but if someone wants to say it, he can rely on the Rambam that even today it is min haTorah.

# 2) Having kavanah for the mitzvah

Does one need to have kavanah for the fulfillment of the mitzvah? In general, when performing a mitzvah, a person must have in mind that he is doing the mitzvah of Hashem. When it comes to mitzvos min haTorah, without having this kavanah, the Shulchan Aruch rules that one did not fulfill the mitzvah. However, if it is only midirabanan, even if one did not have kayanah for the mitzyah, he is still *votzei*. Therefore, if *sefira* is a *mitzvah min haTorah*, this kavana may be required. However, if the mitzvah of sefira is only midrabanan, even if someone did not have kavanah for the mitzvah, he is still yotzei.

# In Summary

There is a machlokes if counting sefira today is min haTorah or midrabanan. Some nafka minos are:

- 1. Can someone count during bein hashmashos (twilight)?
- 2. Can we say: "Lekayem mitzvas asei, kimo shekasuv baTorah"?
- 3. Is *kavanah* required in order to fulfill the *mitzvah*?

### Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

• Chavrusa learning - Gemara מסכת פסחים, פרק ערבי פסחים :Currently

- Friday Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics
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# Parshas Acharei Mos - The Pure Air of Shabbos Kodesh

Parshas Achari Mos 18:3-

כמעשה ארץ מצרים אשר ישבתם בה לא תעשו, וכמעשה ארץ כנען אשר " - אני מביא אתכם שמה לא תעשו ובחקתיהם לא תלכו"

"Do not perform the practice of the land of Mitzrayim in which you dwelled; and do not perform the practice of the land of Kna'an to which I bring you, and do not follow their traditions." – These two lands: the one where Klal Yisroel had dwelt for 210 years, and the land to which they were headed, were the most morally depraved lands in the world. By stressing these two lands – where Klal Yisroel were in the past, and where they were headed – the Torah teaches us that they were worse than all the rest.

The *Toras Kohanim* says that because Klal Yisroel dwelled there, it caused them to be even more sullied. The *Sitra Achara* can only attain its sustenance through *Kedushah*. Due to the sins of Klal Yisroel, they can latch on to the *kedushah* from Klal Yisroel, and thus give themselves sustenance. The more that Klal Yisroel sins, the more the forces of evil receive. Thus, they are constantly seeking to cause Klal Yisroel to stumble and sin. Hakodosh Baruch Hu Himself, is *Mashgiach* over Klal Yisroel. It says in *Bereishis Rabbah* 20 that the *Yetzer Hara* puts evil thoughts into the minds of *Kayin* and his friends (groups of evil people), and *Iehavdil*, Hakodosh Baruch Hu places thoughts of *kedushah* into the minds of Klal Yisroel. Anything that the *Yetzer Hara* can do, to sneak in, to get Klal Yisroel to sin, it certainly does. It says in *Tehillim* 106:35

"יותערבו בגוים וילמדו מעשיהם" - "Mingled with the nations, and learned their ways." This does not only mean that they mingle together and actually see their evil deeds, but even just living among them without seeing their practices has a profound effect on them. (שם משמואל)

The other nations of the world sully, with their evil thoughts and actions, the very air in which they reside, as the *Rama Mipano* says, that this evil becomes part of the air. *Chazal* tell us that מוכים, that the air of Eretz Yisroel causes one to become smarter — it is because of the quality of the air. The *yetzer hara* doesn't have direct access to Klal Yisroel, but rather it comes at them from the side. It gets the other nations of the world to perform many abominable acts against Hakodosh Baruch Hu, and that sullies the air. The *Yiddin* who are in proximity to that air are adversely affected by it. Thus, the *posuk* is telling us that Klal Yisroel just living there, their being in *tumas Mitzrayim*, was a great danger for them, and extremely harmful to their *ruchniyus*.

Thus it says in *Vayikra* 23:3 "שבת הוא לד' בכל מושבותיכם" – "It is a Shabbos for Hashem in all your dwelling places" – Shabbos is a time that the evil spiritual powers are banished, and thus it is Shabbos, "in all your dwelling places" – at all times, even when we are in galus. The air is pure, for all the evil powers are gone, and thus it is appropriate for one to strengthen himself in Torah and *tefillah* on the holy day of Shabbos, for it is a day on which the air is always *tahor*.

# Lessons for These Trying Times

It certainly hasn't been too long since we all sat at the *seder* table, but let's review some important lessons learned from the *yomtov* of *emunah*. Rov Dovid of Tolna asks "Why is it that as compensation for not barking, the dogs of Egypt did not bark during the plague of the firstborn, the dogs of Egypt were rewarded for eternity? Forever, when we have a *treifah*, an animal we cannot eat, we fulfill a special *mitzvah* by giving it to a dog!

"Yet, those frogs in the plague of *tzfardiim*, who leapt to their death in burning hot ovens, were rewarded in that generation only (those frogs lived forever). From here we can see," R' Dovid says, "that remaining silent can be much harder to do than even jumping into a burning hot oven."

We were given the divine aspect of speech in order to bring positivity into this world. But too many times, we find ourselves regretting a negative statement we may have uttered. We get emotional and shout, hurting ourselves, hurting others, but then regretting our actions. It's true, other people's behaviors may trigger us – those closest to us, most of all – but we must not give in.

"Siyag lechochma, shtika"... a wise person holds back a sharp retort, becoming wiser still. Rebbe Nachman advises us: if our spouse or anyone else speaks in a way that upsets us, we should never respond in kind.

Simply stay quiet, he says, and pray to Hashem that the relationship will change for the better, and it will, he guarantees. The power of *tefilla* is great. But the *yetzer harah* that keeps us from using this G-dly tool can be much stronger, if we let it.

A story will illustrate this point.

## RABBI BEN ZION SNEH

Yossi told his parents, "I cannot stay here, I must go to where I can find myself, to Berlin (of all places)."

His father was understanding. "Here's a ticket, Yossi and some money to start your journey, please promise me that you will take the time to put on *tefillin* and pray, even if only just a little bit."

Yossi assured his father that he would. Life abroad was difficult. After a few months, Yossi had run out of money; his expenses were high, and income was slow in coming. Whats-apping his father yielded only one reply:

"Davening will give you all you need Yossi – pray to the Aibeshter."

And so it was time after time – Yossi asked for money, and his father told him to *daven*. Finally, he pleaded to his father "Tatty, I have no food to eat!"

"Just daven, I am sure you will be answered. Have you really davened, Yossi?"

Not wishing to lie, Yossi sheepishly hung up the phone and opened his *tefillin* bag for the first time since he began his journey. Opening the bag, he saw a bundle containing thousands of dollars that his father had prepared for him.

And so it is with all of us — we have no greater power than *tefillah*. The entire world is ours for the asking. Our Father who has taken care of us until now will never abandon us, especially during these trying times. We need to only open our hearts, entering the storehouse of unlimited blessings — with our *teflilos*.

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita

# Eating Blood Abarbanel on the Parsha

The prohibition against eating an animal's blood is explained by Abarbanel in the context of the subtle differences in the relevant verses in the Torah:

- 1) Parshat Noach 9:4: "But flesh, with its *nefesh* (soul or life essence) its blood you shall not eat."
- 2) Parshat Acharei Mot 17:11: "For the nefesh of the flesh is in the blood..."
- 3) Parshat Acharei Mot 17:11: "...for it is the blood in the *nefesh* that will atone."
- 4) Acharei Mot 17:14: "You shall not consume the blood of any creature, for the *nefesh* of any creature is its blood."
- 5) Parshat Re'eh 12:23: "For the blood, it is the *nefesh*, and you shall not eat the nefesh with the meat."

Abarbanel begins by explaining that this prohibition is based on the principle that we are enjoined to strive to maintain the spiritual purity of the *nefesh*, or life essence, of every individual. For this reason, the Torah in this Parsha states (Acharei Mot 17:12) "Any *nefesh* among you may not consume blood". Normally the Torah would have stated, "Any person among you..." Clearly the Torah is telling us that blood has a direct negative effect on our very spiritual essence.

Beginning from the juxtaposition of the relationship between blood and nefesh in the above verses, the Torah is telling us that an animal's blood, although it is obviously technically a physical entity, is synonymous on a very real level with the non-physical life essence of the animal itself, unlike the other parts of the animal's body. Abarbanel explains that when someone ingests the other parts of an animal, those parts are broken down and completely transformed by the digestive process. Blood, on the other hand, is essentially already "digested" and retains its original nature when eaten. Thus, some aspect of animal nature is incorporated into the consumer of the blood. Even though the animals that are permitted for our consumption are not violent, cunning, or predatory, their spiritual essence is far below that of man, who is the unique pinnacle of G-d's creation. From the verses above we see that the blood is in the *nefesh*, the *nefesh* is *in* the blood and finally, the blood *is* the *nefesh*.

Because of the severity of this prohibition the Torah emphasizes that it applies to converts as well, an emphasis which is generally not found in regard to other mitzvot. Even though in regard to certain situations a convert is considered on a slightly different halachic plane (such as for marriage eligibility), here we are specifically told that every Jew must be vigilant.

The significance of animal blood also explains its importance in the procedures of the sacrificial offerings. An offering expresses man's desire to give himself over completely to G-d. The animal takes the place of the individual, since human sacrifice is obviously prohibited. Since we want to dedicate our very essence to the service of G-d, the blood of the animal, which is its very essence, becomes an essential component of the service.

Based on this analysis, Abarbanel offers a final unique perspective on the rationale for the prohibition. He compares eating an animal's blood to eating the limb of a live animal, a prohibition which applies not only to Jews, but to all of Mankind as well, as one of the seven Noachide Laws. Since blood retains the life force and essence of the animal at all times, it is no different than actually eating any other portion of the live animal itself.

– Rabbi Kasnet, ohr.edu



This week's parsha starts with the Yom Kippur service, which is to atone for free will abuse. The abuse of free will is the greatest sin about sinning. That's why a sin changes status based on a person's will. If they WILLED to sin, they are called "meizid," and had to bring one kind of sacrifice, and if they did it accidentally, they are called "shogeg," and brought a lesser sacrifice, because the net effect on Creation was less.

This is also why Nadav and Avihu were killed the way they were, on the inside while their bodies remained intact. Their sin was executed in the physical world, but it was punishment on the inside one (their souls were "burned" out from within them). Their act may have been correct, but their intentions were not; their wills had been off the mark.

Hence Moshe Rabbeinu told Aharon back in *Parashas Shemini* that Nadav and Avihu had been greater than the two of them. BUT THEY DIED BY THE HAND OF GOD! HOW IS THAT GREATER? Because they had become so inspired to serve God and connect to Him on such an ultimate level that it drove them to take the risk they did. That part of what they did had inspired Moshe Rabbeinu.

But God had already prescribed how He wanted things to run in the *Mishkan*. Rules were in place, upon which thousands of years of Jewish history were going to be based. Any "free-styling" in the service of God from that point onward had to be within the guidelines of *halachah*, not above them, as the act of Nadav and Avihu had been.

Some people believe that a Torah lifestyle limits free will because it limits what you can do and how. But that's just the *yetzer hara* talking, which likes to do what it feels like doing more than what our souls want to do. Everyone knows that it takes more free will to live within a system than beyond one, especially when that system goes against the *yetzer hara*, as the Torah is meant to do.

That means taking a look at your life, especially your "service of God," and asking yourself, "What can I do better?" or "Where can I do more?" If it's a sin we're talking about, then the question would be, "How can I do it less?" Either way, it takes free will, and that is the whole reason for Creation...for every moment of conscious life. So we might as well heighten our consciousness of it, and use it the way God intended.

# A New Yom Kippur Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"I

The move from the first Yom Kippur to the second was one of the great transitions in Jewish spirituality. The first Yom Kippur was the culmination of Moses' efforts to secure forgiveness for the people after the sin of the Golden Calf (Ex. 32-34). The process, which began on 17th Tammuz, ended on the 10th of Tishrei – the day that later became Yom Kippur. That was the day when Moses descended the mountain with the second set of tablets, the visible sign that God had reaffirmed his covenant with the people. The second Yom Kippur, one year later, initiated the series of rites set out in this week's parsha (Lev. 16), conducted in the Mishkan by Aaron in his role as High Priest.

The differences between the two were immense. Moses acted as a prophet. Aaron functioned as a priest. Moses was following his heart and mind, improvising in response to God's response to his words. Aaron was following a precisely choreographed ritual, every detail of which was set out in advance. Moses' encounter was ad hoc, a unique, unrepeatable drama between heaven and earth. Aaron's was the opposite. The rules he was following never changed throughout the generations, so long as the Temple stood.

Moses' prayers on behalf of the people were full of audacity, what the Sages called *chutzpah kelapei shemaya*, "audacity toward heaven," reaching a climax in the astonishing words, "Now, please forgive their sin – but if not, then blot me out of the book You have written." (Ex. 32:32). Aaron's behavior, by contrast, was marked by obedience, humility, and confession. There were purification rituals, sin offerings and atonements, for his own sins and those of his "house," as well as those of the people.

The move from Yom Kippur 1 to Yom Kippur 2 was a classic instance of what Max Weber called the "routinization of charisma", that is, taking a unique moment and translating it into ritual, turning a "peak experience" into a regular part of life. Few moments in the Torah rival in intensity the dialogue between Moses and God after the Golden Calf. But the question thereafter was: how could we achieve forgiveness – we who no longer have a Moses,

or prophets, or direct access to God? Great moments change history. But what changes us is the unspectacular habit of doing certain acts again and again until they reconfigure the brain and change our habits of the heart.

We are shaped by the rituals we repeatedly perform.

Besides which, Moses' intercession with God did not, in and of itself, induce a penitential mood among the people. Yes, he performed a series of dramatic acts to demonstrate to the people their guilt. But we have no evidence that they internalized it. Aaron's acts were different. They involved confession, atonement and a search for spiritual purification. They involved a candid acknowledgment of the sins and failures of the people, and they began with the High Priest himself.

The effect of Yom Kippur was to create a culture in which people are not ashamed or embarrassed to say, "I got it wrong, I sinned, I made mistakes."

Judaism helps us admit our mistakes in three ways. First is the knowledge that God forgives. He does not ask us never to sin. He knew in advance that His gift of freedom would sometimes be misused. All he asks of us is that we acknowledge our mistakes, learn from them, confess and resolve not to do them again.

Second is Judaism's clear separation between the sinner and the sin. We can condemn an act without losing faith in the agent.

Third is the aura Yom Kippur spreads over the rest of the year. It helps create a culture of honesty in which we are not ashamed to acknowledge the wrongs we have done. And despite the fact that, technically, Yom Kippur is focused on sins between us and God, a simple reading of the confessions in *Ashamnu* and *Al Chet* shows us that, actually, most of the sins we confess are about our dealings with other people.

Honest self-criticism is one of the unmistakable marks of spiritual greatness.

# The Power of Pride Rabbi Yissochor Frand

The Torah section in *Achrei Mos* dealing with the laws of the Yom Kippur Service in the Bais Hamikdash concludes with the words "This shall be to you an eternal decree to bring atonement upon Children of Israel for all their sins once a year. And (Aharon) did as Hashem commanded Moshe." [Vayikra 16:34]

"And (Aharon) did all that Hashem had spoken to Moshe". Rashi, quoting the Toras Kohanim, states: This indicates the praise of Aharon. When Aharon wore the special garments of the High Priest on Yom Kippur, he did it strictly for the sake of Heaven. There was not an iota of personal pride or haughtiness.

Consider that once a year, one man out of the entire nation was privileged to wear these special garments. That could potentially go to a person's head and affect him. But the *pasuk* testifies that this was not the case with Aharon. He was not

thinking of personal pride, but did it strictly to fulfill the decree of the King.

Rav Simcha Zissel Brody asks the following question: The Talmud in *Brochos* speaks of Rabbi Channina ben Dosa, whose intent in prayer was so focused that he did not even notice when an *arod* (a serpent-like animal with a very painful bite) bit him while he was davening — so intense was his *kavana*. Rav Simcha Zissel asks: Why would it enter our mind to think that Aharon the High Priest would have less *kavana* than Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa? Why then is the Toras Kohanim afraid his mind might wander and have thoughts of personal pride that he is wearing the "White Garments" designated only for the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur? Of course, his laser-like concentration would not allow him to deviate for one moment from his *kayanah*!





# THE LOTTERY

**Rabbi Yitzchak Adlerstein** Based on Be'er Yosef, Vayikra 16:5-10

He shall take the two goats and stand them before Hashem... Aharon shall place lots upon the two goats: one lot "for Hashem," and one lot "for Azazel."

This procedure places the Yom Kippur goats at sharp odds with all other offerings, where verbal designation assigns kedushah to an animal. In the case of these goats, it is the lottery and the lottery alone that assigns one animal the role of a *chatas*. A verbal declaration without the lottery, says the gemara, is simply ineffective. How can we account for this anomaly?

We can start by considering a parallel event at the showdown between Eliyahu and the priests of Ba'al. Chazal tell us that the two bulls that were offered up on Mt. Carmel were identical-looking twins. While Eliyahu's bull willingly followed him, the one chosen by the priests of Ba'al stood its ground, and refused to budge. All the idolatrous prophets surrounded it and tried to move it, to no avail. Thereupon Eliyahu spoke to it, and asked it to go with the idolaters.

The bull resisted. "My fellow bull and I emerged from the same womb. We were raised together. Should it bear the Name of G-d and be offered up to Him, while my fate should be to be offered to a false god, to anger Hashem?" Eliyahu responded. "Go with them, and look for no excuse. I assure you that the same way that the bull that goes with me will help sanctify Hashem's Name, so will you!"

Still, the bull refused to move. It insisted that it would have to be handed over to the priests by Eliyahu himself. And so it was.

Our goats run parallel with this episode. While neither winds up in the domain of a false god, the difference between their treatments could not be more striking. One moves to a very honorable position; the other to a place of shame.

The goat designated for Hashem becomes perhaps the most dramatic korban of the year. Its blood is brought inside the Holy of Holies, sprinkled towards the place of the *Shechinah* by a kohen gadol who prepared for the occasion for an entire week. The other goat — which entirely resembled the first in appearance, stature, value — did not even merit proper *shechitah*. Sent out to a desolate wilderness, it met with an ignominious end, pushed off a rocky crag. The fall would tear its body to shreds.

The impression upon the observer was powerful. The two goats began their Yom Kippur career completely similar, and ended it as polar opposites. The difference in outcome was determined by Hashem Himself, acting through the lottery. This hints to us that one of the two animals gained prominence because Hashem saw it as fulfilling its promise, its mission. It suggests to us the person who has actualized the potential of Yom Kippur through sincere *teshuvah*, to finding his way back to his source in Hashem. Whatever he was before Yom Kippur is irrelevant. By unleashing the power of teshuvah, the person who was previously distant and reviled by Hashem has become close and loved.

The other goat represents the person who has failed to respond to the promise of Yom Kippur. He has guaranteed that he will not be selected by Hashem to rejoin Him. Instead, he is left to the fatal wilderness that he has made of his life.

Like the bulls on Mt. Carmel, both goats participate in sanctifying Hashem's Name, because it is the contrast between them that we take to heart. The "winners" and "losers" on Yom Kippur – those chosen for good things by Hashem and those not chosen – need not be the product of different behavior in the course of the year. Completely opposite fates are sealed on Yom HaDin for people whose performance records are entirely similar. What separates them – what determines who will be chosen for a year of security and prosperity and who will not – can appear to be random, but is anything but. The difference is the quality of a person's repentance.

Rav Simcha Zissel Brody answers that it is easier not to be affected by physical pain than it is to be not affected by such things as pride and haughtiness! One can overcome the physical. It is difficult but it is doable. However, for people not to be affected by matters such as honor, jealousy, pride, and all of these very human character traits is not as easy a matter.

Therefore, Chazal need to tell us that Aaron would not have been affected by a bee bite, a snake bite, or the bite of any other animal, but even when it came to honor, which *could* have affected him, he also was not affected in the slightest and did the entire service strictly for the sake of Heaven.

Rav Simcha Zissel relates this comment to another amazing *Medrash* which he cites. The *Medrash* in *Bereishis Rabbah* states that during the *Akeida* Satan came to Yitzchak and told him that all of his most prized gifts and possessions that his mother Sarah had lovingly given him throughout the years would now fall to his half-brother and nemesis, Yishmael.

"Does that not bother you?" Satan teasingly asked. "How can you go through with this, Yitzchak? You are going to lose all those presents your mother gave you!"

The *Medrash* goes on to record Yitzchak's response to this taunt. Why, the *Medrash* asks, does Yitzchak say "My father, my father" two times? It is so that at least on some minuscule level, his father would have mercy on him and not go through with the *Akeida*. In other words, the *Medrash* implies that Satan's teasing of Yitzchak DID have at least a partial impact on him!

Should Yitzchak not be above such matters? The answer is that as great as Yitzchak was, he was human, and human beings are affected by these things. They are affected by honor, by lust, by pride, by jealousy, and by all types of human emotions that are impossible to totally suppress. We can overcome physical things, but when we start talking about a person's psyche, then even the greatest of people have to deal with human frailties.

# Just Trust and You Will See

By Rabbi David Ashear

People often say to me, "I have Emunah; I know that everything that happens is for the best. But, what about what I am going through now? Is that also for the best?" The people are good people; they are sincere. They do have Emunah. But when the time comes to apply it to their own lives, it is not so easy to feel that goodness.

Deep down, they really do believe that it is for the best. They just need some reassurance sometimes. Everything that happens is orchestrated by Hashem for our benefit. We don't always see that good, but we know it's true. Many times, it is the tough situations themselves that are the springboards to bring us to the places that we need to be.

Rabbi Reuven Elbaz told a story about one of his oldest students in the Yeshiva who was a Baal Teshuva, and he grew leaps and bounds in Torah and Yirat Shamayim. He was ready to start dating and was set up with a great girl from a respected family. Everything was going great. A few days before they were going to get engaged, the girl broke it off.

The young man was devastated. He thought that he was going start a family and a בית באמן - a holy Jewish home with the perfect girl, and now everything was shattered. He went to Rabbi Elbaz who explained to him, "It is all he straight from Heaven, don't worry, Hashem will give you the real girl that He has intended for you."

But it was very hard for the young man to accept. He told the Rabbi, "I just want to cry. But I want to channel my tears toward prayer to Hashem, so I am going to go to the Kotel."

On his way to the bus stop, a car pulled over and asked him if he knew how to get to the Kotel. It was a religious man, traveling with some of his family members, so the young man said, "Yes, actually, I am going to the Kotel. If you want, I could come with you and show you how to get there."

He got into the car and they started talking Torah. They spoke Torah the entire way. The driver was very impressed by the things that this young man was saying, and he seemed to have beautiful Midot. In the backseat of the car was the driver's wife and his single sister.

When they arrived at the Kotel, the wife got out of the car and asked the young man if he was dating. She told him that she has a great girl, her sister in law, who was actually in the car with them. He agreed to go out, and that night they had their first meeting. Eventually, he married that girl. He told Rabbi Elbaz, "Baruch Hashem

that this is the one I am marrying, and not the first girl. Now I see how she is much better for me in every way: Yirat Shamayim, Midot. I fit in perfectly with her family and they are even helping us financially."

When he was crying about that broken Shiduch, Hashem was saying, "Your real Shiduch is on the way to the Kotel now. I have to get you there. This breakup is best for you, trust Me."

A Rabbi spoke at his daughter's Sheva Berachot last week and said over that a year ago his daughter came back from studying for a year in Seminary. She was looking to get a teaching job. She was very qualified. She went for her first interview to give a model lesson in a school about forty-five minutes from her house. They absolutely loved her. They told her on the spot, "You got the job."This was at the end of the school year. They told her, that every summer there is usually one teacher who has to leave, you will take the place of that teacher. They called her back at the beginning of August, and they told her that the second grade Morah is leaving, so you are hired for second grade. The girl started to prepare and was excited to start her new position.

Less than a week before the school year started, they called her back and said, "Unfortunately for you, the second grade teacher was only leaving on condition that her other job worked out, but it didn't, so she's back. We're sorry, but we don't have any positions available now."

The girl was now stuck with just a few days left until school and no job. Her initial thoughts were, "How could they do this to me? I could have found a job in ten other schools!" She then calmed herself down and realized that it was all from Hashem.

She ended up getting a secretary job in a business very close to her house. Though it wasn't what she wanted to do, she took what she could get. The other secretary who worked there was so impressed with her that she suggested her for her brother. Recently, she married that boy and became the sister-in-law of the other secretary.

Hashem knew exactly what He was doing the whole time. He prevented the girl from getting a teaching job in a school so that she could find her Shiduch. Hashem always has our best interest in mind. The more we trust Him, the happier we'll be.

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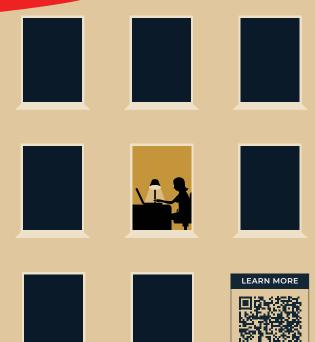


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# JOUES

### Newspaper Headlines

- Deaf College Opens Doors to Hearing
- Air Head Fired
- Steals Clock, Faces Time
- Old School Pillars are Replaced by Alumni
- Bank Drive-in Window Blocked by Board
- Hospitals are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors
- Include Your Children When Baking Cookies

### Spelling checker

Eye halve a spelling chequer
It came with my pea sea
It plainly marques four my revue
Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

Eye strike a key and type a word And weight for it to say Weather I am wrong or write It shows me strait a weigh.

As soon as a mist ache is maid It nose before two long And eye can put the error rite It's rarely ever wrong.

Eye have run this poem threw it I'm shore your pleased to no It's letter perfect all the weigh My chequer tolled me sew!

### A Tough Math Problem

September came and thankfully the kids at King David High school were back in class. A few days in, the principal, Rabbi Epstein, was walking through the lunch room and noticed a few students hard at work on their calculators. Surprised that they had received such a difficult math problem so early in the school year, Rabbi Epstein approached them and asked what their assignment was.

One of the students, a girl named Shira, looked up at Rabbi Epstein and replied, "We're figuring out how many days until spring break."

### A Tough Customer

Mrs. Rosenbaum was known for being a difficult customer at the local grocery store.

"Give me two pounds of oranges," she asked the saleswoman, "But I need you to wrap every orange up in separate pieces of paper."

"And three pounds of cherries, and wrap up every one in a separate piece of paper, too." The saleswoman obliged.

"And what is that over there?"
Mrs. Rosenbaum asked, pointing
to a bushel in the corner.
"Those are raisins," said the
saleswoman, "but they are not
for sale!"

### A Very Narrow Bridge

One day, two rabbis from shuls belonging to different Jewish communities are walking towards each other. As they get closer, Rabbi Levy, with a cheeky smile on his face, shouts to Rabbi Isaacs, "The pavement is too narrow for us to pass each other without one of us moving over. And as I never make way for fools, please move over so that I can pass."

Also smiling, Rabbi Isaacs steps aside and shouts back, "Okay, no problem. I always make way for fools."

### A Visit to Grandma

Sadie Weinstein's grandson and his wife are coming to visit her for the first time, so she is giving him directions to her apartment.

"Come to the front door at 980 West Broadway. I am apartment number 450. At the front door, you'll see a big panel of buttons. With your elbow push button 32 to call me. I will buzz you in. Come inside, the elevator is on the right. Get in, and with your elbow hit 4 for the fourth floor. When you get out, I am on the left. With your elbow, hit my doorbell."

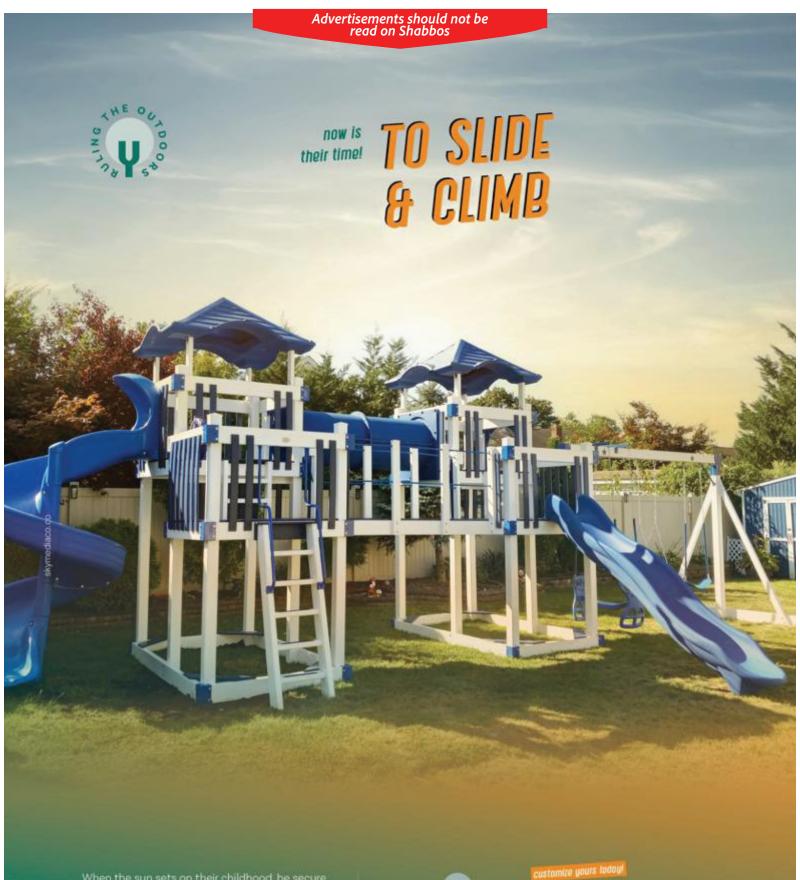
"Bubbie," says Sadie's grandson David, "Why am I hitting all these buttons with my elbow?"

"What, you're coming empty handed?"









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