

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

Covenant & Conversation

There is something unique about the way Parshat Emor speaks about Shabbat. It calls it a mo'ed and a mikra kodesh when, in the conventional sense of these words, it is neither. Mo'ed means an appointed time with a fixed date on the calendar. Mikra kodesh means either a sacred assembly, a time at which the nation gathered at the central Sanctuary, or a day made holy by proclamation, that is, through the human court's determination of the calendar. Shabbat is none of these things. It has no fixed date on the calendar. It is not a time of national assembly. And it is not a day made holy by the proclamation of the human court. Shabbat was the day made holy by God Himself at the beginning of time.

The explanation lies in the context in which the passage containing these terms appears, the chapters of the Torah whose primary theme is holiness (Lev. 18–27). The radical claim made in these chapters is that holiness, a term normally reserved for God, can be acquired by human beings when they act like God. The festivals stand to Shabbat the way the Sanctuary stands to the universe. Both are humanly created domains of holiness constructed on the model of divine creation and sanctification as they appear at the beginning of Genesis. By inviting human beings to create a sanctuary and determine the monthly and yearly calendar, God invests us with the dignity of a holiness we have not just received passively as a gift, but acquired actively as co-creators with God.

Mikra kodesh and mo'ed as they appear in Leviticus have an extra sense that they do not bear elsewhere because they evoke the opening verse of the book: "He called [Vayikra] to Moses, and the Lord spoke to him in the Tent of Meeting [Ohel Mo'ed], saying..." (Lev. 1:1). The focus is on mikra as "call" and mo'ed as "meeting." When the Torah uses these words uniquely in this chapter to apply to Shabbat as well as the festivals, it is focusing on the encounter between God and humanity in the arena of time. Whether it is God's call to us or ours to Him, whether God initiates the meeting or we do, holy time becomes a lovers' rendezvous, a still point in the turning world when lover and beloved, Creator and creation, "make time" for one another and know one another in the special form of knowledge we call love. If this is so, what does Parshat

Emor tell us about Shabbat that we do not learn elsewhere? The answer becomes clear when we look at two other passages, the two versions of the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments, as they appear in Exodus and Deuteronomy. Famously, the wording of the two versions is different. The Exodus account begins with the word Zachor, remember. The Deuteronomy account begins with Shamor, "keep, guard, protect." But they differ more profoundly in their very understanding of the nature and significance of the day. Here is the Exodus text: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work.... For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth... but He rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (Ex. 20:7–9)

According to this, Shabbat is a reminder of creation. The Deuteronomy text gives a very different account: Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant... Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there... Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. (Deut. 5:11–14)

Here there is no reference to creation. Instead the Torah speaks about a historical event: the Exodus. We keep Shabbat not because God rested on the seventh day but because He took our ancestors out of Egypt, from slavery to freedom. Therefore, Shabbat is a day of freedom even for servants, and even for domestic animals. One day in seven, no one is a slave.

Of course, both are true, and we integrate both accounts into the text of the Kiddush we make on Friday night. We call Shabbat a remembrance of creation (zikaron lemaaseh bereishit) as well as a reminder of the Exodus (zekher liyetziat Mitzrayim). However, once we set the Leviticus account in the context of these other two, a richer pattern emerges.

If we play close attention, we can hear three primary voices in the Torah: those of Kingship, Priesthood, and Prophecy. These are the three fundamental leadership roles and they have distinctive modes of knowledge.

Priests, Prophets, and the governing elite (the wise, the Elders, Kings and their courts) each have

**TORAS AISH IS A WEEKLY PARSHA
NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTED VIA EMAIL
AND THE WEB AT WWW.AISHDAS.ORG/TA.
FOR MORE INFO EMAIL YITZW1@GMAIL.COM**

The material presented in this publication was collected from email subscriptions, computer archives and various websites. It is being presented with the permission of the respective authors. Toras Aish is an independent publication, and does not necessarily reflect the views of any synagogue or organization.

**TO DEDICATE THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE CALL
(973) 277-9062 OR EMAIL YITZW1@GMAIL.COM**

their own ways of thinking and speaking. Kings and courts use the language of chochmah, "wisdom." Priests teach Torah, the word of God for all time. Prophets have visions. They have "the word" of God not for all time but for this time. Prophecy is about history as the interaction between God and humanity.

Is it merely accidental that there happen to be three voices, when there could have been four, or two, or one? The answer is no. There are three voices because, axiomatic to Jewish faith is the belief that God is encountered in three ways: in creation, revelation, and redemption.¹

Wisdom is the ability to see God in creation, in the intricate complexity of the natural universe and the human mind. In contemporary terms, chochmah is a combination of the sciences and humanities: all that allows us to see the universe as the work of God and human beings as the image of God. It is summed up in a verse from Psalms (104:24), "How many are Your works, O Lord; You have made them all in wisdom."

Revelation, Torah, the speciality of the Priest, is the ability to hear God in the form of the commanding voice, most characteristically in the form of law: "And God said," "And God spoke," "And God commanded." Revelation is a matter not of seeing but of listening, in the deep sense of hearing and heeding, attending and responding. Wisdom tells us how things are. Revelation tells us how we should live. Prophetic consciousness is always focused on redemption, the long and winding road towards a society based on justice and compassion, love and forgiveness, peace and human dignity. The prophet knows where we came from and where we are going to, what stage we have reached in the journey and what dangers lie ahead. The prophetic word is always related to history, to the present in relation to the past and the future: not history as a mere succession of events, but as an approach to or digression from the good society, the Promised Land,

¹ Rabbi Shimon ben Tzemach Duran (1366–1441) argued that all of Maimonides' Thirteen Principles of Faith could be reduced to these three. See Menachem Kellner, *Dogma in Medieval Jewish Thought* (Oxford: Littman Library Of Jewish Civilization; New Ed edition, July 22, 2004). In the modern era, this idea is primarily associated with Franz Rosenzweig.

and the Messianic Age.

Creation, revelation, and redemption represent the three basic relationships within which Judaism and human life are set. Creation is God's relationship to the world. Revelation is God's relationship with us. When we apply revelation to creation, the result is redemption: the world in which God's will and ours coincide.

We now understand why the Torah contains three distinct accounts of Shabbat. The account in the first version of the Ten Commandments, "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth," is the Shabbat of creation. The account in the second version, "Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord, your God, brought you out," is the Shabbat of redemption. The Parshat Emor account, spoken in the Priestly voice, is the Shabbat of revelation. In revelation, God calls to humankind. That is why the middle book of the Torah (that more than any other represents Torat Kohanim, "the law of the Priests,") begins with the word Vayikra, "and He called." It is also why Shabbat is, uniquely here, included in the days "which you shall proclaim (tikre'u) as sacred convocations (mikra'ei kodesh)," with the double emphasis on the verb k-r-a, "to call, proclaim, convoke." Shabbat is the day in which, in the stasis of rest and the silence of the soul, we hear the Call of God.

Hence too, the word mo'ed, which in general means "appointed times," but here means "meeting." Judah Halevi, the eleventh-century poet and philosopher, said that on Shabbat, it is as if God had personally invited us to be dinner guests at His table.² The Shabbat of revelation does not look back to the birth of the universe or forwards to the future redemption. It celebrates the present moment as our private time with God. It represents "the power of now."

Not only is this threefold structure set out in the Torah, it is embodied in the prayers of Shabbat itself. Shabbat is the only day of the year in which the evening, morning, and afternoon prayers are different from one another. In the Friday night Amidah, we refer to the Shabbat of creation: "You sanctified the seventh day for Your name's sake as the culmination of the creation of heaven and earth." On Shabbat morning we speak about the supreme moment of revelation: "Moses rejoiced at the gift of his portion....He brought down in his hands two tablets of stone on which was engraved the observance of the Sabbath." On Shabbat afternoon we look forwards to the ultimate redemption, when all humanity will acknowledge that "You are One, Your name is One, and who is like Your people Israel, a nation one on earth."³

² Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari*, II:50.

³ The phrase *goy echad baaretz*, which appears three times in Tanach, has two meanings: "a nation unique on earth" (II Sam. 7:23, I Chr. 17:21), and "a nation reunited" after its internal divisions (Ezek. 37:22). It bears both meanings here.

Creation, revelation, and redemption form the basic triad of the Jewish faith. They are also the most fundamental structuring principle of Jewish prayer. Nowhere is this clearer than in the way the Torah understands Shabbat: one day with three dimensions, experienced successively in the experiences of evening, morning, and afternoon. What is fragmented in secular culture into science, religion, and political ideology is here united in the transforming experience of God who created the universe, whose presence fills our homes with light, and who will one day lead us to a world of freedom, justice, and peace. *Covenant and Conversation 5779 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl z"l* ©2019 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks and rabbisacks.org

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

"**A**nd the Lord said to Moses, Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them..." (Leviticus 21:1) What is the major task of a religious leader, a community rabbi or the dean of a day school? This is a question that plagues every search committee as well as every practicing "professional" religionist, because, while satisfying everyone's desires and expectations is a virtual impossibility, establishing priorities and setting clear goals is an absolute necessity. We will attempt to provide some general direction derived from the priestly functions described in this Torah and haftara reading, bearing in mind Rabbi Yisrael Salanter's adage that if everyone is satisfied, you are not a proper rabbi, and if no one is satisfied, you are not a proper mensch (sensitive human being).

The Kohen was the priest-educator during the biblical and Temple periods. The very first – and unique – commandment concerning him is that he not defile himself by contact with the dead; this is an especially telling limitation when we remember that the primary responsibility of priests of all religions is to aid their adherents to "get to the other world" – that the Bible of ancient Egypt was called the Book of the Dead. In effect, the Torah is teaching us that our religious leadership must deal with the living and not the dead: must spend its time teaching Torah and accessing Jewish experiences, rather than giving eulogies and visiting cemeteries; must be dedicated primarily to this world rather than the world-to-come. Although he must unquestionably be available to eulogize the dead and comfort the mourners – since death remains an inevitable part of life!

Second, the high priest (kohen gadol) wore a head-plate upon which was written "holy unto God" and a breast-plate upon which were engraved the twelve tribes of Israel. I believe that the symbolism is quite clear: The religious leader must dedicate his mind to the divine and his heart to his people; his thoughts,

plans and machinations must always be purely in line with the God-endowed principles of ethical conduct, and his feelings must be informed with love, concern and commitment to the welfare of each and every Jew. His primary task must be not so much to elevate himself to God as it is to bring God to his people; and the unique characteristics of each of the twelve tribes remind him that there are at least twelve different gates through which the divine can be sought after and encountered. The true leader helps many different individuals discover his/her pathway within Torah, his/her roadway to approach God's tent.

Third, the prophet Ezekiel (44:24) adds a phrase which we read in the haftara but which is based on many biblical verses: "And my directions (torot) and my statutes, all of my festivals, shall they guard (yishmor)." The Bible as well as our liturgy is replete with the necessity to "guard" the Torah and its commandments; from a linguistic perspective, it is fairly easy to understand the necessity to study Torah and perform the commandments, but whence comes the notion of guarding Torah and commandments? What does this verb shamor (to guard – usually mistranslated as to observe) actually mean in context?

There is a well-known midrash, cited in the Jerusalem Talmud, that Rav Ashi visited a Jewish town for the first time and asked to see the "guardians of the city" (neturei karta). When the townsmen brought out the policemen and firemen, the rabbinical sage rejected them; the true guardians, he insisted were the teachers of the children in the city.

The analogy goes much deeper. In the realm of torts, or civil monetary law, the Bible (Exodus 22:6–14) and the Talmud (Tractate Bava Metzia) delineate four prototypical guardians (shomrim), and the extent of their respective responsibility for the objects in their custody for safekeeping. First and foremost, they must understand that while the object may have been placed in their possession to guard for a certain period – if the owner was going on vacation, for example – the guardian dare not use it up in any way; much the opposite, the guardian or shomer must restore it, whole and intact, to its true and initial owner. Consequently, if the rabbi and educator is entrusted with "guarding Torah," the guardian or shomer Torah must understand that although the teaching is in his/her possession, its ultimate owner is God; in effect, the Almighty has deposited it as a sacred trust with the religious leaders of the community. Thus, this Torah dare not be altered or compromised; it is to be transmitted but not transmuted, taught but not tampered with. To be sure, the Torah may be interpreted and applied within the accepted rules of explication, but only by those qualified to do so and only in accordance with its own rules and regulations.

The guardians who do receive payment (shomrei sakhar) have a heightened responsibility in

Jewish civil law: not only are they culpable of willful neglect, but they are also culpable if the object in their custody is lost or stolen. Continuing our analogy to Torah, a “professional” Jewish leader cannot escape the tragic truth that our Torah is being lost to countless Jews who have never ever been exposed to the rich treasures of their tradition. Jewish ignorance which leads to assimilation is an advanced stage of Jewish Alzheimer’s, a dreadful case of “losing it” – “it” being the essence of our history, the very bedrock of tradition upon which our future must be built. The guardians of Torah must tirelessly pursue the initiation and implementation of ideas such as “Birthright” and the creation of Jewish institutions such as outreach synagogues, day schools, summer camps, and seminars which can restore the lost treasure to its rightful owners, the Jewish people. And even if false ideologies and perversions attempt to “steal” the true Torah – such as Jews for Jesus or other Christian missionary movements attempting to capture Jews under false pretenses – it is incumbent upon the guardians of Torah to prove the falseness of such claims and to restore the pure traditions to their rightful owners.

However, it is the third level of guardianship, the borrower (sho’el), who is the most analogous to our Jewish leadership. In the realm of Jewish civil law, one who borrows an object for his/her own use while it is in his/her possession assumes responsibility not only for willful neglect, loss or thievery, but even for unforeseen tragedies which may threaten the existence of the object, such as fire or flood (onsin). Our tradition is replete with Torah teachers who continued to transmit this message, to impart their sacred trust under the most tragic of circumstances: Rabbi Akiva, who taught Torah while in prison and even while being tortured to death with iron combs under the Hadrianic persecutions; Maimonides, who continued to study, teach and write while fleeing the Almohad Muslim persecutors; Rabbi Oshry who answered religious questions and gave religious direction in the midst of the horrors of the concentration camps.

During the three summers I spent with my family in Miami Beach, Florida in the early 1970s, I got to know, appreciate and love Rabbi Sender Gross, of blessed memory, the founder and dean of the Hebrew Academy of Miami Beach, the individual who is credited as being the pioneer who first brought Torah to Florida. I learned from him, up close, what it really means to be a Torah-guardian and to discharge one’s responsibility with total dedication, completely devoid of self-interest or self-aggrandizement. Two incidents I witnessed personally: When the yeshiva high school he had started was in danger of closing because of lack of funds, and when all of its fundraising efforts proved unsuccessful, he took out a personal mortgage on his home in order to keep the yeshiva going; and at the

end of his life, when the school bus drivers went on strike, he personally picked up the students and drove them to the Hebrew Academy so that their Torah study would not be interrupted. Such is the dedication of a true Torah guardian, who understands that his responsibility is not only to teach Torah to those interested in hearing it, but it is rather to preserve Torah, to transmit and instill it within the hearts and minds of the next generation, no matter how insurmountable the obstacles for doing so may appear to be. And our sages guarantee that in accordance with the commitment will come the ultimate reward. ©2019 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

The opening subject matter in this week’s Torah reading deals with the existence of impurities in Jewish and human society. In our world today, especially in the realm of the intelligentsia, there is a great deal of chatter and worry about the pollution of our atmosphere. When the threat of global warming proved to be unfounded, the environmentalists amongst us changed the focus of their dire warnings, about the extinction of our planet, to now be under the new slogan of climate change. There is very little if any scientific evidence to support their claims that the world as we know it will disappear in the very near future because of fossil fuels, carbon emissions and the natural behavior of cows. Nevertheless, it is clear that all of us have to be against pollution of the atmosphere.

The pollution referred to in our Torah reading is of a different nature completely. It concerns itself with the impurity that comes from death and not from life, from sin and the non-performance of good deeds and noble aspirations. It prohibits the priestly descendants of Aaron from willfully rendering themselves to be impure. This is a matter of ritual law, but it is also a matter of a value system and a personal and societal outlook.

All of us, not only the priestly class of Israel, are to avoid whenever possible both physical and spiritual impurity. This type of impurity pollutes the atmosphere that we live in subtly. Its influence upon us is inescapable and tragically, many times, permanent. God demanded of us that we be a holy nation, but spiritual, mental and physical pollution will always prevent us from reaching that desired goal. While it is difficult to maintain cleanliness of body and clothing in a physically polluted world, it is even more difficult to maintain cleanliness and purity of thought, dress and outlook in a very polluted emotional, mental and spiritual world.

By removing all previous inhibitions, mores and social manners of Western society, built up over generations, regarding speech, dress, public and private behavior, a terrible cloud has enveloped society.

Since the Jewish people exist in the main within the confines of Western society, with its attitudes and behavior patterns, there is no question that we also have been dirtied simply by existing.

The advanced technological achievements of our time have unfortunately been put to the service of those individuals and ideas that intend to make us impure for their own personal, political or economic gain. They have done so with fancy sounding slogans that espouse all types of freedom, but really impose upon those who disagree with them the tyranny of enforced conformity.

In many parts of the world today, especially in the Far East, people wear masks over their noses and mouths to prevent the air pollution that surrounds them from being inhaled. There is no question that we all need such spiritual masks as well to allow us to counter the destructive pollution and impurity of much of the norms of the society that we live in. ©2019 Rabbi Berele Wein - Jewish historian, author and international lecturer offers a complete selection of CDs, audio tapes, video tapes, DVDs, and books on Jewish history at www.rabbiwein.com. For more information on these and other products visit www.rabbiwein.com

RABBI AVI WEISS

Shabbat Forshpeis

This week's Torah portion presents many rules pertaining to the Kohen (Jewish priest). Among these laws is the prohibition against any contact with the dead. Except for his closest family members, the Kohen cannot touch a dead corpse, be present at burial or even be in the same room as a dead body. What is the rationale of this prohibition and what is its relationship to the Kehuna (priesthood)?

Perhaps the reasoning of this law lies with an understanding of the difference between the ultimate goal of life itself. Some faith communities see the ultimate goal of existence the arrival in the life hereafter. Christianity, for example, insists that redemption is dependent upon the belief that Jesus died for one's sins. In Islam, martyrdom is revered, as only through death can one reach the ultimate world.

The Torah, on the other hand, is fundamentally a system that accentuates commitment to God, in this world—the world of the living. While Judaism does believe that the hereafter is of important status, it takes a back seat to this world. As the Psalmist states, "I shall not die but live and proclaim the works of the Lord," (Psalms 118:17) and "The dead cannot praise the Lord...but we (the living) will bless the Lord now and forever." (Psalms 115:17-18)

To teach this point the Kohen, the teacher par excellence is mandated not to have any contact with the dead. This is a way of imparting the concept that the ultimate sanctification of God is not through death but through life.

My dear friend and teacher, Rabbi Saul

Berman has suggested another approach. It was the priest of old who was often called on to intercede on behalf of the deceased. In ancient times, families hoped that through such intercession, the dead person would receive a better place in the life hereafter. In such situations, the priest may have been tempted to, and sometimes did, take payoffs for intervening.

It is then understandable that the Torah insists that the Kohen have no contact whatsoever with the deceased. This would make it impossible for him to take advantage of people, particularly when they are going through a deep loss, when they are most vulnerable.

Today, the community, whether justified or not, sees the rabbi as the primary intermediary between God and humanity. Although most rabbis are not Kohanim (descendants of priests), I have the great honor of being both a rabbi and a Kohen. Due to my status as a Kohen, it has not always been easy for me to fulfill my role as the rabbi. Due to this limited ability to become involved in the bereavement process, I have gained a unique perspective toward death and mourning. The requirement to not fully engage has taught me that although in their time of most intense grief mourners need the support of family, friends and rabbis, there is such a thing as over involvement. No one fully understands the mystery of death, and no one can solve this age old question for a mourner as s/he sits beside her or his deceased loved one.

Only God knows these answers. Although they must stand as a support and comfort, no rabbi nor priest can serve as a buffer or intermediary between the intense dialogue between a grief stricken mourner and the Almighty One at the deepest moment of loneliness, the moment of loss. ©2019 Hebrew Institute of Riverdale & CJC-AMCHA. Rabbi Avi Weiss is Founder and Dean of Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, the Open Orthodox Rabbinical School, and Senior Rabbi of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale

RABBI DAVID LEVINE

The Counting of the Omer

It is appropriate that Parashat Emor which always occurs at this time of the year should contain within it a specific mitzvah which only occurs at this time of year, namely S'firat Ha'Omer, the Counting of the Omer. We also find in this parasha a listing of all of the major holidays of the Jewish people and their exact dates except for the exact date of Shavuot which is dependent directly on the result of the Counting of the Omer. This section is one of several sections in the Torah dealing with all of the holidays and is read on Pesach and Sukkot.

The Torah first begins by telling us what the Omer offering is. "And Hashem spoke to Moshe saying. Speak to the children of Yisrael and you will say to them, when you will enter the land that I give you

and you reap its harvest, you will bring the omer of the first of your harvest to the Kohein. And he will wave the omer before Hashem to be an appeasement for you on the morrow of the "rest day" the Kohein will wave it. On the day that you wave the omer, you shall perform the service of an unblemished lamb in its first year as an olah offering to Hashem. And its meal offering shall be two tenth-ephahs of fine flour mixed with oil, a fire-offering to Hashem, a satisfying aroma, and its poured-offering, wine, a quarter of a hin. You shall not eat bread and parched meal and plump kernels until this very day, until you bring the offering of your Elokim, it is an eternal decree for your generations in all your settled places."

HaRav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch explains that the omer is an amount of barley equivalent to one day's meals. There are five grains "which are regarded as the real harvest of the Land, those five grains which represent the real bread, the real food of the Nation." These grains are chitah (wheat), s'orah (barley), kusemet (oats), shibolet shu'al (rye), and shipun (spelt). Barley is the grain from which the omer is taken because it is the first of these grains ready for harvest. The Ramban tells us that the words "When you reap its harvest" require that "you are not to reap any harvest in the land until you have reaped the omer and have brought it as "the first fruits of your harvest to the Kohein." From the Ramban we learn that "it is forbidden to raise the sickle over standing grain until the day that you begin to count [seven weeks]." Hirsch qualifies this statement: "cutting before the omer is only forbidden from such fields which the real harvest of such grain is hoped for, but not from fields which require artificial watering and which lie in deep valleys." One may also not bring the omer from any of these types of fields.

HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin quotes from Gemara P'sachim (3a) that barley is not often thought of as food for humans but is instead food for animals. Humans do eat barley but seldom make bread from it. Since it does grow wild in Israel and therefore is hefkeir, unowned grain, it is available for the poor who may harvest it in their desperation. Why, then, should we bring a food which is animal food as our offering instead of one which is fit for Man? As we said earlier it is because barley matures earlier than wheat and is ready for harvest at the time of Pesach. But then we could ask why Hashem caused barley to mature before wheat. Hashem must have a message for us which is paralleled in the paragraphs from the Torah which we recite as part of the Sh'ma each day. "And I have given (you) grains in your fields for your animals and you will eat and you will be satisfied." From here we learn two things: (1) we are required to feed our animals before we feed ourselves, and (2) because we feed animals first, Hashem grants us our food in abundance. HaRav Sorotzkin also indicates that this concept is

emphasized by the way in which we present this omer to the Kohein and through the Kohein to Hashem. Every Minchah offering that we present to Hashem as part of our daily offerings is made of fine flour except for the show breads that were placed weekly on the Table were done partially to indicate that this was food for animals, as this is the way in which it would be presented to those animals. He continues by emphasizing that even though we bring the entire omer of barley to the Courtyard in the form of sheaves, we extract only one tenth of fine flour to place on the Altar.

Hirsch points out another aspect of this mitzvah. The Torah tells us, "When you come into the land that I give to you." It is the gift of our own land which makes the presentation of the omer into a special mitzvah. "When you have attained, not only freedom, but also the national independence which the possession of one's own land gives..., and you cut the produce of the land, bring that which the land has produced into your own personal possession..., then bring the omer that you cut to the Kohein, to your representative in Hashem's Sanctuary of the Torah. That which the soil has produced and the sun matured has not grown for you, but for the Torah of Hashem's Sanctuary, so that its demands may be fulfilled." One must come to realize that while Hashem produces food for us, that food is also a glorification of His promise to provide food for the entire world. It is our recognition of this relationship which enables the relationship to continue. That is why this mitzvah was dependent on the arrival in our land and the possession of our fields. It could not take place in the wilderness in which the Jews traveled for forty years. In the desert we were fed directly from the man, the manna that Hashem sent from the Heavens for us. We were not confused as to where our food originated. It was clear that, "You (He) open Your (His) hands and satisfies all living things according to His Will." The true farmer realizes that his success is determined by Hashem and not by his own hand.

It is always a challenge for Man to realize that his efforts are necessary but they do not guarantee success. We see time and again that people work long hours and yet success does not come. Others, it appears, work little but are blessed with great riches. Our livelihood and reward are governed by Hashem. We pray each day for our livelihood and for an abundance which will allow us to take care of the needs of others less fortunate. Hashem has provided us with a system that can feed the world if we each do our part without greed



and selfishness. The Omer of barley enables our use of the grains from that year. Just as feeding our animals first grants us grain to our satisfaction, so the sharing of our abundance enables that abundance. May we always keep in mind Hashem's system and fulfill our part in His plan. ©2019 Rabbi D. Levine

ENCYCLOPEDIA TALMUDIT

Chadash in the Diaspora

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

The Mishna at the end of Misnayot Orlah states emphatically that, "Chadash" is forbidden from the Torah everywhere", which would include not only Israel but the Diaspora as well. This is derived from a sentence in this week's Torah Portion 23;14 " You shall not eat bread or roasted kernels or plump kernels until this very day...in all your dwelling places (b'chol Moshvotchem), which include also the Diaspora. According to this view the prohibition is not attached to the Mitzva of bringing of the Omer sacrifice, since the Omer offering cannot be brought in the Diaspora (as the Talmud states in Tractate Menachot and as the Rambam [Maimonides] brings down as practical law). In any case, wheat grown before the sixteenth of Nissan in the Diaspora is forbidden to eat until the sixteenth of Nissan.

This Mitzva is more difficult to adhere to in the Diaspora since wheat is often processed before the sixteenth of Nissan and is available. Indeed some of the Gedolim (Rabbinic Leaders) would roam from place to place with special utensils to find wheat that is not in the category of "Chadash"

However there is another view which is sited in the Mishna in Kiddushin which states that Biblically the law of "Chadash" only pertains to the land of Israel. Therefore, according to this view, this Mitzvah is integrally connected to the offering of the Omer which is only relevant to the land of Israel. That same Mishna presents an opposing view which would be in consonance with the Mishna in Orlah that was cited above.

The question arises- which Mishna is the deciding one? Shall we say that the Mishna in Orlah was studied last and therefore one would say that the Mishna that was presented earlier (the Mishna in Kiddushin) was updated and in essence nullified by the later Mishna in Orlah and therefore decided unequivocally that the law follows that Mishna that "Chadash" is prohibited everywhere, or do we say that the Mishna in Kiddushin appeared later which would indicate that there is a controversy? Additionally one could not use the argument that because the Mishna in Orlah appears before the Mishnah in Keddushin in the order of Mishnayot that it was therefore authored first, for we know that there is no chronological order in the presentation of Mishnayot. ©2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and Encyclopedia Talmudit

RABBI KALMAN PACKOUZ

Shabbat Shalom Weekly

The Torah states: "And you shall not profane My holy name, rather shall I be sanctified among the Children of Israel; I am the Lord Who sanctifies you." (Leviticus 22:32).

What does this mean?

The Rambam, Maimonides, writes in Hilchos Yesodei Torah 5:11: "When a pious Torah scholar does things which cause people to talk against him, even if the acts are not transgressions, he profanes God's name. For example, when such a person doesn't speak pleasantly to others and does not receive them with a pleasant facial expression, but is quarrelsome and easy to anger. The greater the man, the more careful he must be with his behavior. Such a person should go beyond the letter of the law in his dealings with others.

"If a Torah scholar will be careful about his behavior, will speak pleasantly to people, act friendly towards them, receive them with a pleasant facial expression, will refrain from retorting when he is insulted, will honor even those who treat him with disdain, will be honest in his business dealings, will constantly devote himself to Torah study, will always go beyond the letter of the law, and will avoid extremes and exaggerations, then he will be praised and beloved and others will desire to emulate him. This man has sanctified God. About him it is written, 'And He said to me, "You are my servant, O Israel, in who I shall be glorified." (Isaiah 49:3). ' "

And now you know how to sanctify God's name... and how to be a credit to your Creator! *Dvar Torah based on Love Your Neighbor by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin* ©2019 Rabbi K. Packouz & aish.com

RABBI MEIR GOLDWICHT

Proper Speech

In parashat Emor, the Torah relates the incident of the mekalel. The mekalel was the son of an Egyptian father and a Jewish mother from the tribe of Dan, and as a result he wished to make his home in the camp of Dan, claiming that he was their fellow tribesman even though his father was Egyptian. The tribe of Dan responded that what determines one's tribe is one's father, as it says, "Ish al diglo l'veit avotam." When they came before Moshe Rabbeinu for a din torah, he ruled that the man had no connection to the tribe of Dan and therefore had no right to live there. Displeased with this ruling, the mekalel cursed Moshe Rabbeinu; unsure of the punishment for the mekalel, Moshe Rabbeinu had him imprisoned until Hashem would reveal to Moshe the proper punishment, skilah.

Immediately after Hashem reveals the proper punishment, the Torah teaches the laws of damages -- ayin tachat ayin, shen tachat shen -- essentially repeating laws we already know from parashat

Mishpatim. At the conclusion of these laws, the Torah repeats, "And Moshe told B'nei Yisrael to remove the mekalel from the camp and to stone him." Why does the Torah interrupt the parasha of the mekalel with the laws of damages, especially considering the fact that we already know these laws from parashat Mishpatim? We never find anything like this -- in the middle of discussing one topic, the Torah "takes a break," only to return several pesukim later to the original topic!

We must also question why the din of the mekalel appears in sefer VaYikra instead of in sefer BaMidbar, like all of the other incidents that took place over the forty years B'nei Yisrael traversed the desert. For example, the mekoshesh eitzim, which took place on the very first Shabbat after B'nei Yisrael left Mitzrayim, belongs in sefer Shemot, but because of the nature of sefer BaMidbar it was placed there instead. Why, then, does the mekalel appear at the end of VaYikra instead of BaMidbar?

To answer these questions, we must enter a very interesting sugya: the sugya of dibbur. Dibbur is not just movement of the lips that facilitates interpersonal communication. Dibbur is a reflection of one's thoughts. The Rambam rules in the third perek of Hilchot Terumot that if a person had intent to say terumah but said ma'aser instead, or olah but said shelamim instead, his words have no validity until his dibbur matches his thoughts.

Shlomo HaMelech, in Shir HaShirim, refers to the dibbur of Knesset Yisrael as "umidbarech naveh," comparing it to a midbar. Through proper speech you can turn a midbar into a yishuv; conversely, through improper speech you can turn a yishuv into a midbar. In Yechezkel (20:35), the galut is referred to as "midbar ha'amim," because this is where HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants to bring us to the brit kerutah bisfatayim, to teach us to use our dibbur properly. The power of dibbur is illustrated further by Chazal, who tell us that it is forbidden to "open one's mouth to the Satan," as we learn from Avraham Avinu -- even though as far as he knew, he would be returning from the Akeidah alone, the Torah tells us that he said to his servants, "And we will bow and we will return," so as not to open his mouth to the Satan. The power of a tzaddik's speech is also demonstrated in the mishnah in Berachot 5:5: A tzaddik can tell who will live and who will die based on whether his tefillah for that person flowed smoothly. The Sefer HaChinuch writes that one who uses his speech improperly is worse than an animal, because it is the ability to speak and to express one's thoughts through speech that distinguishes us from the animals. The power of dibbur is tremendous in its ability to build and to save, but also to destroy.

Sefer VaYikra deals with all the different types of kedushah that exist: kedushat ha'adam (tumah and taharah); kedushat hazman (the yomim tovim); kedushat ha'arets (shemittah and yovel). With the

parasha of the mekalel, the Torah teaches us that the key to all kedushah is kedushat hapeh, proper dibbur. This is also the reason why the Torah reviews the laws of damages within the parasha of the mekalel, to teach us that the destruction we can wreak with our mouths is no less than that which we can cause with a gun or a rock. As clear as it is that you can murder someone with a gun, it must be just as clear that you can murder someone with your dibbur as well.

How amazing is it, then, that the Torah juxtaposes Moshe's punishment of not being able to enter Eretz Yisrael after hitting the rock instead of speaking to it to Moshe's request to pass through the land of Edom. The king of Edom refuses to let Moshe and B'nei Yisrael pass through his land, even threatening war. Why was he so opposed? Essentially, Moshe Rabbeinu was telling the king of Edom that the two of them represented Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov promised to meet Eisav in Seir (see Bereishit 33:14). Moshe wanted to fulfill the promise of Yaakov to Eisav. The king of Edom's response was that if Moshe really represented Yaakov, he would have used the power of Yaakov, of "hakol kol Yaakov," in dealing with the rock. Instead, Moshe used the power of Eisav, of "hayadayim y'dei Eisav." If so, the king of Edom was prepared to confront them in battle, since his power through Eisav was stronger than their power through Yaakov. This is the connection between Moshe's hitting of the rock and the king of Edom's refusal to let B'nei Yisrael pass through his land.

During these special days in which we find ourselves, one of the ways we must improve ourselves is by working on developing proper speech. We must become more conscious of how we speak with our parents, our wives, our children, and our friends. Through proper speech we can create worlds. It is not for no reason that Shlomo HaMelech teaches us, "Mavet v'chayim b'yad lashon" (Mishlei 18:21). ©2007 Rabbi M. Goldwicht & yutorah.org

