

Toras Aish

Thoughts From Across the Torah Spectrum

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS ZT"L

Covenant & Conversation

In recent years we have often felt plagued by reports of Israeli and Jewish leaders whose immoral actions had been exposed. A President guilty of sexual abuse. A Prime Minister indicted on charges of corruption and bribery. Rabbis in several countries accused of financial impropriety, sexual harassment and child abuse. That such things happen testifies to a profound malaise in contemporary Jewish life.

More is at stake than simply morality. Morality is universal. Bribery, corruption and the misuse of power are wrong, and wrong equally, whoever is guilty of them. When, though, the guilty are leaders, something more is involved: the principles introduced in our parsha of Kiddush ha-Shem and Chillul ha-Shem: "Do not profane My holy name, that I may be sanctified in the midst of the Israelites, I the Lord who sanctify you" (Lev. 22:32).

The concepts of Kiddush and Chillul ha-Shem have a history. Though they are timeless and eternal, their unfolding occurred through the course of time. In our parsha, according to Ibn Ezra, the verse has a narrow and localized sense. The chapter in which it occurs has been speaking about the special duties of the priesthood and the extreme care they must take in serving G-d within the sanctuary. All Israel is holy, but the priests are a holy elite within the nation. It was their task to preserve the purity and glory of the Sanctuary as G-d's symbolic home in the midst of the nation. So the commands are a special charge to the priests to take exemplary care as guardians of the holy.

Another dimension was disclosed by the prophets, who used the phrase chillul haShem to describe immoral conduct that brings dishonour to G-d's law as a code of justice and compassion. Amos (2:7) speaks of people who "trample on the heads of the poor as on the dust of the ground, and deny justice to the oppressed... and so profane my holy name." Jeremiah invokes chillul ha-Shem to describe those who circumvent the law by emancipating their slaves only to recapture and re-enslave them (Jer. 34:16). Malachi, last of the prophets, says of the corrupt priests of his day, "From where the sun rises to where it sets, My name is honored among the nations... but you profane it" (Mal. 1:11-12).

The sages (Bereishit Rabbah 49:9) suggested

that Abraham was referring to the same idea when he challenged G-d on his plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah if this meant punishing the righteous as well as the wicked: "Far be it from you [chalilah lekha] to do such a thing." G-d and the people of G-d must be associated with justice. Failure to do so constitutes a chillul ha-Shem.

A third dimension appears in the book of Ezekiel. The Jewish people, or at least a significant part of it, had been forced into exile in Babylon. The nation had suffered defeat. The Temple lay in ruins. For the exiles this was a human tragedy. They had lost their home, freedom and independence. It was also a spiritual tragedy: "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" (Psalm 137:4) But Ezekiel saw it as a tragedy for G-d also: "Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions... I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. And wherever they went among the nations they profaned My holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the Lord's people, and yet they had to leave his land.'" (Ez. 36:17-20)

Exile was a desecration of G-d's name because the fact that He had punished his people by letting them be conquered was interpreted by the other nations as showing that G-d was unable to protect them. This recalls Moses' prayer after the golden calf:

"'Lord,' he said, 'why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.'" (Ex 32:11-12)

This is part of the divine pathos. Having chosen to identify His name with the people of Israel, G-d is, as it were, caught between the demands of justice on the one hand, and public perception on the other. What looks like retribution to the Israelites looks like weakness to the world. In the eyes of the nations, for whom national gods were identified with power, the exile of Israel could not but be interpreted as the powerlessness of Israel's G-d. That, says Ezekiel, is a chillul ha-Shem, a desecration of G-d's name.

A fourth sense became clear in the late Second

Temple period. Israel had returned to its land and rebuilt the Temple, but they came under attack first from the Seleucid Greeks in the reign of Antiochus IV, then from the Romans, both of whom attempted to outlaw Jewish practice. For the first time martyrdom became a significant feature in Jewish life. The question arose: under what circumstances were Jews to sacrifice their lives rather than transgress Jewish law?

The sages understood the verse, "You shall keep my decrees and laws which a person shall keep and live by them" (Lev. 18:5) to imply "and not die by them." (Yoma 85b) Saving life takes precedence over most of the commands. But there are three exceptions: the prohibitions against murder, forbidden sexual relations and idolatry, where the sages ruled that it was necessary to die rather than transgress. They also said that "at a time of persecution" one should resist at the cost of death even a demand "to change one's shoelaces," that is, performing any act that could be construed as going over to the enemy, betraying and demoralizing those who remained true to the faith. It was at this time that the phrase kiddush ha-Shem was used to mean the willingness to die as a martyr.

One of the most poignant of all collective responses on the part of the Jewish people was to categorise all the victims of the Holocaust as "those who died al kiddush Hashem," that is, for the sake of sanctifying G-d's name. This was not a foregone conclusion. Martyrdom in the past meant choosing to die for the sake of G-d. One of the demonic aspects of the Nazi genocide was that Jews were not given the choice. By calling them in retrospect, martyrs, Jews gave the victims the dignity in death of which they were so brutally robbed in life.

(There was a precedent. In the Av ha-Rachamim prayer (Authorised Daily Prayer Book, p. 426), composed after the massacre of Jews during the Crusades, the victims were described as those "who sacrificed their lives al kedushat haShem." Though some of the victims went to their deaths voluntarily, not all of them did.)

There is a fifth dimension. This is how Maimonides sums it up: "There are other deeds which are also included in the desecration of G-d's name. When a person of great Torah stature, renowned for his piety, does deeds which, although they are not transgressions, cause people to speak disparagingly of him, this is also a desecration of G-d's name... All this depends on the stature of the sage..." (Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Yesodei ha-Torah 5:11)

People looked up to as role models must act as role models. Piety in relation to G-d must be accompanied by exemplary behavior in relation to one's fellow humans. When people associate religiosity with integrity, decency, humility and compassion, G-d's name is sanctified. When they come to associate it with

contempt for others and for the law, the result is a desecration of G-d's name.

Common to all five dimensions of meaning is the radical idea, central to Jewish self-definition, that G-d has risked his reputation in the world, His "name," by choosing to associate it with a single and singular people. G-d is the G-d of all humanity. But G-d has chosen Israel to be His "witnesses," His ambassadors, to the world. When we fail in this role, it is as if G-d's standing in the eyes of the world has been damaged.

For almost two thousand years the Jewish people was without a home, a land, civil rights, security and the ability to shape its destiny and fate. It was cast in the role of what Max Weber called "a pariah people." By definition a pariah cannot be a positive role model. That is when kiddush ha-Shem took on its tragic dimension as the willingness to die for one's faith. That is no longer the case. Today, for the first time in history, Jews have both sovereignty and independence in Israel, and freedom and equality elsewhere. Kiddush ha-shem must therefore be restored to its positive sense of exemplary decency in the moral life.

That is what led the Hittites to call Abraham "a prince of G-d in our midst." It is what leads Israel to be admired when it engages in international rescue and relief. The concepts of kiddush and chillul ha-Shem forge an indissoluble connection between the holy and the good.

Lose that and we betray our mission as "a holy nation." The conviction that being a Jew involves the pursuit of justice and the practice of compassion is what led our ancestors to stay loyal to Judaism despite all the pressures to abandon it. It would be the ultimate tragedy if we lost that connection now, at the very moment that we are able to face the world on equal terms.

Long ago we were called on to show the world that religion and morality go hand in hand. Never was that more needed than in an age riven by religiously-motivated violence in some countries, rampant secularism in others. To be a Jew is to be dedicated to the proposition that loving G-d means loving His image, humankind. There is no greater challenge, nor in the twenty-first century is there a more urgent one. *Covenant and Conversation 5775 is kindly supported by the Maurice Wohl Charitable Foundation in memory of Maurice and Vivienne Wohl zt"l ©2015 Rabbi Lord J. Sacks z"l and rabbisacks.org*

RABBI SHLOMO RISKIN

Shabbat Shalom

"**A**nd you shall count for yourselves from the morrow of [the first day of the Festival of Matzot] ..." (Leviticus 23:15) Since Judaism teaches that all Jews are responsible for each other, the hemorrhaging of the number of diaspora Jews actively involved in Jewish life – or even identifying as

Jews – is a source of grave concern. How might we inspire our Jewish siblings to remain within, or return to, Jewish tradition?

I believe that the very nature of the Hebrew calendar contains the direction toward the solution. Each year after the start of the Passover festival, we count each day toward the festival of Shavuot, a count that begins with our freedom from Egypt and culminates with the revelation at Sinai. The days of our counting, a period of spiritual growth and development, begin with Passover, the first real encounter that God has with His nation Israel and its very conception. Our sefira (Hebrew root: s-p-r), our counting, begins with a sippur (Hebrew root: s-p-r): a tale, a story, a recounting; the very essence of the Passover Seder evening experience.

We must remember that the Israelites came into Egypt as a family, the 70 descendants of our grandfather Jacob-Israel. Hence, the recounting of the story of our enslavement and eventual redemption is transmitted by parents to their children as a familial recounting of family history because the Jewish nation is essentially an extended family. And, as in any family, there are familial memories of origins, of beginnings; in a family, there will always be a commonality, a togetherness that results from the good that flows through the veins of the family members.

Passover is our familial, communal festival, at the very beginning of our calendar, at the very outset of our unique history, at the early steps toward our sefira march, celebrated even before we received our Torah from God and before we entered the Promised Land.

The Passover Sacrifice, the source for our Passover Seder, represents the celebration of our being part of a special, historic family even before we became a religion at Sinai. It emphasizes our willingness to sacrifice the lamb, a defiant act of rebellion against the bull-god of Egyptian slave-society, an act that attests to our uncompromising belief in human freedom and redemption – a belief that arose from the familial history of the pain of our enslavement and the murder of our children in the Nile River. Hence freedom for every individual became a familial passion for us and even an obsession.

In order to feel truly free, every person must feel that he/she counts (sefira); but that is how it is in families, where each member is called by his/her personal name and is known by his/her unique traits (both positively and negatively). It is for this reason that our Passover sacrificial meal must be subdivided into smaller – and more manageable – familial and extra-familial units, “a lamb for each household” or several households together. Special foods, special stories and special songs define and punctuate the familial nature of the event.

And the only ticket of admission is that you consider yourself a member of the family and wish to

be counted in; this alone entitles you to an unconditional embrace of love and acceptance, to inclusion in the family of Israel. The rasha (wicked son) is the one who himself excludes himself from the family – and even he/she is to be invited and sought after!

One of the rousing songs of the Seder is Dayenu (“It would have been enough”). One line reads: “Had God merely brought us to Sinai and not given us the Torah, it would have been enough.” Our Sages teach that when the Israelites stood at Sinai they were one people with one heart, a united and communal family. The song teaches that even if a Jew feels only a sense of familial oneness – even without the 613 commandments – it would be extremely positive, if not sufficient in itself.

How might we engage Jews estranged from Jewish life? We must embrace them as part of our family, love them because we are part of them and they are part of us, regale them with the stories, songs and special foods which are expressed in our people’s literature and that emerged from our fate and our unique destiny, share with them our vision and dreams of human freedom and peace, and accept them wholeheartedly, no matter what.

For some of them it may be the first step on their march to Torah and the Land of Israel on Shavuot; for others, it might be all they are interested in. And that, too, must be considered good enough, Dayenu! After all, the very first covenant God made with Abraham was the covenant of family and nation. ©2022 *Ohr Torah Institutions & Rabbi S. Riskin*

RABBI BEREL WEIN

Wein Online

One of the central themes in this week’s Torah reading concerns the special and unique laws and commandments that pertain to the kohanim - the family of Aaron who became the priests of Israel. While the people of Israel did not democratically elect them to serve in that exalted role, they were, rather, appointed to their duties and status by the will of Heaven, as expressed through Moshe.

We have seen earlier in the Torah that there was hesitancy on the part of Aaron to accept his role of priesthood. Nevertheless, at the insistence of Moshe and the direction of Heaven, the family of Aaron became the everlasting chain of priesthood that exists within Jewish society even until today.

It is obvious that the Torah was aware of the pitfalls of choosing the priesthood instead of electing it through the medium of the will of the people of Israel. Later in the Torah, a rebellion was mounted against this notion and Moshe’s leadership, and one of the main complaints against them would be that somehow Moshe was guilty of nepotism in choosing his brother Aaron as the first and founding member of the priesthood of Israel. Yet, the Torah did not flinch from

establishing Aaron and his family as the priesthood of Israel, and that choice has weathered all storms, and remains valid and vital, even in current Jewish society, thousands of years after Moshe and Aaron are no longer with us.

Truly, human beings have many thoughts, plans, and ideas, but eventually it is the will of the Lord that will prevail and survive. All human choices are, by their very nature, subject to fallibility and mistakes. But the will of Heaven always has the imprint of perfection and infinity upon it.

Aaron and his descendants have a special place in Jewish life. They are entitled to financial support, social favor, and status. The laws that we read in this week's portion still apply to them. In my experience, I have noticed that kohanim possess a special pride in their heritage and in their uniqueness. Judaism, which always is a meritocracy, nevertheless, creates an aristocracy to the priesthood of Aaron and his descendants. Scholarship, piety and even leadership are fields that are open to each and every Jewish person, without regard to ancestral advantage. However, the service of bridging the gap between God and the Jewish people, between the practical and mundane parts of life, and that of the Temple service with the exalted infinity that the temple was meant to encompass, was a task that was left those that were chosen by Heaven for the fulfillment of that very role -- Aaron and his family.

Not every kohen was necessarily fit for the task, nor did he live up to the responsibilities of the priesthood. However, as a group and as a class, it is obvious that even until today, the family of Aaron is deservedly held in high regard throughout Jewish society, and remains a constant reminder of the will of Heaven as expressed in our own societal lives. ©2022 Rabbi Berel 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

The relationship of the priest to his community is commonly viewed as hierarchical; the movement is from the above to the below. The priest is the religious leader who is greater than his brothers and sisters. Thus, the Torah says, "And the priest who is exalted above his brethren [gadol me'achav]" (Leviticus 21:10).

Sefat Emet, though, reads this relationship differently. He argues that the level of the priest's sanctity depends upon those he serves. In his words, "[the non-Kohen] adds strength to the priest who has been designated as holy, [enabling him] to be properly sanctified." For the Sefat Emet, gadol me'achav does not mean "the priest who is exalted above his brethren"

but "the priest who is exalted from his brethren." The prefix me- is not comparative, "above," but diminishing, "from."

While the role of the Chassidic rebbe in many Chassidic sects is outsized, Sefat Emet, who was the third Gerer Rebbe, downplayed his own spiritual powers. Whatever spiritual strength he had was inspired by his constituents.

Is it too far a stretch to extend this teaching to how halachic authority works? For some, halachic authority is thoroughly hierarchal. The ruling of a posek (decisor of Jewish law) is treated as the final say on the topic, one that allows no room for discussion; moreover, the posek has the final word not only in halachic matters, but also in communal and policy matters as well.

But there is an alternative approach, which I believe aligns with the Sefat Emet's teaching. A psak should never cut off dialogue; rather, decisions should set the foundation from which discussion ensues. And concerning public policy, the laity plays a crucial role in deciphering situations and conditions and helping apply them to halachah. From this perspective, halachah is a partnership between the laity and the rabbinate, with the laity playing a critical role in the halachic process.

A good example is the contemporary agunah issue, wherein recalcitrant husbands refuse to give their wives a get. (In rare cases, it is the wife who refuses to receive the get.) Only because of the pressure of the laity – who raised a collective voice of ethical conscience, pointing to the inequity of the halachic system relative to divorce – did the rabbinate take some steps (e.g., the prenuptial agreement) to help alleviate the plight of the agunah.

More broadly, the laity can powerfully impact the vision, mission, and core values of their respective communities. Indeed, over the years, I have been enormously moved, influenced, and even transformed by the spiritual striving and religious commitment of countless congregants. They have become my rebbes. While some follow the tradition of standing as a rabbi walks into the room, I much prefer standing up in my congregants' honor.

Yes, spiritual leaders have much to teach constituents. But constituents have much to teach spiritual leaders as well. ©2022 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 JONATHAN GEWIRTZ

Migdal Ohr

"Speak to Aharon, saying, a man of your seed for all generations who shall have a blemish shall not approach to offer the sacrifices of his G-d." (Vayikra 21:17) In this posuk, we learn that the

Divine service in the Mishkan or Bais HaMikdash could not be performed by one with physical deformities. The Ramban says the Torah doesn't refer to Aharon in the context of a 'mum,' as he was a completely holy individual in whom no blemishes (usually the result of a spiritual imperfection) would ever manifest.

The question we'd like to address is why the Torah specifies that Aharon was told to be the one to convey this to his "seed" for all time. Why is it different than the other warnings such as regarding contamination by a corpse or tzaraas, where the warning was given to Aharon and his sons, or to Aharon and his sons and all of Klal Yisrael?

If we imagine for a moment what it is to live the life of a deformed Kohain, we may gain an insight. As a Kohain, he was not permitted to become impure. This means avoiding cemeteries and funerals, possibly hospitals and airplanes. He was limited in who he could marry. Yet, he was unable to perform the Avoda, essentially the very thing he was born to do. Not only that, but many of the gifts to the Kohain came from the korbanos he offered, so this affected his livelihood as well. He can't even go up to duchen and bless the Jewish People with Birkas Kohanim. He has the "worst" of both worlds, so to speak.

And yet, this is what Hashem wants. Hashem is the Creator of each person and He chooses who serves Him. He gives the blemishes or deformities, and it is not for us to question or try to change and argue. However, it's easy for those of us who are not Kohanim or blemished to say, but how does that help the blemished Kohain who will never realize his greatest aspirations?

For this reason, Hashem told Aharon, YOU need to be the one to explain this. You need to pass on the message to your descendants that they have within them your seed, a piece of you is implanted in their spiritual DNA. It is the power to accept Hashem's will with joy.

When Hashem told Moshe to go and take the Jews from Egypt, one of Moshe's objections was that his older brother Aharon had been the spiritual leader of the Jews there. How could he take that away from him? Hashem responded, "Aharon, your brother, will come out to see you and be rejoicing from the depths of his heart."

What Aharon possessed was the ability to serve Hashem as He wanted to be served. He would take a leadership role if Hashem wanted it and would step down if that's what Hashem wanted. His own prestige or benefit were of no matter and he truly rejoiced in fulfilling Hashem's will. Because of this, he merited to wear the Choshen Mishpat on his heart. THIS is the seed that Aharon passed down to his children, and this is the message to the deformed Kohain.

You are fulfilling Hashem's will by NOT

performing the Avoda. Your greatest aspiration is to serve Hashem as He wishes. And then, perhaps, like Aharon, you will find yourself given another role by Hashem, where you can shine like no one else.

R' Mordechai of Neshchiz carefully saved his coins the entire year in order to buy an esrog. On the way to purchase it, he came across a fellow crying bitterly. "What is wrong, my friend?" inquired R' Mordechai. "I am a porter," replied the downtrodden man as he fought back the tears. "I make my living by hauling goods for people in my wagon. Today, my horse died and now I have no way to support my family."

R' Mordechai took out the money he had saved for his esrog and gave it to the man. He told him to buy another horse and blessed him with prosperity. R' Mordechai then turned his gaze Heavenward. "Ribono Shel Olam," he said. "All Jews will perform the mitzvah of the four species with an esrog, but I will do so with a horse." © 2022 Rabbi J. Gewirtz and Migdal Ohr

RABBI DAVID LEVIN

Terumah, Right and Permitted

Parashat Emor is directed primarily to the holiness of the Kohein. The Kohein is to place his service in the Mishkan (Temple) above everything else in his responsibilities. His reward for this service is the portion of the sacrifices which may be eaten only by the Kohein and his family. He also receives a portion of the produce brought by every person from the grains, vegetation, and fruits which were grown that year. These foods are treated as Kodosh (holy) and may not be eaten by anyone who is not a Kohein, with only a few exceptions.

The Torah explains, "Any outsider (non-Kohein) shall not eat of the holy; a Kohein's resident or a hired worker shall not eat of the holy. If a Kohein shall acquire a person, an acquisition of his money, he may eat of it; and someone born in his household, they may eat of his bread. If a Kohein's daughter shall be married to an outsider (non-Kohein), she may not eat of the separated holies. And a Kohein's daughter who will become a widow or a divorcee, and not have offspring, she may return to her father's house, as in her youth, she may eat from her father's bread; but any outsider may not eat of it. If a man will eat that which is holy inadvertently, he shall add its fifth to it and he shall give that which is holy to the Kohein. They shall not defile the holy things of the B'nei Yisrael, which they set aside to Hashem; and they will cause them to bear the sin of guilt when they eat their holy things, for I am Hashem, Who sanctifies them."

The holy food which this section is describing is the terumah, approximately one-fiftieth of a crop, which is given to the Kohanim for his service in the Mishkan.

Only a Kohein or a member of his household may eat from this “holy” food. We know that a non-Kohein may also not eat from the parts of the sacrifices that were set aside for the Kohein, but this section is specifically dealing with terumah. If a non-Kohein takes from those parts of the sacrifice, it is termed m’ilah, which is the unlawful use of an animal or part of an animal that has been designated for a sacrifice and is considered kadosh, holy. Any direct member of a Kohein’s household is eligible to eat from the terumah. This includes his wife, children, and slaves which he purchased with his money, namely a Canaanite slave. Not included in those who are eligible is a Jewish slave, as he is not the property of the Kohein and maintains a level of independence.

The Rabbis discuss the point at which a wife who was not a daughter of a Kohein may eat terumah based on her relationship with her husband. The Gemara in Yevamot explains that there are two stages that a couple undergoes. Erusin is a form of engagement but carries a much greater connection than an engagement today. The “bride” in a stage of Erusin continued to live in her father’s house and was still supported by the father until the prescribed term of the engagement was fulfilled. If the groom waited too long to complete the marriage, he would be forced to support her even though she had not yet been taken into his house. If a decision was made to call off the wedding, a divorce document (a get) would have to be written. HaRav Shmshon Raphael Hirsch explains that the act of Nesuin and “bringing the bride into one’s house” would then enable this non-Kohein bride to eat from her Kohein husband’s terumah. Her husband was her permission to eat from his terumah. If the Kohein husband died after taking her into his house but before they had any children, she would no longer be eligible to eat from the “holy food” and would return to her father’s house. If she had a son, that child would remain her connection to the terumah and she would maintain her eligibility to eat terumah. In reverse, if a daughter of a Kohein married a non-Kohein, she would cease eating terumah from her father. Should her non-Kohein husband die and she had no son, she would be able to return to her father’s house and regain the permission to eat from his terumah. If she did have a son from her non-Kohein husband, she would no longer be permitted terumah. This rule of permission, to regain or not to regain terumah through childlessness, also applies to having grandchildren.

HaRav Zalman Sorotzkin explains that the Torah refers to the terumah as kodesh, holy, when referring to the Kohein, yet it changes the language to lachmo, his bread, when referring to the food which is given to his wife or his slaves. HaRav Sorotzkin explains that this change in language gives a meaning to “permitted and not permitted” eating of terumah. The Kohein is holy and therefore his food is “holy”. It is only

through his holy right to this food that those who he owns or are part of his family are “permitted” to partake of that food. If that connection is changed by death, divorce, or some other means, that “permission” is no longer valid and no rights continue to partake of the “holy.” This is evident by the rule of the widow of a Kohein who has no offspring and loses her connection to the “permitted” food. If her son or grandson from the Kohein was still alive, she maintains her connection to this “permitted” food through the child’s direct connection to the “holy” food.

If a non-Kohein accidentally eats from this terumah produce, the Torah speaks of a fine that is added to the returned produce. The Torah explains that a person who eats terumah must return produce rather than money to the Kohein. When the Torah speaks of one-fifth added to this produce, the actual amount is one fourth, which when added to the full amount, makes this one-fifth of the total amount (five-fourths) that he gives the Kohein. This produce which he returns to the Kohein takes on the status of terumah and is treated as such with the same limitations on who may or may not be permitted to eat from it.

If a Kohein owns a field with crops or fruit, he must also set aside terumah from this harvest. This separated food becomes terumah and is governed by the same laws that we have already discussed. HaRav Hirsch explains that the Kohein receives the terumah from the people so that he will understand that he serves them. At the same time, he must treat this food as holy, as he and his family are “stamped with the impress of priestly sanctity and should be filled with the spirit of holiness and purity.” Since he performs this service, calling his food “holy” is relevant. His household does not serve, but they maintain the sanctity of “his bread.”

We no longer have the Temple nor do we have Hashem’s “holy” food. Still, we can learn from the Kohein that we should also be careful of our own purity so that we may also reach a level of holiness. The Kohein serves Hashem in His house and Hashem rewards him and his family with food. We strive to serve Hashem in our own way which we hope will be holy and which will lead us to receive our rewards, also.
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Chadash in the Diaspora

Translated by Rabbi Mordechai Weiss

The mishnah at the end of *Orlah* makes an unequivocal statement about *chadash* (grain from the new harvest, which may not be eaten until the *omer* offering is brought on the sixteenth of Nissan). According to this mishnah, “*Chadash* is biblically forbidden everywhere.” This means it is an issue not only in Israel, but in the Diaspora as well. The rule is derived from the verse: “Until that very day, until you

have brought the offering of your G-d, you shall eat no bread or parched grain or fresh ears; it is a law for all time throughout the ages **in all your settlements**" (*Vayikra* 23:14). Clearly, this last phrase includes the Diaspora.

Even though *chadash* applies in the Diaspora according to this mishnah, the *omer* offering may not be brought from grain grown in the Diaspora (as the mishnah states in *Menachot* and as the Rambam rules).

This mitzva is more difficult to follow in the Diaspora, since wheat there sprouts before the sixteenth of Nissan, and might be made into flour (which is not the case in Israel). Some rabbinic leaders in the Diaspora used to roam from place to place with their own pots and pans, looking for wheat that was not *chadash*.

However, the mishnah in *Kiddushin* presents, in addition to the view cited above, a lenient view that biblically the law of *chadash* pertains only to the Land of Israel. According to this view, the mitzva of *chadash* is similar to the offering of the *omer*, in that both are relevant only in the Land of Israel. Thus, we see that in *Kiddushin* the status of *chadash* in the Diaspora is disputed. One would expect that we would follow the explicit ruling in *Orlah*, where only one view is recorded: that *chadash* is forbidden everywhere. But it is not that simple. Which mishnah to follow may depend upon which tractate was written first. If the mishnah in *Orlah* is later than the mishnah in *Kiddushin*, then it seems there was a disagreement followed by an unopposed statement, so we should follow the unopposed statement. (Hence *chadash* would be prohibited even in the Diaspora.) However, if *Orlah* is earlier, then it seems the disagreement continued afterwards in *Kiddushin* despite categorical statement in *Orlah*.

We might assume that *Orlah* must bearlier. After all, it is part of *Seder Zera'im* (the first of the six orders of the Mishnah), while *Kiddushin* is part of *Seder Nashim* (the third order). But it is not that simple. There is a general principle that "The Mishnah is not in order." This means that the order of the Mishnah's tractates is logical, not chronological. It does not necessarily correspond to the time periods in which they were originally taught. ©2017 Rabbi M. Weiss and *Encyclopedia Talmudit*

RABBI YITZCHOK ADLERSTEIN

Reb Yeruchem

A baal among his people shall not become tamei to the one who desecrates him. (*Vayikra* 24:4) How you translate baal generates very different readings of the pasuk. Rashi assumes that it means "husband." A kohen is permitted and instructed to become tamei while tending to the burial of his wife. If that wife is one "who desecrates him," i.e. she is a woman whom he was not permitted as a kohen to

marry, then he may not become tamei. Onkelos, however translates baal as "important person." The one who possesses the distinction of being a kohen is instructed not to desecrate his role and station by becoming tamei when forbidden to do so.

Now, just what is this desecration? You might argue that it is stepping out of his exalted role. When he becomes tamei, his service as kohen is halted until he becomes tahor again. In the interim, he descends from his lofty position. Ramban, however, does not take it that way. "Because they are priests to Hashem and serve our G-d, tell them to comport themselves with honor and stature, and not to become tamei." He reads our pasuk as a demand not to desecrate and disgrace their station. But this is not readily understood. We find elsewhere that people of stature can choose to forego any honor coming to them. The kohen does not have that option. He is required to maintain his dignity, even if he would prefer to disregard it. Why should this be so?

The answer, I believe, lies in what the word "desecrate" implies. The person who ignores the rules of Shabbos does not merely violate, or transgress. The Torah calls him a desecrater of Shabbos. Ibn Ezra (*Bereishis* 2:3) comments on Hashem's sanctifying (i.e. the opposite of desecrating) Shabbos from among the other days of the week. "Work should not be done on it as it is done on the others." How do we display this sanctification? We follow the words of Yeshaya. "If you proclaim Shabbos a delight...and you honor it by not engaging in your own affairs...or discussing the forbidden." (*Yeshaya* 58:13) We see -- and we implement this in practice -- that the desecration of something special lies in treating it like ordinary things. The holiness of Shabbos demands of us that we speak differently, walk differently, dress differently, eat different foods. Treating Shabbos similarly to other days of the week fully desecrates it. Kedushah, on the other hand, requires distinction, separation, and visibly flaunting its specialness.

Why is it, then, that some people are permitted to forego the honor due them? The answer is that it depends on the reason for the honor. When the honor is due because of some relationship, its owner can excuse it. A parent can forego the honor due them by a child. That honor grows out of the debt of gratitude owed by the child. The kohen, however, is given his role and distinction by G-d. Violating its terms is a desecration not of himself, but of that role -- and really a desecration of G-d's Word which created the distinction. He is a kohen not by choice, but because Hashem elevated him to that position. It is not his to forego. If he treats himself like other people, he desecrates the reality of what he is.

Similarly, there are people who willingly proclaim their denial of human specialness. They are prepared to live closer to the life styles of animals. We

say to such people, "Like it or not, you are a human being! You cannot live as an animal."

Bnei Torah are like this as well. Some, out of a sense of genuine modesty, do not want to seem different than anyone else. They are embarrassed when they are treated as different from commoners. They prefer to freely mix with the completely ignorant.

They, too, are mistaken. They cannot walk away from the distinction of being Bnei Torah, of being different. Bnei Torah are obligated to live according to their elevated station. They must keep to the expectations of living on a higher plane, and take steps to broadcast the difference! How? By ensuring that they distinguish themselves in love for their fellow man, in honoring their fellow man, and in always speaking gently and calmly with people. (Based on Daas Torah by R. Yeruchem Levovitz zt"l, Vayikra pgs. 206-209) © 2022 Rav Y. Adlerstein & torah.org

RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND

RavFrand

Transcribed by David Twersky

Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman

I found the following thought in the sefer Imrei Baruch from Rabbi Baruch Simon (a rebbe in Yeshivas Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanon, Yeshiva University).

This week's parsha repeats the mitzvah of the Lechem HaPanim, the twelve loaves of 'Showbread' that were on the Shulchan in the Mishkan and later in the Beis haMikdash. The Gemara states (Chagiga 26b) that at the end of the three Pilgrimage Festivals when Jews came from all of Eretz Yisrael to the Beis HaMikdash, when they were about to leave, the Kohanim lifted the Shulchan to show the Lechem HaPanim to those who came up for the Regalim.

When they showed the Lechem HaPanim, the Kohanim would say, "See how precious you are before the Almighty -- the Lechem HaPanim is still as fresh and warm now when we're removing it from the Shulchan, a week after being baked, as it was when it was first placed on the Shulchan." This was a great miracle that occurred week after week with the Lechem HaPanim. It remained warm a week after it was baked!

This was the parting message that the Kohanim delivered to the Pilgrims as they were about to return home after spending the Shalosh Regalim in the proximity of the Beis HaMikdash. Rabbi Baruch Simon comments that there were many miracles that the Ribono shel Olam performed in the Beis HaMikdash. Why was specifically this miracle pointed out and shown off to those who came up to Yerushalayim for the Regalim?

He cites an idea from the Pri Tzadik, Rav Tzadok haKohen of Lublin, that the warmth of the Lechem HaPanim was indicative of how the Ribono shel Olam loves Klal Yisrael. There were twelve Lechem HaPanim, corresponding to the twelve Tribes.

When the Almighty kept the twelve Lechem HaPanim warm, He was making the statement "I love you. Our relationship is still warm. It has not dissipated over the past week. And I love all twelve of the Tribes of Israel."

There is a universal minhag, based in Halacha, that a Beis Knesses has twelve windows. The reason for this practice is that each Tribe has its own "pathway" to the Ribono shel Olam. Contrary to what some people may think, Klal Yisrael is not monolithic. We are not a one-size-fits-all religion where just a single approach to Divine Service is appropriate for all Jews. Every Shevet had its own path to the Almighty, and this was signified in the Beis HaMikdash, where there were twelve windows, and so too it is signified in every shul, which also has twelve windows.

The approach of Shevet Reuven is different from the approach of Shevet Shimon, and the approach of Shevet Gad is different from the approach of Shevet Dan. But, the Lechem HaPanim of all those twelve Tribes is still warm a week after having been taken out of the oven, because the Ribono shel Olam loves the approaches advanced by each of the Tribes. Of course, this is predicated on the fact that they are all done k'Das u'k'Din -- based on Torah and Halacha. But there are nuances and differences. We all know that. There is Nussach Sfarad and Nussach Ashkenaz. There are Chassidim and Misnagdim. There are different approaches. Every Tribe has its own approach, and they are all dear to the Almighty.

What better message can be imparted to Klal Yisroel as they head back home to their communities where they live together with people who are different, and who may have different approaches. Their approaches are as valid as your approach. That is what will keep us together as a unified nation. When everyone has the affirmation that the approach of each Tribe -- as long as it is done k'Din u'k'Das -- is precious to the Almighty, then we will have greater Achdus in Klal Yisrael. This is the message that the Olei Regalim are left with as they head back home to their local communities.

This is an important message to keep in mind during the weeks of Sefirah when we observe partial laws of mourning because of the disciples of Rabbi Akiva who died during the period because they did not show proper honor and respect for their fellow Jews. No one should disparage the legitimate approach of his fellow member of Klal Yisrael just because he does things somewhat differently. © 2022 Rav Y. Frand & torah.org

