



Parshat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rabbi Hanoch Teller

Parshat Kedoshim begins, "*Kedoshim tiyheu.*" You shall be holy. Separating oneself from the degrading mores of the general populace is the beginning of sanctity. The Ramban explains this command: sanctify yourself with what is permitted to you. The Torah commands us not be *naval b'reshut haTorah*. Do not be disgusting within the boundaries of the Torah. The Maharal points out that *Kedoshim tiheyu* is an introduction to all the *mitzvot* that follow.

The commandment to honor one's parents is written next to the *mitzvah* of Shabbat to teach us that although one is obligated to honor and respect one's parents, one's obligation to Hashem comes first. Honoring parents means assisting and serving one's parents. Fearing them means displaying proper respect towards them. The *parsha* continues with the commandment not to curse

a deaf person. Why does the Torah single out such a person? Rashi answers that it is adjuring us that one must not curse anyone, even a deaf person who will not hear or suffer from it. "Do not put a stumbling block before a blind man." One may not give someone who is blind in a specific area the wrong advice. This includes leading someone astray in *halacha*. The verse ends, "And you shall fear Hashem," The person you're advising has no idea if the advice you are giving is good or not.

The *parsha* continues, "*B'tzedek tishpot et amitecha.*" Judge your fellow Jew favorably. Chazal say, "*Hevei dan et kol adam l'kaf zechut.*" You have to take into account a person's complete background, upbringing, personality, and education. It is impossible to know all this. Therefore, judge him favorably. The Gemara says, "Judgment is in the morning and say to wisdom you are my sister."

The sages explain that a judge may not judge the case until he knows the laws relating to it as well as the law that one may not marry one's sister. In addition, one must understand the reality of the case as clearly as one knows that morning is morning. Unless you know exactly what occurred and all pertinent laws you may not render a decision. We don't always hear things correctly. People speak quickly, have different accents, and then there are times when we see and hear everything but miss one crucial detail. Therefore, one should always judge favorably.

The *parsha* discusses that one must be careful to maintain meticulous weights. Lying regarding a measurement invokes upon a person all the curses given to a judge who doesn't judge justly. Being honest brings the *geulah* closer. May we merit the final redemption speedily in our days.

Shalom Bayit – Builder of Her Home: Challah#2

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

In this class, Rebbetzin Heller discusses the choices a woman can make. She can choose to do what she has to do because it has to get done. Or she can work to connect it all to Hashem by seeing her life as a puzzle with many pieces and wanting to put the pieces where they are meant to be.

"*Bayom hahu yiyhe hashem echad ushemo echad.*" At the end of time Hashem will be one and His name will be one. In the future we will see how everything traces back to Him. The completion of His name comes through the wife whose primary role is to unite the physical with the spiritual. The basic connection comes through the husband and his Torah learning.

Hashem fashioned the world in a way that His glory could shine through into the world. He used physical dimensions and words to tell us how to bring His presence into our lives. Hashem told Moshe, "Make me a sanctuary so I'll live among you." He revealed to Moshe His *koach hatzimzum*, His capacity to reduce His presence to something we can grasp. The

Mishkan was a place where Hashem's revelation could be felt. Its precise measurements and each of its numbers and letters reflected different heavenly secrets. A woman's family depends on her for what they imbibe. The ability to meld spirituality with real life is the strength of a woman. Baking bread and uplifting it through the *mitzvah* of *challah* brings blessing into the home. In earlier times, *challah* was given to a kohen. It was a visible and concrete sacrifice. Today, when we no longer have the *beit hamikdash*, a woman fulfills her mission by giving what she has and what she is to Hashem. When there is *shalom bayit* and the couple appreciates and contributes to one another, when the *heh* and the *yud* become one, then the home is transformed into a *mishkan* for Hashem.

The Gemara says transgressing the *mitzvah* of *challah* is very severe. *Challah* makes it possible for us to see ourselves as *reishit*. First and foremost we must be dedicated to Hashem. The Midrash in Bereishit Rabbah says that of the different things that are the cornerstone of Hashem's creativity, the very first one is *challah*. The foundation of the

mitzvah is uplifting physicality. The *mitzvah* of *challah* is much like the Jewish people. It connects the soul and body. Virtually all other religions view transcendence as an ideal. Judaism teaches that one must elevate materialism. In that sense we are *reishit*. We are the purpose for which Hashem created the world. He gave us the *mitzvot* so that we could tap into our souls. Every detail of *halacha* changes us and our relationship to Him. When we eat with holiness, a bond is created between us and the *tahara* (purity) Hashem demands of us.

Bread is called *mazon halev*, sustenance of the heart, because in order to produce it you have to invest yourself. Everything about a human is included in the process of baking bread. The more you put yourself into it, the more your self, in the Jewish sense, is caught within. Connection comes through sharing and food is the main conduit in giving to one's family and Hashem. This kind of uplifting is an essential way in which a woman fulfills her purpose.



Pesach Sheini

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles

In the second year after the Jewish people left Egypt, a group of Jews approached Moshe. They were impure and could not bring the *korban Pesach*. They asked, why should we be lose out? Although they were technically exempt from the *mitzva*, they desired a second chance. Hashem saw their yearning and gave them Pesach Sheini. Why did He designate one day for the makeup offering? Why did He not make it open for people to bring the second sacrifice whenever they wanted?

The Zohar writes that every year a great light descends on the night of Pesach. It's a time of love and intimacy, a night of deep divine revelation and closeness to Hashem. This great light remains for 30 days. Not only did the people want to bring the *korban*, they wanted to connect to this holiness. *Pesach Sheini* was Hashem's way of providing a fresh opportunity for those who had missed the intensity of the first experience. Therefore, there needed to be a universal time. After 30 days, when the *Pesach* experience is completed, Hashem opens a new gate.

Pesach Sheini occurs in the fifth week of *sefirat hamoer*, the week of the *mida* called *hod*. *Hod* is one of the lower levels of *sefirot*. This implies that even people who have sunk to the deepest depths can raise themselves up and come back to Hashem. The Netivot Shalom writes that the *tamei l'nefesh*, people who have become impure, who are far from *emunah* and were not able to tap into the light of *Pesach* can connect to the special sanctity of *Pesach Sheini*. Although we don't have the *Beit Hamikdash* today and cannot offer the

Korban Pesach, the conceptual aspects remain. On *Pesach Sheini* we can return to Hashem.

The fifth week of *hod* corresponds to the fifth *ushpizin*, Aharon. *Hod* is *bitul*, submission. Aharon's essence was peace. He gave in to the will of the people. He subdued his personal desires to rejoice in his brother Moshe's good fortune. Aharon represents the model of bringing Jews closer to Hashem. Similarly, *Pesach Sheini* is about *shalom*. No matter what we've done, Hashem beckons us to return. Aharon kindled the *menorah* at twilight. He ignited the souls lost in the murky darkness of confusion.

Similarly, we celebrate Lag Ba'omer with bonfires in the week of *hod*, on the *yartzheit* of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Rabbi Shimon taught that every Jew, no matter how far he has strayed, is connected to a letter in the Torah. Just as every letter can be studied on the levels of *pardes*, on a simple or secret level, every Jew's soul can be understood in the same ways. *Hod* is about discerning this potential within every person and within ourselves. The flames of Lag Ba'omer represent the tiny eternal spark within us that yearn for closeness to Hashem.

So many *mitzvot* and *yomim tovim* are connected to the exodus because *Pesach* teaches us that a Jew must never lose hope. At the time of *yetziat Mitzrayim*, the Jews had sunk to the 49th level of impurity. Yet Hashem had faith in their inner potential and redeemed them. No Jew is ever lost. When the people said, "*Lamah nigara*," it wasn't a question but a request. Although they knew they weren't

obligated, their love for the *mitzvot* compelled them to ask for another chance. They did not give up. They did not know that Hashem would give them *Pesach Sheini*. They asked and prayed and believed Hashem would do what was best. *Pesach Sheini* is about taking control. It's saying, "My life circumstances won't overtake me. I have the ability to change."

We often imprison ourselves within our limitations and fears. In reality, the door isn't locked. The sky's the limit what we can achieve. Our job is to push forward and grow. The end results are not in our hands. But we can pray for *chesed* and *rachamim* and trust that Hashem will do what is ultimately good. All of our *tefilot* and good intentions make an impression. Each attempt to overcome our evil inclination is precious to Hashem. We have to keep on trying.

The Leket V'halibuv writes that the key to success is focusing on the moment. We see that each day of *sefirah* is counted separately. Ask yourself, "What does Hashem want of me right now?" We have the power to elevate each moment for *kedusha*.

The Leket V'halibuv teaches that the people came to Moshe and stated their condition clearly. One of the 48 ways of acquiring Torah is *hamakir et mekomo*, recognizing your place. You have to be able to say I know where I am. That's the prerequisite to moving forward and with that, the law of *Pesach Sheini* was created. In the week of *hod* we too can turn to Hashem and say, "I know where I'm at. Help me to ascend further."