

ACHAREI MOS

אַחֲרֵי מוֹת

16¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they drew near before the Lord, and they died. ² And the Lord said to Moses: Speak to your brother Aaron, that he should not come at all times into the Holy within the dividing curtain, in front of the cover that is upon the ark, so that he should not die, for I appear over the ark cover in a cloud.* ³ With this shall Aaron enter the Holy:* with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ⁴ He shall wear a holy tunic* and linen pants shall be upon his flesh, and he shall gird himself with a linen sash and wear a linen cap these are holy garments, [and therefore,] he shall immerse himself in water and don them.

participating in the *Avodah* of Yom Kippur. The identity of the corpse makes no difference: whether it is the body of a king or a simple shepherd, all men carry within them the image of God. Mankind is redeemed only when the honor and the value of the individual are upheld simply on the basis of his humanity, not based on his position or accomplishment. (Mipeninei Harav, pp. 56-58)

There is a disagreement between Resh Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan regarding the reason that we sequester the *Kohen Gadol* for seven days prior to Yom Kippur (*Yoma* 2a). According to Rabbi Yochanan, the rule is derived from the precedent of the inauguration of the Mishkan in the desert (*miluim*), where Aaron and his sons were separated from their families for seven days. Disagreeing with Rabbi Yochanan, Resh Lakish maintains that the reason the *Kohen Gadol* must be sequestered is because one cannot enter the presence of God without first being isolated for six days. He learns this from the precedent of Moses, who waited six days before ascending Mount Sinai (*Ex.* 24:16). According to Rabbi Yochanan, the purpose of the sequester is to impart holiness to the *Kohen Gadol* over and above his normal status—the same function as the seven days of the *miluim*. According to Resh Lakish, the purpose of the sequester is not to elevate the personal status of the *Kohen Gadol*; it is a prerequisite to grant license for the *Kohen Gadol* to enter the Holy of Holies through introspection and self-examination.

According to Rabbi Yochanan, during this seven-day prelude the *Kohen Gadol* experiences two fundamental changes of his personal status. On one level, the seven-day period elevates the *Kohen Gadol* until he is the virtual personification of Aaron himself. For this reason the Biblical *Avodah* description refers specifically to tasks that Aaron was to perform (*בְּזֹאת יָבֵא אֶהְרֹן אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ*) rather than a generalized description of the *Kohen Gadol*'s duties. Therefore, just as Aaron underwent a seven-day sequester prior to the *Avodah*, so must every *Kohen Gadol*. On a second level, the *Kohen Gadol* assumes the status of a holy Temple vessel, as he was required to use his hands to transfer incense from the ladle to the coal-pan while in the Holy of Holies. The seven-day period of *Avodah* preparation facilitates both transformations. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 44-56, 69-70)

כְּתִנֶּת בֵּד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ - *He shall wear a holy linen tunic.* Why is only the tunic referred to as holy? Netziv, in his *Ha'amek Davar*, explained that there exists a hierarchy of holiness pertaining to parts of the Torah written on parchment: The holiness of a Torah scroll exceeds that of *tefillin*, which in turn exceeds that of a *mezuzah*. The hierarchy is based on the quantity of Torah sections written in each—the more Torah sections, the greater the holiness. Similarly, the body of the *Kohen Gadol* is comparable to a Torah scroll. Each limb is parallel to a portion of the Torah. Because the tunic covers the largest portion of his body, it is more holy than the other garments, and therefore, it is the only garment which the Torah describes as sanctified. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 73-75)

א וַיִּדְבֶּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אֶהְרֹן בְּקִרְבָּתָם לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה וַיֹּמְרוּ: ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר אֶל־אֶהְרֹן אַחִידֶךָ וְאַל־יָבֵא בְּכָל־עַת אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִבֵּית לַפְּרֻכָּת אֶל־פְּנֵי הַכַּפֹּרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֹרֹן וְלֹא יָמוּת כִּי בִעֲנֹן אֶרְאֶה עַל־הַכַּפֹּרֶת: ג בְּזֹאת יָבֵא אֶהְרֹן אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּפָר בֶּן־בָּקָר לַחֲטָאת וְאַיִל לְעֹלָה: ד כְּתִנֶּת־בֵּד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ וּמְכַנְסֵי־בֵד יִהְיוּ עַל־בְּשָׂרוֹ וּבְאַבְנֵט בֵּד יַחְגֹּר וּבְמִצְנֵפֶת בֵּד יִצְנַף בְּגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרַחֵץ בַּמַּיִם אֶת־בְּשָׂרוֹ וְלִבְשֵׁם:

(א) בואת יבא אהרן וגו'. ואף זו לא בכל עת כי אם ציוס הכפורים, כמו שמפורט בסוף הפרשה בְּזֹאת יָבֵא אֶהְרֹן אַחִידֶךָ וְאַל־יָבֵא בְּכָל־עַת אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ (להלן פסוק טז): (ב) כתנת בד וגו'. מגיד שאינו משמש לפנים בשמונה עגדים שהוא משמש בהן בחוץ שיש בהם זהב, לפי שאין קטיגור נעשה סניגור, אלא בארבעה כהן הדיוט, וכולן של טיף: קודש ילבש. שיהיו משל הקדש: יצנף. כתרומתו יחית צרישיה, יינת צראשו, כמו וַתִּפְתַּח פְּנֵי (צראשיה לט, טו) ואחתמה: ורחץ במים. אותו היום טעון טבילה בכל חליפותיו. וחמש פעמים היה מחליף, מעבודת פנים לעבודת חוץ, ומחוץ לפנים, ומשנה מנגדי זהב לנגדי לָנָן מנגדי זהב, ובכל חליפה טעון טבילה ושי קדושי ידים ורגלים מן הכיור:

(ב) וידבר ה' אל משה אחרי מות שני בני אהרן וגו'. מה תלמוד לומר, היה רצי אלעזר בן עזריה מושלו משל, למולה שזכנם אלנו רופא, אמר לו אל תאכל זונן ואל תשכב בטמא. זה אמר ואמר לו, אל תאכל זונן ואל תשכב בטמא שלא תמות כדרך שמת פלוני, זה וזו יומר מן הראשון. לכך נאמר אחרי מות שני בני אהרן: (ג) ויאמר ה' אל משה דבר אל אהרן אחיך ואל יבא. כי שלא ימות כדרך שמתו בניו: ולא ימות. שאם זה הוא מת: כי בענו אראה. כי תמיד אני נראה שם עם עמוד ענני, ולפי שגלוי שכינתי שם זהר שלא ירגיל לנא, זהו פשוטו. ומדרשו, לא יבא כי אם צענן הקטרת ציוס הכפורים: (א) בואת. גימטריא שלו ארבע מאות ועשר, רמז לצית ראשון:

וְאַל יָבֵא בְּכָל עַת אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ...כִּי בִעֲנֹן אֶרְאֶה עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת עַל הַקֹּדֶשׁ - *he should not come at all times into the Holy..for I appear over the ark cover in a cloud.* The precise procedure for offering the incense was the subject of a debate between the heretical sect known as the Sadducees, who did not accept the Oral Law, and Chazal, centered around the interpretation of this verse. The Sadducees interpreted this verse to mean that the incense is sprinkled on the fire outside the Holy of Holies, and only afterward may the *Kohen Gadol* enter. According to their interpretation, the cloud in the verse refers to the smoke of the incense; God will appear within that smoke as the burning incense is brought into the Holy of Holies.

Chazal, however, interpreted the phrase *עַל הַכַּפֹּרֶת* to refer to the Divine Presence. One may not enter the Holy of Holies at any time he wishes, since God's presence, enveloped in a cloud, appears there. A later verse (verse 13) stipulates explicitly that the incense cannot be placed on the fire outside the Holy of Holies. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 171-174)

בְּזֹאת יָבֵא אֶהְרֹן אֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ - *With this shall Aaron enter the Holy.* Despite the exalted status of the *Kohen Gadol*, the *halachah* states that if he happens upon a dead body where no one has come forward to take care of the burial (*a meis mitzvah*), he must perform this function immediately, even though by coming into contact with the corpse he becomes impure and invalidates himself from

5 And from the community of the children of Israel, he shall take two he goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. 6 And Aaron shall bring his sin offering bull, and and he is to atone for himself and for his household.* 7 And he shall take the two he goats, and place them before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. 8 And Aaron shall place lots upon the two he goats:* one lot "For the Lord," and the other lot, "For Azazel." 9 And Aaron shall bring the he goat upon which the lot, "For the Lord," came up, and designate it as a sin offering. 10 And the he goat upon which the lot "For Azazel" came up, shall be placed while still alive, before the Lord,* to atone upon it, and to send it away to Azazel, into the desert. 11 And Aaron shall bring his sin offering bull, and shall [initiate] atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall [then] slaughter

to a cliff, hurled to its destruction. The Talmud (Yoma 67b) explains that the two goats must be identical in appearance, size and value, and were to be purchased at the same time. Though they resembled each other in every respect, their destinies were entirely different.

Rashi describes how their destinies were decided: [Aaron] placed one goat at his right hand and the other at his left. He then placed both hands into an urn and took one lot in his right hand and the other in his left. These he placed on [each one of] the goats. The goat upon which fell the lot bearing the inscription "laShem" was for the Lord, and that bearing "la'Azazel" was later sent forth to Azazel.

There is a profound idea behind the casting of lots in this ritual of atonement. The penitent argues that his moral directions were influenced by forces beyond his control, that his sinning was not entirely a free and voluntary choice. The Almighty can evaluate the extent of human culpability in situations that are not entirely of man's making. Only God knows to what extent a man was a free agent in making his decisions. The casting of lots is thus a psychodramatic representation of the penitent's state of mind. The compelling intrusion of the unknown and irrational is basic to man's existential condition, and his weakness in the face of such intrusion qualifies him to receive God's compassionate forgiveness on Yom Kippur. Only by entering such a plea can man be declared not guilty. (Reflections of the Rav, Vol. 1, pp. 42-43,46; Mipeninei Harav, p. 308)

And the he goat upon which the lot "For Azazel" came up, shall be placed while still alive before the Lord. Maimonides writes that the scapegoat is so powerful a means of atonement that, even without accompanying repentance, it provides acquittal for all transgressions, except those punishable by a judicial death sentence or a divinely inflicted death penalty (kares).

The owner of the sa'ir hamishtalei'ach is not a particular individual; it is the community, Knesses Yisrael, which possesses its own independent personality. The sacrifice of the scapegoat atones for the sins of each member of the people of Israel who adheres to Knesses Yisrael and remains inseparably linked to it. The individual receives atonement only in his capacity as a member of the community.

It is here that one can understand Maimonides' distinction between sins which are punishable by the death penalty and those which are not. Concerning people deserving of death it is written: This soul shall be cut off from Israel (Num. 19:13) and That soul shall be cut off from the congregation (Num. 19:20). These individuals have done something which banishes them from the community of Israel. Consequently, the communal atonement of the sa'ir hamishtalei'ach will have no effect on them. (Teshuvah Lecture, 1969)

ה ומאת עדת בני ישראל יקח שני-שעירי עזים לחטאת ואיל אחד לעלה: ו והקריב אתהן את-פר החטאת אשר-לו וכפר בעדו ובעד ביתו: ז ולקח את-שני השעירים והעמיד אתם לפני יהוה פתח אהל מועד: ח ונתן אהרן על-שני השעירים גרלות גורל אחד ליהוה וגורל אחד לעזאזל: ט והקריב אהרן את-השעיר אשר עלה עליו הגורל ליהוה ועשהו חטאת: י והשעיר אשר עלה עליו הגורל לעזאזל יעמד-חי לפני יהוה לכפר עליו לשלח אתו לעזאזל המדברה: יא והקריב אהרן את-פר החטאת אשר-לו וכפר בעדו ובעד ביתו ושחט

(1) את פר החטאת אשר לו. הוא האמור למעלה (פסוק ג). ולמדך כאן שמשלו הוא זא ולא משל זכור: וכפר בעדו ובעד ביתו. מתודה עליו עונותיו ועונות צימו: (ב) ונתן אהרן על שני השעירים גרלות. מעמיד אחד לימין ואחד לשמאל, ונתן שמי ידיו צקלפי ונטול גורל צימין וצבדו צשמאל ונתן עליהם, את שכתוב צו לשם הוא לשם ואת שכתוב צו לעזאזל משתלה לעזאזל: עזאזל. הוא הר עז וקשה, זוק גבוה, שנאמר (להלן פסוק כג) אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה, חמוכה: (ט) ועשהו חטאת. כשמניח הגורל עליו קורא לו שם ואומר לה' חטאת: (י) יעמד חי. כמו

and he is to atone for himself and for his household. In a vision recorded in the Book of Zachariah, an angel removed the "soiled clothes" of Joshua prior to his assuming the position of Kohen Gadol. Chazal interpreted this vision as a command for Joshua's children to divorce their gentile spouses. The question arises as to why the status of Joshua's children affected his ability to serve as Kohen Gadol. Rav Moshe Soloveitchik explained in the name of his father, Rav Chaim, that the disqualification relates to Yom Kippur, on which the Kohen Gadol must request atonement for his household. The plea of the Kohen Gadol to gain atonement for himself and his household presupposes that his household is capable of receiving atonement. However, had Joshua's children not divorced their gentile spouses, they would have been unable to receive atonement because of their wanton rejection of Judaism. Joshua thus would not have been able to request forgiveness on their behalf, and would have been disqualified from serving as Kohen Gadol. Hence, Joshua's children had to divorce their gentile spouses before he was allowed to perform the Avodah of Yom Kippur. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 41-42; Mesorah, Vol. 2, p. 22)

And Aaron shall place lots upon the two he goats. Two male goats were set aside, one to be sacrificed to God, and the other (the sa'ir hamishtalei'ach) to be sent

his sin offering bull. 12 And he shall take a pan full of burning coals from upon the altar, from before the Lord, and both hands full* of fine incense, and bring [it] within the dividing curtain. 13 And he shall place the incense upon the fire, before the Lord,* so that the cloud of the incense shall envelope the ark cover that is over the [tablets of] Testimony, so that he shall not die.* 14 And he shall take some of the bull's blood and sprinkle [it] with his index finger on top of the ark cover on the eastern side; and before the ark cover,* he shall sprinkle seven times from the blood, with his index finger. 15 He shall then slaughter the he goat of the people's sin offering and bring its blood within the dividing curtain, and he shall do with its blood as he had done with the bull's blood, and he shall sprinkle it upon the ark cover and before the ark cover. 16 And he shall effect atonement upon the Holy from the defilements of the children of Israel and from their rebellions and all their unintentional sins. He shall do likewise to the Tent of Meeting, which dwells with them amidst their defilements.*

amount of incense from the ladle into the palm of his hand, without dropping a single particle. The *Talmud Yerushalmi* (*Yoma* 5:3) notes that although during the First Temple the Ark itself provided illumination, during the Second Temple the Holy of Holies was completely dark. For the *Kohen Gadol* to perform this aspect of the *Avodah* properly was an almost superhuman feat. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 6, p. 176)

The *even shesiyah* is probably not the rock located in the mosque known as the Dome of the Rock presently found on the Temple Mount. That rock is much taller than the prescribed three finger widths in height, although it is conceivable that the area surrounding the rock eroded over time. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 6, p. 182)

And he shall place the incense upon the fire, before the Lord...so that he shall not die. The verse explicitly states that there is a death penalty for anyone who deviates from this procedure and does not place the incense in the Holy of Holies, while before the Lord. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 6, pp. 171-174; see commentary on verse 2)

Netziv, in his *Ha'amek Davar*, offers a different approach. The Torah adds the phrase *so that he shall not die*, Netziv suggests, to teach us that none of the other services that take place in the Holy of Holies can occur without first offering incense. The incense serves as a *mattir*, a license, for the subsequent entry to perform the sprinkling ritual that occurs later in the service. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 6, pp. 161-162)

before the ark cover. When he reentered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood, the *Kohen Gadol* was to stand in the precise location where he had earlier burned the incense. The license (*mattir*) to reenter the Holy of Holies was the prior offering of the incense, and was limited to that precise spot. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 6, p. 182)

which dwells with them amidst their defilements. We know from daily experience that the father loves to stand beside his baby's cradle and rock it—when the baby is clean. If the baby dirties his diaper, the father will often immediately call to the baby's mother to clean the baby, while he stands aside. The mother, on the other hand, is constantly ready to clean the baby and do all necessary unpleasant tasks.

So is it in the spiritual world. The Creator relates to us as a mother relates to her child. He hears the cries resulting from man's spiritual crisis and immediately appears to offer help. At that

את־כַּף הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ: יב וְלָקַח מִלֶּאֱהֻמַּחֲתָה גַחְלִי־אֵשׁ מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִלֶּפְנֵי יְהוָה וּמִלֶּאֱ הַכֶּטֶת סָמִים דָּקָה וְהֵבִיא מִבֵּית לְפָרְכָת: יג וְנָתַן אֶת־ הַכֶּטֶת עַל־הָאֵשׁ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וְכִסָּה ׀ עַנְנֵי הַכֶּטֶת אֶת־הַכֶּפֶרֶת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעֵדוּת וְלֹא יָמוּת: יד וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וְהִזָּה בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ עַל־פְּנֵי הַכֶּפֶרֶת קְדָמָה וְלִפְנֵי הַכֶּפֶרֶת יוֹזֵה שִׁבְע־פַּעְמִים מִן־הַדָּם בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ: טו וְשָׁחַט אֶת־שְׂעִיר הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר לָעֵם וְהֵבִיא אֶת־דָּמּוֹ אֶל־ מִבֵּית לְפָרְכָת וְעָשָׂה אֶת־דָּמּוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָם הַפָּר וְהִזָּה אֹתוֹ עַל־הַכֶּפֶרֶת וְלִפְנֵי הַכֶּפֶרֶת: טז וְכִפֵּר עַל־ הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִטְּמֵאת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּמִפְשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם וְכִן יַעֲשֶׂה לְאַהֲל מוֹעֵד הַשָּׁכָן אֹתָם בְּתוֹךְ טְמֵאתָם:

על ישראל, והוא השעיר שעלה עליו הגורל לשם: כאשר עשה לדם הפר. אחת למעלה ושבע למטה: (טו) משמאות בני ישראל. על הנכנסין למקדש בטומאה ולא נודע להם בסוף, שנאמר לכל הטאחס, וטאחס היא שוגג: ומפשעיהם. אף הנכנסין מויד בטומאה: וכן יעשה לאהל מועד. כשם שהזהר משניהם צניח אחת למעלה ושבע למטה, כך מזהר על הפרוכת מצדו משניהם אחת למעלה ושבע למטה: הישובן אתם בתוך טמאותם. אף על פי שהם טמאים שניהם צניחם: (יב) מעל המזבח. החינוך: מלפני ה'. מלך שלפני הפתח, והוא לז מערב: דקה. מה חלמוד לומר דקה, והלא כל הקטורת דקה היא שנאמר (שמות ל, לו) וְשָׁחַטָהּ מִמִּנֵּה דֶקֶק, אלא שהיא דקה מן הדקה, שבערב יום הכפורים היה מחזירה למכתשת: (יג) על האש. שנתוך המחתה. ולא ימות. הא אם לא עשאה קטקנה חייב מימה: (יד) והזהר באצבעו. הזהר אחת צממע: ולפני הכפרת יזה שבע. הרי אחת למעלה ושבע למטה: (טז) אשר לעם. מה שהפר מכפר על הכהנים מכפר השעיר

and both hands full. Two rules are derived from this verse. First, the requisite amount of incense offered in the Holy of Holies is that amount which can be held in the palms of the *Kohen Gadol*, which naturally varied with the size of the palm of each *Kohen Gadol*. Second, unlike the incense offering throughout the year which attained its holiness by placement in the *bazach* (the dish designated for incense), on Yom Kippur, the *Kohen Gadol* himself vested holiness in the incense simply by holding it. Thus, on Yom Kippur, the *Kohen Gadol* himself assumed the nature of a holy vessel. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 6, pp. 71-73)

And he shall place the incense upon the fire, before the Lord. The Mishnah (*Yoma* 5:1-2) describes the procedure of the *Kohen Gadol*'s offering of the incense. The *Kohen Gadol* would take the incense ladle in his left hand and the pan of coals in his right hand. He would then enter the Holy of Holies. He placed the pan containing the coals before the Ark (during the First Temple) or on a rock three finger widths high known as the *even shesiyah* (during the Second Temple, when the Ark was no longer there), thus freeing his right hand. He held the ladle of incense between his thumb and his palm (or between his teeth). He then transferred the entire

17 And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to effect atonement in the Holy, until he comes out. * And he shall effect atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18 And he shall then go out to the altar that is before the Lord and effect atonement upon it: He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the he goat's blood, and place it on the horns of the altar, around. 19 He shall then sprinkle some of the blood upon it with his index finger seven times, and he shall cleanse it and sanctify it of the defilements of the children of Israel. 20 And he shall finish effecting atonement for the Holy, the Tent of Meeting, and the altar, and then he shall bring the live he goat. 21 And Aaron shall lean both of his hands [forcefully] upon the live he goat's head and confess upon it* all the willful transgressions of the children of Israel, all their rebellions,

chuppah is yichud, no one else can be present; the presence of a stranger destroys yichud. (The Lord is Righteous, p. 196)

~ ~ ~ וְסָמָךְ אֶהְרֹן אֶת שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עַל רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר הַחַי וְהִתְוַדָּה עָלָיו - And Aaron shall lean both of his hands [forcefully] upon the live he goat's head and confess upon it. Confession over the head of the goat is an allusion to sins resulting from man's tendency to be overly practical, to act exclusively in accordance with one's head rather than one's heart. The modern Jew is very utilitarian and practical, expending most of his energy on accumulating wealth. Lacking a spiritual sensitivity, he acts with his head rather than his heart. (Yemei Zikaron, p. 121)

~ ~ ~ וְהִתְוַדָּה עָלָיו - and confess upon it. The Kohen Gadol's confession does not include remorse or resolve not to sin again, both of which are necessary for individual confession. When reciting a communal confession—for his family, for other kohanim, and for all of Israel, respectively—the Kohen Gadol could not express remorse because he cannot do teshuvah for the sins of others. As recited by the Kohen Gadol, vidui is not an expression of teshuvah but serves as a means of communal kapparah, as atonement, just as a communal sacrifice performs this function.

In a real sense, the pain and remorse associated with sincere vidui serve as an actual sacrifice which performs a kapparah function. Confession, which is not merely a perfunctory verbalization of a set formula but is bound up with tribulations of the soul and pangs of conscience, shall be deemed a sacrifice.

Confession compels man—in a state of terrible torment—to admit facts as they really are, to give clear expression to the truth. This, indeed, is a sacrifice, a breaking of the will; a tortuous negation of human nature. Both remorse and shame are involved in this process. You have taught us, O Lord, our God, to confess before You all of our sins—to look inward at the truth, to look ourselves straight in the eye, to overcome our mechanism of self-defense, to smash asunder the artificial barriers, to go against our natural inclination to run and hide, to tear down the screen, to put into words what our hearts have already determined—so that we may desist from the violence of our hands. And then—Accept us as we come before thee in full repentance, as burnt offerings and sweet-smelling incense (Amidah of Yom Kippur Ne'ilah). Just as the sacrifice is burned upon the altar, so do we burn down, by our act of confession, our well-barricaded complacency, our overblown pride, our artificial existence. (Teshuvah Lecture, 1967; Shiurei Harav Hagaon R. Yosef Dov Halevi on Maseches Yoma, p. 141)

וְכָל אָדָם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד בְּבֹאֵו לְכַפֵּר בְּקֹדֶשׁ עַד-צֵאתוֹ וְכַפֵּר בְּעֵדוֹ וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ וּבְעֵד כָּל-קָהֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל: שֵׁנִי יָח וַיֵּצֵא אֶל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי-יְהוָה וְכַפֵּר עָלָיו וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וּמִדָּם הַשְּׂעִיר וְנָתַן עַל-קַרְנֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: יֵט וְהִזָּה עָלָיו מִן-הַדָּם בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ שִׁבְעַת פְּעָמִים וּטְהַרְוֹ וּקְדָשׁוֹ מִטְמֵאוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: כ וְכָל־הַ מְכַפֵּר אֶת-הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהַקָּרִיב אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר הַחַי: כֹּא וְסָמָךְ אֶהְרֹן אֶת-שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עַל-רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר הַחַי וְהִתְוַדָּה עָלָיו אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת-כָּל-פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם

(יט) אל המזבח אשר לפני ה'. זה מוצג הזהב, שהוא לפני ה' צהיכל. ומה תלמוד לומר ויאל, לפי שהוא הזאות על הפרוכת ועמד מן המוצג ולפנים הזה, וצמתנות המוצג הזקיקו ללאה מן המוצג ולחוק, ויחמיל מקרן מזרחית

צפוינת: וכפר עליו. ומה היא כפרתו, זולקת מדם הפר ומדם השעיר מעורבני זה לתוך זה: זה (יט) והזה עליו מן הדם. אחר שנתן מתנות צאלצבו על קרנותיו מזה שבע הזאות על גגו: ושהרו. ממה שעבר: וקדשו. לעמיד לנא:

moment, the Holy One, Blessed be He, does not make an accounting of previous sins that man may have done. When man finds himself in overwhelming distress, the Shechinah-mother strengthens her efforts. The Shechinah is present at the moment that man is in distress and suffers from spiritual crisis, dwells with them amidst their defilements.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, becomes impure, as it were, from the iniquities of the Children of Israel. Sin is contaminating, and even the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it were, becomes contaminated. But the Shechinah never departs completely from any Jew, no matter how far he has gone or how deep he has immersed himself in sin. God is there after man sins. He remains hidden in the inner recesses of the heart of even the worst evildoer until the moment arrives when he remembers his Maker, renounces his ways and repents. (Ha'Adam Ve'Olam, p. 19)

~ ~ ~ וְכָל אָדָם לֹא יִהְיֶה בְּאֹהֶל מוֹעֵד בְּבֹאֵו לְכַפֵּר בְּקֹדֶשׁ עַד צֵאתוֹ - And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to effect atonement in the Holy, until he comes out. According to Jewish law, the revelation at Sinai symbolizes the erusin, the betrothal, of Knesses Yisrael to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The entire Knesses Yisrael stood at the foot of the mountain, ready to enter into this relationship. When they built the Mishkan, the marriage, the nisu'in, was completed. In this view, erusin was translated into nisu'in with the building of the Mishkan.

The Mishkan and Beis Hamikdash, then, are the symbols of the marriage of Knesses Yisrael to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. I will arrange My meetings with you there (Ex. 25:22) is the yichud, the chuppah.

The verse says, And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to effect atonement in the Holy, until he comes out. Why? Because service in the Mikdash is an act of marriage, and since

and all their unintentional sins, and he shall place them on the he goat's head, and send it off to the desert with a designated person.* 22 The he goat shall thus carry upon itself all their sins* to a precipitous land,* and he shall send off the he goat into the desert.*

— אֵל אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה - to a precipitous land. The ritual of the *sa'ir la'Azazel* was classified by Chazal as a *chok*, a statute which cannot be understood (*Yoma* 67b). However, Nachmanides (verse 8) developed a most enigmatic rationale for this ritual. He first quotes Pirkei DeRabi Eliezer (chapter 46), which states that on Yom Kippur, the *Satan* not only ceases to indict the Jewish people but, paradoxically, acts as their defense attorney. God thus commanded us, in return, to sacrifice the *sa'ir la'Azazel* as an offering to the *Satan*. Nachmanides in his comment suggests that, in fact, both the *sa'ir la'Shem* and the *sa'ir la'Azazel* were sacrifices to God, but that that God Himself offers the latter to *Azazel*—the *Satan*.

What is the idea behind this “offering to the *Satan*”? The necessity for offering sacrifices as a means of atonement is not limited to the time that the *Beis Hamikdash* was in existence. Even nowadays, one must offer sacrifices. Today, these sacrifices are known as *yisurin*, suffering (*Yoma* 86a). *Yisurin* can be described in general terms as defeat, when man feels that he has lost a battle, that his efforts are for naught. In the constant struggle of life, whenever there is a discrepancy between ambition and realization, between aspiration and reality, man experiences defeat. These negative, destructive forces are indifferent and cruel. Man suffers, loses, feels frustrated and lonely. The feelings of sorrow, of disappointment, of frustration that man endures are often for the sake of petty human cupidity, financial covetousness or craving for honor. This terrible feeling of alienation and loneliness are due to his pursuit of futile vanities. These involuntary defeats that are imposed upon man are represented by the *sa'ir la'Azazel*.

When man regrets all those sacrifices offered up to Satan, when he repents on Yom Kippur, God will accept the *yisurin* as an atonement—even though the suffering itself was experienced through the pursuit of futility, as a sacrifice to Satan rather than an offering to God. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 6, pp. 194-206; *Teshuvah Lecture*, 1972)

— וְשִׁלַּח אֶת הַשְּׂעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר - and he shall send off the he goat into the desert. A person is blessed with free will. This gift was not given to inanimate objects whose essential nature is passive. Free will, however, allows man to fulfill his role as a subject, as one who acts. Sin occurs when man becomes an object, when he is transformed from a creator to a victim.

The simplest verbs which denote the dichotomy between a subject and an object are those of ascent and descent, respectively. Ascent involves an act of overcoming the force of gravity, while descent involves succumbing to this force. Gravity is a force that is not characteristic of personality; it is characteristic of objects, things. If a person loses his dynamic, subjective existence and cannot counteract various forces which tend to pull him downward, he is acting as a simple object.

The object most closely identified with sin is the *sa'ir hamishtalei'ach*, the scapegoat. The Mishnah in *Yoma* 67a describes the ultimate fate of the scapegoat in the ritual: *It went backward, and it rolled and descended until it was halfway down the mountain, where it became dismembered into many parts*. Can there be a more accurate description of what sin itself does to a person? Even before his total descent he is broken apart, an abject victim of gravity. (*Before Hashem*, pp. 31-32)

לְכָל-חַטָּאתָם וְנָתַן אֹתָם עַל-רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר וְשִׁלַּח בְּיַד-אִישׁ עֵתִי הַמִּדְבָּרָה: כִּב וְנָשָׂא הַשְּׂעִיר עָלָיו אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹתָם אֶל-אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה וְשִׁלַּח אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר: לְכָל חַטָּאתָם וְנָתַן אֹתָם עַל רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר וְשִׁלַּח בְּיַד אִישׁ עֵתִי לַמִּדְבָּרָה: כִּב וְנָשָׂא הַשְּׂעִיר עָלָיו אֶת כָּל חַטָּאתָם אֶל-אֶרֶץ גְּזֵרָה וְשִׁלַּח אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר:

(כב) איש עתי. המוכן לכך מיום אמונו:

— בְּיַד אִישׁ עֵתִי - with a designated person. When the Jew, on Yom Kippur, sought to symbolize the contrast between the temporality of the moment, and time as one living, creative stream, and the consequences of each, he prepared two sacrifices, *sa'ir la'Shem* and *sa'ir la'Azazel*. There were two distinctions between the two goats. The *sa'ir la'Shem* was under the aegis of the *Kohen Gadol*, symbol of tradition and eternity, of qualitative time; and it was confined to the *Azarah*, symbol of *kedushas makom*, place-consciousness. On the other hand, the *sa'ir la'Azazel* was under the supervision of the *ish iti*, the “man of the moment,” symbol of temporality and quantitative time; it was confined to no place and welcome to none. Place and time went hand in hand. And what did this *ish iti*, temporal man, do to sustain himself while following the homeless scapegoat? He stopped at the “ten booths” set up on the way from Jerusalem to the cliff. In each booth was placed water and food. Time-unconscious man wanders from one resting place to another, seeking sustenance for the moment. He has neither place-consciousness nor time-consciousness. Only the *sa'ir la'Shem*, who had both, was a fitting consecration to God. The other became a nomad with no past, present or future. He had no other fate but the wastelands. (*Sacred and Profane*, pp. 21-22)

— וְנָשָׂא הַשְּׂעִיר עָלָיו אֶת כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתָם - The he goat shall thus carry upon itself all their sins. The Midrash explains this verse as follows: “The he goat shall carry upon itself”—that is Esau, as it is written [Gen. 27:11], Behold, my brother Esau is a hairy man [שָׁעַר]. “All their iniquities [עֲוֹנוֹתָם]”—the iniquities of the simple one [עֲוֹנוֹת תָּם], as it is written [Gen. 25:27], Jacob was a simple man [אִישׁ תָּם] (*Bereishis Rabbah* 65:15).

How are we to understand the expression *עֲוֹנוֹת תָּם*, “the iniquities of the simple”? If this refers to sins (*עֲוֹנוֹתָם*), where is the *temimus* (wholesomeness)? How can these two opposing terms be paired in this description?

The answer to this question is based in the principle that the Jew, at his essence, always seeks to fulfill *mitzvos*. Despite his transgression and even at the very moment that he is committing it, a Jew remains in some way *tam*—wholesome and pure. Sin does not come from his inner personality, but is external to him. Often it is a product of environmental influences and the cultural ambience of the non-Jewish world around him. Since the sin is not internal or inherent, it is compared to a particle of dirt that lodges in one's garment or skin. This requires only a wiping away (*kapparah*) to remove it. Therefore, on Yom Hakippurim, we ask for *kapparah*.

This is the source of our perpetual ability to do *teshuvah*, as well as the foundation of the *korbanos* introduced in *Parashas Vayikra*. Deep down, a Jew only wants to fulfill God's will. Therefore, sin is not rooted in his soul. It is merely a response to external stimuli. Since the Jew's desire to do God's will is stronger than any other impulse within him, it generates a permanent ability to overcome the evil inclination and return wholeheartedly to God. (*Darosh Darash Yosef*, pp. 212-213)

23 And Aaron shall enter the Tent of Meeting* and remove the linen garments that he had worn when he came into the Holy, and there, he shall store them away. 24 And he shall immerse his flesh in a holy place and don his garments. He shall then go out and sacrifice his burnt offering and the people's burnt offering, and he shall effect atonement for himself and for the people. 25 And he shall cause the fat of the sin offering to go up in smoke upon the altar. 26 And the person who sent off the he goat to Azazel, shall immerse his garments and immerse his flesh in water. And after this, he may come into the camp. 27 And the sin offering bull and he goat of the sin offering, [both of] whose blood was brought to effect atonement in the Holy, he shall take outside the camp, and they shall burn in fire their hides, their flesh, and their waste. 28 And the person who burns them shall immerse his garments and immerse his flesh in water. And after this, he may come into the camp. 29 And [all this] shall be as an eternal statute for you; in the seventh month, on the tenth of the month, you shall afflict yourselves,* and you shall not do any work neither the native nor the stranger who dwells among you.

ליום, אצל הראשונה הייתה צילוי: ולבש את בגדיו. שמנה צגדים שהוא עובד בהן כל ימות השנה: ויצא. מן ההיכל אל החצר שמוצת העולה שם: ועשה את עולתו. איל [ואיל] לעולה האמור למעלה (פסוק ג) צואת צא אהרן וגו': ואת עלת העם. ואיל אקד לעלה האמור למעלה (פסוק ה) ואת עדת צני יקראל וגו': (כ) ואת חלב החטאת. אמורי פר ושעיר: יקטיר המזבחה. על מוצת החיטון, דאילו בפנימי כתיב לא תעלו עליו קטרת וקדש ועלה ומנחה (שמות ל, ט): (כ) אשר הובא את דמם. להיכל ולפני ולפני:

אל המטבח (פסוק ט), וצא אהרן (פסוק כג): והניחם שם. מלמד שטעונו גזירה, ולא ישחמש צאותן ארבעה צגדים ליום הכפורים אחר: (כד) ורחץ את בשרו וגו'. למעלה למדנו מן קטרת אהרן וצגדו (פסוק ד) שכשהוא משנה מצגדי זה צגד לכן טעון טבילה, שכשהוא טבילה פשט צגדי זה צגד זה עבודת חמיד של שחר ולבש צגדי לכן לעבודת היום, וכאן למדנו שכשהוא משנה מצגדי לכן צגדי זה טעון טבילה: במקום קדוש. המקדש צקדושת עזרה, והיא הייתה צג צית הפרוה, וכן ארבע טבילות הצאות מוצה

כג ובא אהרן אל-אהל מועד ופשט את-בגדי הַבָּד אשר לבש בבואו אל-הקדש והניחם שם: כד ורחץ את-בשרו במים במקום קדוש ולבש את-בגדיו ויצא ועשה את-עלתו ואת-עלת העם וכפר בעדו ובעד העם: שלישי שני כשהו מחוברין כה ואת חלב החטאת יקטיר המזבחה: כו והמשלח את-השעיר לעזאזל יכבס בגדיו ורחץ את-בשרו במים ואחרי-כן יבוא אל-המחנה: כז ואת פר החטאת ואת שעיר החטאת אשר הובא את-דמם לכפר בקדש יוציא אל-מחויץ למחנה ושרפו באש את-ערתם ואת-בשרם ואת-פרשם: כח והשרף אתם יכבס בגדיו ורחץ את-בשרו במים ואחרי-כן יבוא אל-המחנה: כט והיתה לכם לחקת עולם בחדש השביעי בעשור לחדש תענו את-נפשתיכם וכל-מלאכה לא תעשו האזרח והגר הגר בתוכם:

(כג) ובא אהרן אל אהל מועד. אמרו רבותינו שאין זה מקומו של מקרא זה, ונתנו טעם לדבריהם צמסכת יומא, ואמרו, כל הפרשה כולה נאמרה על הסדר, חוץ מציהא זו שהיא אחר עשיית עולתו ועולת העם והקטרת אמורי פר ושעיר שנעשים בחוץ צגדי זה, וטובל ומקדש ופושטן ולבש צגדי לכן וצא אל אהל מועד להוציא את הכף ואת המנחה שהקטיר זה הקטרת לפני ולפני: ופשט את בגדי הבוד. אחר שהוציא, ולבש צגדי זה צגד לחמיד של צין הערבים.

And Aaron shall enter the Tent of Meeting. The description of the Avodah in this chapter is complete in almost every way. One seldom finds any Biblically mandated mitzvah formulated in this amount of detail. However, there is one anomaly in the Biblical prescription. In the course of the Avodah description, at the point in which the scapegoat is dispatched to the desert, the Torah states: And Aaron shall enter the Tent of Meeting and remove the linen garments. According to the Gemara in Yoma 71a, this portion of the ritual is out of sequence. The change of garments actually took place much later in the Avodah, after the removal of the incense ladle and coal-pan from the Holy of Holies.

The reason the Avodah is not performed in the sequence written is because there is a halachah leMoshe miSinai, an oral tradition handed down from Moses at Sinai, that the Kohen Gadol must sanctify his hands and feet ten times and immerse himself five times during the ritual. If the Biblical description of the Avodah were to be followed in the written sequence, there would be only six sanctifications and three immersions.

These inconsistencies between the written text and the actual practice teach us an important principle. The Torah is deliberately ambiguous to teach us that Torah Shebichsav without Torah Sheb'al Peh is in fact not Torah at all. (Before Hashem, pp. 144-147)

you shall afflict yourselves. There are five so-called "afflictions" (inuyim) that apply to Yom Kippur: abstaining from eating and drinking, washing, anointing, wearing leather shoes and marital relations. Rashi, in explaining a passage in Shabbos 114b, suggests a practice that enhances the fasting experience: kenivas hayerek, preparing salad at the time of Minchah to be eaten after the fast. According to Rashi, coming in contact with and becoming tempted by food on Yom Kippur afternoon and resisting this temptation constitutes a complete fulfillment of inuy.

30 For through this day* He will atone for you* to cleanse you. From all your sins before the Lord,* you shall be cleansed.* 31 It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you shall afflict yourselves. It is an eternal statute. 32 And the Kohen who is anointed or who is invested to serve in his father's stead, shall effect [this] atonement, and he shall don the linen garments, the holy garments; 33 And he shall effect atonement upon the Holy of Holies, and he shall effect atonement upon the Tent of Meeting and upon the altar,

in a court of Jewish law. This disqualification is not an additional punishment *per se*, but a natural result of the metaphysical corruption of the human personality as a result of sin. True *teshuvah* not only achieves *kapparah* but also *taharah*, the removal of this impurity. (*Teshuvah Lecture*, Undated)

מכל חטאתיכם לפני יהוה - From all your sins before the Lord. The Mishnah in *Yoma* 8:9 emphasizes the importance of asking *mechilah* of our fellow man on Yom Kippur: *Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah stated: For sins between man and God [bein adam laMakom], Yom Kippur atones; for sins between man and his fellow [bein adam lachavero] Yom Kippur does not atone until one appeases his fellow.* Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah derives this rule from the verse: *For through this day He will provide atonement for you, to purify you from all your sins [that are] before the Lord, you shall be purified.* Rabbi Elazar's opinion is based on his punctuation of the verse; in his opinion, a comma should be inserted after the phrase *before the Lord*, which implies that Yom Kippur atones unconditionally only for those sins that are *bein adam laMakom, before the Lord.* (*Before Hashem*, pp. 112-113)

The verse *and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God* (23:40) suggests that when one is in the presence of God, there is joy. If sin separates man from God (Is. 59:2), the forgiveness of sin afforded by the day of Yom Kippur, which restores man's relationship with God, results in joy. (*Nefesh Harav*, p. 315)

The concluding Mishnah in *Yoma* (85b) records Rabbi Akiva's statement: *Fortunate are you, Israel! Before whom are you purified and who purifies you? Your Father in heaven, as it is said: and I will sprinkle clean water upon you and you shall be clean [Ez. 36:25]. And it further says: The hope of Israel [מקרה] is the Lord [Jer. 17:13]. Just as the ritual bath [מקרה] renders clean the unclean, so does the Holy One, Blessed be He, render clean Israel.* The meaning behind Rabbi Akiva's words lies in their historical context. Living through the destruction of the Temple, Rabbi Akiva informed a demoralized nation that could not imagine Yom Kippur without the various Temple rituals that a new type of atonement could be readily attained. The Yom Kippur Temple service was an intricate ritual accomplished by the High Priest, in the same way that involved protocols are generally required before a commoner approaches a king. However, the atonement of the *itzumo shel yom*, the day of Yom Kippur itself, no longer requires intricate ceremonies; our approach to God can now be unmediated and as direct as a son's approach to his own father. (*Before Hashem*, pp. 87-88)

תטהרו - you shall be cleansed. One can engage in a type of repentance that merely erases the punishment of sin, but does not cleanse the personality: this is the *teshuvah* of *kapparah*. For example, if one was guilty of gambling with dice, one could repent simply by desisting from the sinful activity, but still retaining the dice in a drawer. This is a type of repentance that merely erases the punishment for sin, but does not transform the personality. On the other hand, if one were to destroy the dice, distancing himself forever from the sinful activity, this would be a repentance of purification, a *teshuvah* of *taharah*. (*Teshuvah Lecture*, Undated)

ל ארי גיזמא הדין יכפר עליכון לנדפא יתכוון מפל חוביכוון קדם יי תדפון: לא שבת שבתא היא לכוון ותענון ית נפשתיכוון קדם עלם: לב ויכפר פתגא די רבי תיה ודי יקרב ית קרבניה לשמשא תחות אבוי וילפש ית לבוישי בוצא לבוישי קודשא: לג ויכפר על מקדש קודשא ועל משכן ומנא ועל מדבחה

(לג) וכפר הכהן אשר ימשח וגו'. כפרה זו של יום הכפורים אינה כפרה אלא צנהן גדול, לפי שנאמרה כל הפרשה צנהן הולך לומר צנהן גדול הנא אחריו שיהא כמוהו: ואשר ימלא את ידו. אין לי אלא המשות בשמן

In the nineteenth century, a great Lithuanian scholar was traveling and spent Yom Kippur in the German community of Frankfurt am Main at the home of Amshel Rothschild, an observant scion of the wealthy Rothschild family. During a break in the prayers at the synagogue before *Minchah*, Amshel Rothschild invited this rabbi to his home. The guest was ushered into the dining room, where he was astonished to find a lavishly set table. As his host proceeded to pour wine into his *kiddush* cup, the rabbi almost fainted in shock. Rothschild stood at the head of the table and said: "Master of the Universe, today is Yom Tov and we should make *kiddush*. However, since it is Yom Kippur and the Torah says *you shall afflict yourselves*, we shall forgo the meal, return to the synagogue, recite *vidui* and pray."

Although there is generally a prohibition of preparing on Shabbos or Yom Tov for the weekday, according to Rashi, the complete fulfillment of the *inuy* imperative supersedes this prohibition. On the other hand, when Yom Kippur falls out on Shabbos, *kenivas hayerek* is prohibited in accordance with the stricter rules of preparing on Shabbos, despite the desirability of intensifying the *inuy* experience. (*Yarchei Kallah*, 1973)

ביום הזה - For through this day. During the time of the Temple, communal atonement was attained on Yom Kippur through the elaborate Temple ritual known as the *Avodah*. Today, when these rituals no longer exist, the means to atonement is described by the verse: *For through this day, ביום הזה, He will atone for you, to purify you from all your sins, before the Lord you shall be purified.* The word *bayom* in this case does not mean "on this day" as it is often translated. Instead, it means "through this day." The day itself provides the atonement. The capability of the day of Yom Kippur to effect atonement for an individual is in direct proportion to the holiness that the Jew himself experiences on Yom Kippur. (*Before Hashem*, pp. 87-88)

יכפר עליכם - He will atone for you. *Kapparah* means the removal of punishment that results from sin. Just as one may forgive a debt, so can God absolve one of the penalties which he "owes God" due to sin. However, there is also a concept known as *tumas hachet*—the "impurity of sin." This impurity causes a blemish on the sinner's very personality. For example, if a man were to commit a transgression punishable by lashes or capital punishment, he is also disqualified to act as a witness

and he shall effect atonement upon the kohanim and upon all the people of the congregation.
 34 [All] this shall be as an eternal statute for you, to effect atonement upon the children of Israel, for all their sins, once each year. And he did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

17¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: **2** Speak to Aaron and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: This is the thing the Lord has commanded, saying: **3** Any man of the House of Israel, who slaughters an ox, a lamb, or a goat* inside the camp, or who slaughters outside the camp, **4** but does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to offer up as a sacrifice to the Lord before the Mishkan of the Lord, this [act] shall be counted for that man as blood he has shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people; **5** in order that the children of Israel should bring their offerings which they slaughter on the open field, and bring them to the Lord, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the kohen, and slaughter them as peace offerings to the Lord.

forbids. Judaism was the first religion that combined both and therefore introduced basic changes in the idea of *korban*, stripping it of its barbarism. We evolved the substitution of the human sacrifice by the physical sacrifice in general, by mental and spiritual surrender to God.

No one is allowed to destroy organic life. Murder is usurpation of something not belonging to me, the act of interfering with exclusively divine prerogatives. *Whoever sheds the blood of man, through man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God He made man* (Gen. 9:6). Tzelem actually signifies life as a divine grant to man. By slaying man, the murderer is committing *chamas*, taking illegitimate possession of divine rights. Murder is *chamas*, for I rob another person of his life which was granted to him by God.

Only God, who gives life, can take life away. *The Lord kills and makes alive; He brings down to the grave and raises up* (I Sam. 2:6). Not only human life, but life in general is divine, is held by God absolutely, and He is the only master who exercises unlimited dominion over it. Each life must be surrendered to God; this is the only way life shall be terminated. Destroying life because of selfish motives is forbidden. This applies to man and animal alike.

With respect to human sacrifice, the religious ethos-experience interfered with the cult-experience and converted the actual sacrifice to a mental one, expressed in submission and surrender. Animal sacrifice, however, was retained by the Torah. The sacral act of offering a life to God is the only legitimate shedding of animal blood

Killing an animal for the sake of satisfying my carnal desire, *besar ta'avah*, was classified as bloodshed and was therefore forbidden. Only after the people entered the Land of Israel did the Torah make a concession and begin to tolerate the slaughtering of animals for non-sacral purposes. To this compromise, however, many conditions were attached that make the slaughtering of the animal and its consumption the most complicated process. By committing the slightest error, man may forfeit his privilege to enjoy the meat of the animal.

Even as the Torah came to terms with the lusty sensual human being concerning the meat, it retained full possession and dominion over the blood. Blood is life, and as such it can never become the object of man's desire or lust—hence the many prohibitions against blood consumption (e.g., verse 11-12; Deut. 12:23). Blood shall be sacrificed to God on His Altar, never misused by man for satisfying his carnal drives. (*The Emergence of Ethical Man*, pp. 37-44)

יִכַּפֵּר וְעַל הַכֹּהֲנִים וְעַל-כָּל-עַם הַקְּהָל יִכַּפֵּר: לְדֹ וְהִיָּתְהָ-זֹאת לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְכַפֵּר עַל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל-חַטָּאתָם אַחַת בַּשָּׁנָה וַיַּעַשׂ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה: פ רביעי יז א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל-אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל-בָּנָיו וְאֶל-כָּל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר-צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: ג אִישׁ אִישׁ מִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט שׁוֹר אֹו-כֶּשֶׁב אֹו-עֵז בַּמַּחֲנֶה אֹו אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה: ד וְאֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא הִבִּיאוּ לְהַקְרִיב קָרְבָן לַיהוָה לִפְנֵי מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה דָּם יִחַשֵׁב לְאִישׁ הַהוּא דָּם שִׁפְךָ וְנִכְרַת הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מִקִּרְב עַמּוֹ: ה לִמְעַן אֲשֶׁר לִבִּיאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת-זִבְחֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הֵם זִבְחִים עַל-פְּנֵי הַשָּׁדָה וְהִבִּיִּאם לַיהוָה אֶל-פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֶל-הַכְּהֵן וְזָבְחוּ זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה אוֹתָם:

(לז) ויעש כאשר צוה ה' וגו'. כשהגיע יום הכפורים עשה כסדר הזה, ולהגיד שזכו של אהרן שלא היה לזשן לגדולמו אלא כמקיים גזרת המלך: (ג) אשר ישחט שור או כשב. שמתמייז צנפשו: דם שפך. לנכות את הורק דמים צמוך: (ה) אשר הם זובחים. אשר הם רגילים לזכות.

— an ox, a lamb, or a goat. The first half of Leviticus is devoted to *korbanos*, sacrifices, dealing with them in great detail. Slaying animals in a non-sacred manner is not even mentioned.

Here, however, we find a strange discussion. Following Nachmanides, the first seven verses of this chapter refer to *besar ta'avah*, meat eaten out of carnal desire, while verses 8 through 12 deal with *shechutei chutz*, the slaughtering of a consecrated animal outside the Tabernacle's precincts.

According to the view of Rabbi Ishmael, non-consecrated meat was forbidden in the wilderness; only sacral killing of an animal was sanctioned. Life in the natural-organic realm is not something in *toto genere* different from divine life. On the contrary, all life is rooted in God and can be traced to Him. "Life" in the Bible is a unique attribute of God that conveys the real essence of Him. If there is life in a creature, it is because God grants a spark of His own living being to the world.

The concept of *korban* flows directly from these metaphysico-mystical springs. Every life is indebted to God, is held by God absolutely and must surrender itself upon demand. And indeed, God demands sacrifices, including the very life of man. The pagan ritual of human sacrifice was prompted by a motif which was basically true. The error of paganism consisted in separating the ethos from the cult. Ritual demands human sacrifice; the ethos, appreciating life as precious,

6 And the kohen shall dash the blood upon the altar of the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and he shall cause the fat to go up in smoke, as a pleasing fragrance to the Lord. 7 And they shall no longer slaughter their sacrifices to the satyrs after which they stray. This shall be an eternal statute for them, for [all] their generations. 8 And you should say to them: Any man of the House of Israel or of the strangers who will sojourn among them, who offers up a burnt offering or [any other] sacrifice, 9 but does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to make it [a sacrifice] to the Lord, that man shall be cut off from his people. 10 And any man of the House of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My attention upon the soul who eats the blood,* and I will cut him off from among his people. * 11 For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have therefore given it to you [to be placed] upon the altar, to atone for your souls. For it is the blood that atones for the soul. 12 Therefore, I said to the children of Israel: None of you shall eat blood, and the stranger who sojourns among you shall not eat blood. 13 And any man of the children of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who traps a quarry of a wild animal or bird that may be eaten, and sheds its blood, he shall cover it [the blood] with dust. 14 For [regarding] the soul of all flesh its blood is in its soul, and I said to the children of Israel: You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of any flesh is its blood all who eat it shall be cut off.

לי אלא אשר יוד, נלודין ועומדין כגון] אוויון ותרנגולין פרט לטמאים: (יד) דמו בנפשו הוא. דמו הוא לו צמקוס מנין, תלמוד לומר יד מכל מקום, אס כן למה נאמר אשר הנפש, שהנפש תלויה בו: כי נפש כל בשר דמו הוא. יוד, שלא יאכל בשר אלא בהזמנה הזאת: אשר יאכל. הנפש היא הדם. דם ובשר לשון זכר, נפש לשון נקבה:

and I will cut him off from among his people. If man wants to defeat death and scoff at nihility he must somehow elevate himself above this order of meaningless existence and come close to the order of eternity. To gain a pass to everlasting reality, he must represent God. He must remember God, become His shaliach, His ambassador. He must carry His message and convey it through action. He must become the medium through which God addresses Himself to the world: the instrument of revelation. The ideal of prophecy must find at least partial realization in all of us.

This is possible only if the individual Jew includes himself in *Knesses Yisrael*, the community which was burdened at the dawn of history with the divine logos and ethos, God's word and ethical system, whose historic existence is unconditionally consecrated to one goal only—the fulfillment of the covenant through a commitment to a singular *modus existentis*, a mode of existence willed by God. Only when the individual joins this community may he lay claim to a deathless existence. Only through identification with the origin may one gain eternal life.

It is interesting that the term *kares*, cutting off—which, according to our Sages, refers to severance from the transcendental order of existence—is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression *from the community of Israel* (Ex. 12:19) or *מִקִּרְבַּ עַמּוֹה*, *from among his people*. Judaism identifies the termination of existence with cutting off the self from the community, for the individual strikes roots in eternity only by abiding within its confines. (*Family Redeemed*, p. 166)

ו וזרק הפתח את-הדם על-מזבח יהוה פתח אהל מועד והקטיר החלב לריח ניחח ליהוה: ז ולא יזבחו עוד את-זבחייהם לשעירים אשר הם זנים אחריהם חקת עולם תהיה-זאת להם לדרתם: חמישי שלישי כשהן מחוברין ואלהם תאמר איש איש מבית ישראל ומן-הגר אשר-יגור בתוכם אשר-יעלה עלה או-זבח: ט ואל-פתח אהל מועד לא יביאנו לעשות אתו ליהוה ונקרת האיש ההוא מעמיו: י ואיש איש מבית ישראל ומן-הגר הגר בתוכם אשר יאכל כל-דם ונתתי פני בנפש האכלת את-הדם והכרתיו אתה מקרב עמיה: יא כי-נפש הבשר בדם הוא ואני נתתיו לכם על-המזבח לכפר על-נפשתיכם כי-הדם הוא בנפש יכפר: יב על-כן אמרתיו לבני ישראל כל-נפש מכם לא-תאכל דם והגר הגר בתוכם לא-יאכל דם: יג ואיש איש מבני ישראל ומן-הגר הגר בתוכם אשר יצוד ציד חיה או-עוף אשר יאכל ושפך את-דמו וכסהו בעפר: יד כי-נפש כל-בשר דמו בנפשו הוא ואמר לבני ישראל דם כל-בשר לא תאכלו כי נפש כל-בשר דמו הוא כל-אכליו יפרת:

(ח) לשעיר. לשדים, כמו (שעיה יג, כא) ושעירים ירקדו שם: (ט) אשר יעלה עולה. לחייב על המקטיר אצרים צחון כשחט צחון, שאם שחט אחד והעלה חצירו שניהם חייבין: (ט) ונקרת. זרעו נכרת ומימו נכרתין: (י) כל דם. לפי שנאמר בנפש יכפר, יכול לא יהא חייב אלא על דם המוקדשים, תלמוד לומר כל דם: ונתתי פני. פנאי שלי, פונה אני מכל עסקי ועוסק בו: (יא) כי נפש הבשר. של כל צריה צדס היא תלויה, ולפיכך נתחיו (על המזבח) לכפר על נפש האדם, מצוא נפש ותכפר על הנפש: (יב) כל נפש מכם. להוסיף גדולים על הקטנים: (יג) אשר יצוד. אין לי אלא ציד, [אין

I will set My attention upon the soul who eats the blood. The phrase ונתתי פני, meaning that God will single him out, occurs only twice in the Torah: here and in forbidding child sacrifices (20:3). The Torah looks upon blood-eating with such horror and abomination that it is almost placed on a par with the worship of Molech. Blood is the very essence of life and as such it must be consecrated as a sacrificial offering to God. (*The Emergence of Ethical Man*, p. 39)

15 And any person, whether a native or a stranger, who eats carrion or what was torn, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the waters, and shall remain unclean until evening, and then he shall become clean. 16 But if he does not immerse [his garments] or immerse his flesh, he shall bear his sin.

18¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: I am the Lord, your God. 3 Like the practice of the land of Egypt, in which you dwelled, you shall not do, and like the practice of the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you, you shall not do,* and you shall not follow their statutes. 4 You shall fulfill My ordinances and observe My statutes,* to follow them. I am the Lord, your God.

them. We assume a divine purpose and value, but we cannot fathom them. *Mishpatim*, on the other hand, reflect cultural and humanistic considerations. Yet the force of the divine command applies to both, demanding observance and unqualified commitment.

Rashi (Num. 19:2) cites a Rabbinic comment on the *parah adumah* rite: *It is a decree ordained by Me. You have no right to question it.* This suggests that the *chok* can be defined as an absolute norm and an ultimate command, demanding total submission without reservations. It is to be affirmed even if *Satan and the nations of the world taunt Israel*, ridiculing its irrationality. The observant Jew accepts the Torah even as a patient follows the prescription of his doctor, taking complex medications and submitting to required surgical procedures. We may seek to understand and make all possible inquiries, but ultimately we accept it on faith. The Lord, Creator and Healer of all flesh, undoubtedly knows what is best for our bodies and souls as well as what is harmful to them.

The *chok* may be said to possess two characteristics. The first is its universal immutability: the fact that a *chok* is independent of situational factors, changing philosophies and ideologies, or shifting practical and economic conditions. All these have no effect or bearing on a *chok*, which persists and retains its value under all circumstances, at all times and everywhere. Obviously, only an absolute faith in God as the Legislator of the *chok* could motivate such acceptance.

Etimologically, the root ק-ק-ח signifies the act of carving, engraving, making incisions in a hard surface such as stone or metal. Several verses support this meaning: *Behold, I have graven you [חֲקַתִּיךָ] upon the palms of my hands (Is. 49:16); Oh that My words were...engraved [יִחְקֶיךָ] with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever (Job 19:23-24).* Such engravings are protected against the erosion of time and the elements. Used in religious law, the term signifies that the *chok* is characterized by perpetual validity and is *engraved in the rock forever*. *Chok* implies eternity; it is not a temporary regulation.

Nature's laws are also *chukim*, unalterable and universal. The same Legislator instituted both systems of law, governing physical nature as well as man's deportment. The Bible uses the word *chok* in regard to nature, as in *Proverbs 8:29: When He gave to the sea His decree [חֻקָּי], that the waters should not transgress His commandment; when he appointed [בְּחֻקָּי] the foundations of the earth.* Nature is not capricious; it unflinchingly abides by God's laws, even as man should in the human realm. There are no exceptions or surprises. Nature is reliable and predictable and its laws are universally valid.

The second characteristic of the *chok* is its incomprehensibility: it demands the surrender of one's mind and the suspension of one's thinking. It is a total commitment precisely because it requires an abdication of one's reason. The commitment of a child to his parents, however fervent, is not total; it is rooted in the family setting and has many qualifications and reservations. A parent's commitment

טו וְכָל-נֶפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תֹּאכַל נְבִלָה וְטֶרֶף בְּאֶזְרָח וּבְגֵר וְכַבֵּם בְּגִדְוֵי וְרֹחַץ בְּמַיִם וְטָמֵא עַד-הָעֶרֶב וְטָהַר: טז וְאִם לֹא יִכְבֶּם וּבִשְׂרוּ לֹא יֶרְחֵץ וְנִשָּׂא עֹנָו: פ יח א וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: ב דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ג כְּמַעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יֹשְׁבֵתֶם-בָּהּ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְכְמַעֲשֵׂה אֶרֶץ-כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְבִיא אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וּבְחֻקֹתֵיהֶם לֹא תִלְכּוּ: ד אֶת-מִשְׁפָּטַי תַעֲשׂוּ וְאֶת-חֻקֹתַי תִשְׁמְרוּ לְלַכֵּת בָּהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

(טו) אשר תאכל נבלה וטרפה. צנצנת עוף טהור דבר הכחוש, שאין לה טומאה אלא בשעה שנצלעת בצית הצליעה, ולמדך כאן שמטמאה הצליעה ואינה מטמאה צמגע. וטרפה האמורה כאן לא נכתב אלא לרוש, וכן שנינו יכול תהא נצלת עוף טמא מטמאה בצית הצליעה, תלמוד לומר טרפה, מי שיש צמינו טרפה, יאל עוף טמא שאין צמינו טרפה: (טז) ונשא עונו. אם יאל קדש או יכנס למקדש, חייב על טומאה זו ככל שאר טומאות: ובשרו לא ירחץ ונשא עונו. על רחילת גופו ענוש כרת, ועל כוס בגדים צמלקות: (יז) אני ה' אלהיכם. אני הוא שאמרתי בסיני אֱלֹהֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיךָ (שמות כ, ג), וקבלתם עליכם מלכותי, מעתה קבלו גורותי. רצי אומר, גלוי וידוע לפניו שסופן לנתק צעירות צימי עורא, לפיכך צא עליהם צגורה אני ה' אלהיכם, דעו מי גוזר עליכם, דיין ליפרע וגאלם לשלם שכר: (יח) כמעשה ארץ

Like the practice of the land of Egypt...you shall not do, and like the practice of the land of Canaan...you shall not do. The contrast between Israel and the rest of mankind is emphasized to an extreme in this section. The key message of this particular passage in the Torah is in this introductory verse. Israel is separate and distinct from the nations surrounding her. We must uphold this unique identity; under no conditions are we to consider assimilation. Egypt and Canaan are mentioned specifically because these nations represented the two poles of secular civilization in Biblical times. Egypt was the most urbanized and technologically advanced civilization of the time, while Canaan was pastoral and primitive. The Torah emphasizes here that as different as they were from each other, neither of these fundamentally immoral societies should serve as role models. (Before Hashem, pp. 157-159)

You shall fulfill My ordinances and observe My statutes. Generally, *chukim* seem to be irrational: if not for the divine imperative, we would never observe

5 You shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, which a man shall do and live by them.* I am the Lord. 6 No man shall come near to any of his close relatives, to uncover [their] nakedness. I am the Lord. 7 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. 8 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. 9 The nakedness of your sister, whether your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born to one who may remain in the home or born to one who must be sent outside you shall not uncover their nakedness. 10 The nakedness of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter you shall not uncover their nakedness, for they are your own nakedness.

Scripture. We make no distinctions between the two in the quality and totality of our commitment.

In our modern world, there is hardly a *mishpat* which has not been repudiated. Stealing and corruption are the accepted norms in many spheres of life; adultery and general promiscuity find support in respectable circles; and even murder, medical and germ experiments have been conducted with governmental complicity. The *logos* has shown itself in our time to be incapable of supporting the most basic of moral inhibitions.

The Torah, therefore, insists that a *mishpat* be accepted as a *chok*; our commitment must be unshakable, universally applicable, and upheld even when our *logos* is confused. Without *chok*, every social and moral law can be rationalized away, leaving the world a sophisticated jungle of instincts and impulses. Even a *mishpat* can endure only when it is sustained by an unmotivated commitment which is impervious to confusing circumstances. (*Reflections*, Vol. 1, pp. 100-105; see Appendix A in *Chumash Mesoras HaRav Sefer Shemos*)

וַחֲיוּ בָהֶם - and live by them. The saving of a life overrides the commandments of the entire Torah; “and live by them” and not die by them. Desecrate one Sabbath on his account so that he may keep many Sabbaths (*Yoma* 85b).

This law is the watchword of Judaism. The teachings of the Torah do not oppose the laws of life and reality, for were they to clash with this world, were they to negate the value of concrete, physiological-biological existence, then they would contain not mercy, loving-kindness, and peace but vengeance and wrath. Even if there is only a doubtful possibility that a person's life is in danger, one renders a lenient decision; and as long as one is able to discover some possible danger to life, one may use that doubt to render a lenient decision.

My grandfather, R. Chaim of Brisk, disagreed with the legal view that on the Day of Atonement one feeds a sick person who is in mortal danger small amounts of food at a time, each amount less than the forbidden measure of food for that day. Rather he instructed those who were taking care of a sick individual to serve him a regular meal, just as they would on other days. When my father was about to travel to Rasseyn, a town close to Kovno, to take up a rabbinical post, R. Chaim took him aside and said, “I command you to follow my view regarding a sick person in danger on the Day of Atonement, for it is an absolute *halachic* truth.”

This law that *pikuach nefesh*, saving a life, overrides all the commandments is indicative of the high value which the *halachic* viewpoint attributes to one's earthly life—indeed, it serves to confirm and nurture that value. Temporal life becomes transformed into eternal life; it becomes sanctified and elevated with eternal holiness. (*Halachic Man*, pp. 34-35)

ה ושמרתם את חקתי ואת משפטי אשר יעשה אתם האדם וחי בהם אני יהוה: ש שיש איש אל-כל-שאר בשרו לא תקרבו לגלות ערוה אני יהוה: ס ז ערות אביה וערות אמה לא תגלה אמה הוא לא תגלה ערותה: ס ח ערות אשת אביה לא תגלה ערות אביה הוא: ס ט ערות אחותה בת-אביה או בת-אמה מולדת בית או מולדת חוץ לא תגלה ערותו: ס י ערות בת-בנה או בת-בתה לא תגלה ערותו פי ערותה הנח: ס

את חקותי. לרצות שאר דקדוקי הפרשה שלא פרט הכתוב זהם. דבר אחר, ליתן שמירה ועשייה לחוקים ושמירה ועשייה למשפטים, לפי שלא נתן אלא עשייה למשפטים ושמירה לחוקים: וחי בהם. לעולם הבא, שאם תאמר בעולם הזה, והלא סופו הוא מת: אני ה'. נאמן לשלם שכר: (י) לא תקרבו. להזהיר הנקצה כזכר, לכך נאמר לשון רבים: אני ה'. נאמן לשלם שכר: (י) ערות אביך. זו אשת אביך. או אינו אלא כמשמעו, נאמר כאן ערות אביך ונאמר להלן (כ, יא) ערות אביו גלה, מה להלן אשת אביו אף כאן אשת אביו: וערות

to a child, however, is instinctive and total; it is irrational and therefore not contingent or conditional. The reason for the *chok* remains a mystery. Indeed, the *chok* is often contested by one's thinking mind. Although man is a rational being, the *chok* demands that he violate his reason.

Laws which are based on intellect are vulnerable to modification, correction, or reinterpretation. The intellect is able to build and tear down, to create and to destroy; it continually reevaluates and postulates anew. The history of science is a chronicle of the construction and destruction of ideas, theories, affirmations, and negations. The *chok*, however, rises above human reason and motivation. A *chok* is unchanging because it is not subject to reason. It is in the non-cognitive dimension and is therefore not susceptible to change, not modified by the attrition of time and mood.

The religious Jew accepts the entire Torah as a *chok*, both in regard to its immutability and its incomprehensibility. At the conclusion of the daily morning service, we find this affirmation: *I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be changed and that there will be no other Torah given by the Creator, blessed be His Name (The Thirteen Principles of Faith)*. The laws of the Torah are above place or time. The observant Jew never asks “Why?” in regard to *mitzvah* obligations. He may ask, “How is it performed?” or, “What lessons are to be derived therefrom?” but not, “Why?”

We perform all *mishpatim* (mostly social laws) in the same manner as the *chukim*. The Torah does not assign separate sections to the *chukim* and *mishpatim*; they are interspersed throughout

11 The nakedness of the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father she is your sister: you shall not uncover her nakedness. 12 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is the close relative of your father. 13 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is the close relative of your mother. 14 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother you shall not come near his wife; she is your aunt. 15 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter in law; she is your son's wife you shall not uncover her nakedness. 16 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife: it is your brother's nakedness. 17 You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter; you shall not take [in marriage] her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness they are close relatives, it is evil counsel. 18 And you shall not take a woman with her sister [in marriage] as rivals, to uncover the nakedness of one upon the other, in her lifetime. 19 And to a woman during the uncleanness of her separation, you shall not come near* to uncover her nakedness. 20 You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to become defiled by her. 21 And you shall not give any of your offspring to pass through for Molech.* And you shall not profane the Name of your God. I am the Lord.

Bride and bridegroom are young, physically strong and passionately in love with each other. Both have patiently waited for this rendezvous to take place. Just one more step and their love would have been fulfilled, a vision realized. Suddenly the bride and groom make a movement of recoil. He, gallantly, like a chivalrous knight, exhibits paradoxical heroism. He takes his own defeat. There is no glamor attached to his withdrawal. The latter is not a spectacular gesture, since there are no witnesses to admire and to laud him. The heroic act did not take place in the presence of jubilant crowds; no bards will sing of these two modest, humble young people. It happened in the sheltered privacy of their home, in the stillness of the night. The young man makes an about-face; he retreats at the moment when fulfillment seems assured.

The idea of catharsis through the dialectical movement manifests itself in all halachic norms regulating human life. Nowhere, however, does this doctrine of dialectical catharsis assert itself more frequently than it does in the aesthetic-hedonic realm. How does man purge himself in this realm? By engaging in the dialectical movement: by withdrawing, at the moment when passion reaches its peak. The stronger the grip of the physiological drive is felt by man, the more intoxicating and bewildering the prospect of hedonic gratification, the greater the redemptive capacity of the dialectical catharsis—the movement of recoil. (Catharsis, pp. 45-46)

וְאֵל־אִשָּׁה בְנֵדָת טְמֵאָתָהּ לֹא תִקְרַב...וְאֵל־אִשָּׁה עֲמִיתָהּ לֹא־תִתֵּן...וּמִזְרַעָהּ לֹא־תִתֵּן לְהַעֲבִיר לְמִלְךָ לְמִלְךָ - And to a woman during the uncleanness of her separation, you shall not come near...You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife...And you shall not give any of your offspring to pass through for Molech. The juxtaposition of the first two prohibitions is clear. But how are the laws of sexual morality related to Molech child sacrifice? A couple saves money to buy a house, but then discovers an unwanted pregnancy. Rather than have their plans thwarted, they will go put the child up for adoption, or undergo an abortion. They are offering their child to Molech because they do not want to be deprived of material niceties. The connection between these prohibitions communicates that if one violates *chukim* such as the rules of sexual morality, it can lead to “Molech,” that is, violation of the *mishpatim* as well. (Boston, 1976)

יא עָרוֹת בַּת־אִשָּׁה אֲבִיךָ מוֹלְדָת אֲבִיךָ אַחֲוֹתְךָ הִוא לֹא תִגְלֶה עָרוֹתָהּ: ם יב עָרוֹת אַחֲוֹת־אֲבִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה שְׂאֵר אֲבִיךָ הִוא: ם יג עָרוֹת אַחֲוֹת־אִמְךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה כִּי־שְׂאֵר אִמְךָ הִוא: ם יד עָרוֹת אַחֲוֵי־אֲבִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה אֶל־אִשְׁתּוֹ לֹא תִקְרַב וְדָדְתָהּ הִוא: ם טו עָרוֹת כַּלְתֶּךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה אִשָּׁה בְנֵדָה הִוא לֹא תִגְלֶה עָרוֹתָהּ: ם טז עָרוֹת אִשְׁת־אֲחִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה עָרוֹת אֲחִיךָ הִוא: ם יז עָרוֹת אִשָּׁה וּבְתוּלָה לֹא תִגְלֶה אֶת־בַּת־בְּנֵהּ וְאֶת־בַּת־בְּתוּלָה לֹא תִקַּח לְגִלוֹת עָרוֹתָהּ שְׂאֵרָה הִנָּה זְמָה הִוא: יח וְאִשָּׁה אֶל־אַחֲתָהּ לֹא תִקַּח לְצָרָר לְגִלוֹת עָרוֹתָהּ עָלֶיהָ בְּחַיֶּיהָ: יט וְאֶל־אִשָּׁה בְנֵדָת טְמֵאָתָהּ לֹא תִקְרַב לְגִלוֹת עָרוֹתָהּ: כ וְאֶל־אִשָּׁה עֲמִיתָהּ לֹא־תִתֵּן שְׂכָבְתָהּ לְזָרַע לְטְמֵאָה־בָּהּ: כא וּמִזְרַעָהּ לֹא־תִתֵּן לְהַעֲבִיר לְמִלְךָ וְלֹא תַחֲלֵל אֶת־שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה: שביעי רביעי כשהו מחוברין

(יא) ערות בת אשת אביך. למד שאינו חייב על אמותו משפחה ונכרית, לכך נאמר בת אשת אביך, צדאיה לקידושין: (יב) ערות אחי אביך לא תגלה. ומה היא ערותו, אל אשתו לא מקרב: (טו) אשת בנד. לא אמרתי אלא נשים לנכר אישות זה, פרט לנוסה ושפחה ונכרית: (יז) ערות אשה ובתה. לא אסר הכתוב אלא על ידי נשואי הראשונה, לכך נאמר לא מקם לשון קיסה, וכן לענין העונש חָסֵר יָקַם אֶת אִשָּׁה וְאֶת אִמָּה (להלן כ. יז) לשון קיסה, אבל אנס אשה

And to a woman during the uncleanness of her separation, you shall not come near. Shir Hashirim Rabbah illustrates the meaning of the verse in Song of Songs (7:3), Thy belly is like a heap of wheat set about with lilies, in this way: It often happens that a man takes a wife when he is forty years of age. When, after going to great expense, he wishes to associate with her, she says to him, “I have seen a rose-red speck,” he immediately recoils. What made him retreat and keep away from her? Was there an iron fence, did a serpent bite him, did a scorpion sting him? A dish of meat is placed before a man and he is told some forbidden fat has fallen into it. He withdraws his hand from the food. What stopped him from tasting it? Did a serpent bite him; did a scorpion sting him? Only the words of the Torah which are as soft as a bed of lilies.

22 You shall not lie down with a male, as with a woman: this is an abomination. 23 And with no animal shall you cohabit, to become defiled by it. And a woman shall not stand in front of an animal to cohabit with it; this is depravity. 24 You shall not defile yourselves by any of these things, for the nations, whom I am sending away from before you, have defiled themselves with all these things. 25 And the land became defiled,* and I visited its sin upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26 But as for you, you shall observe My statutes and My ordinances,* and you shall not do like any of these abominations neither the native, nor the stranger who sojourns among you. 27 For the people of the land who preceded you, did all of these abominations, and the land became defiled.

from a natural existence, from that finite and determinate character of an earthly being. And this spells doom for man. *Tumah* is identical with death or disease: hence it is associated with *meis* (corpse), *neveilah* (carrion), *sheretz* (creeping swarming thing), *zav*, *zavah*, *metzora* and *yoledes*. All these are anomalous in organic life. Pathology is identical with *tumah*.

What is true of physical *tumah* is true as well for spiritual *tumah*, *tumas hachet* (defilement from sin). Any anomaly in the pattern of living, any pathological deviation from the straight path of existence, is *tumah*. (*The Emergence of Ethical Man*, pp. 55-57)

— But as for you, you shall observe My statutes and My ordinances. Most of our Sages distinguished between *chukim* and *mishpatim*. They declared the compliance with *chukim* to be a gesture of pure obedience and subordination to God. Conversely, adherence to *mishpatim* is a result of an inner moral need that God implanted in Man, when He created him in His image. The mere fact that Man carries God's image suggests that morality is characteristic of human nature, and that doing good is an indispensable necessity.

However, surrender and obedience are necessary not only for *chukim*, but for *mishpatim* as well. A clearly defined distinction between *chukim* and *mishpatim* is practically nonexistent. The central concept of *mishpatim* is indeed illumined by a rationale, can be developed by human reason, and is therefore accessible to the logos. However, one's conscience cannot be sensitive to all aspects of *mishpatim*. *Mishpatim* contain peripheral areas that are as strange and alien to reason as the most mysterious *chukim*. Along this periphery, the cultivated, friendly and attractive scenery of *mishpatim* suddenly turns into a dark jungle.

As an example of a *mishpat*'s "periphery," consider the law against theft. Every sensitive individual confirms and abides by such a law. The thief is held in contempt, the embezzler despised by society. The rationale is simple and self-evident. Only a psychopath would approve of stealing candy from a child or money from the box of a blind beggar.

Yet what about the sort of theft depicted so often in literature, particularly by Victor Hugo in *Les Miserables*? A poor man just released from prison, having no prospect of earning a livelihood, steals a loaf of bread from a bakery to sustain himself. The proprietor of the bakery wishes to prosecute even though the loss incurred is very small. Is the poor starving man deserving of punishment? Has a crime been committed? If human conscience is the authority judging the validity of the *mishpat*, we could conclude that there was no transgression, that the act of stealing the loaf of bread was justifiable and quite possibly heroic.

כב וְאֶת-זָכָר לֹא תִשְׁכַּב מִשְׁכַּבִּי אִשָּׁה תֹועֵבָה הִוא: כג וּבְכָל-בְּהֵמָה לֹא-תִתֵּן שְׁכַבְתֶּךָ לְטָמְאָהּ-בָּהּ וְאִשָּׁה לֹא-תַעֲמֹד לְפָנַי בְּהֵמָה לְרַבְעָההּ תִּבְלֶה הִוא: כד אֶל-תִּטְמְאוּ בְכָל-אֵלֶּה כִּי בְכָל-אֵלֶּה נִטְמְאוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי מַשְׁלַח מִפְּנֵיכֶם: כה וְתִטְמְאוּ הָאָרֶץ וְאֶפְקֹד עֹונָה עָלֶיהָ וְתָקָא הָאָרֶץ אֶת-יְשֻׁבֵיהָ: כו וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת-חֻקְתֵּי וְאֶת-מִשְׁפָּטֵי וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל הַתֹּועֵבֹת הָאֵלֶּה הָאֲזָרָח וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: כז כִּי אֶת-כָּל-הַתֹּועֵבֹת הָאֵל עֲשׂוּ אֲנִשֵׁי-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לְפָנֵיכֶם וְתִטְמְאוּ הָאָרֶץ: מַפְטִיר

(כג) תבל הוא. לשון קדש וערוה ונאוף, וכן ואפי על פגליקס (שעיה י, כה). דבר אחר, 'תבל הוא' לשון בליה וערבוז זרע אדם וזרע בהמה:

— And the land became defiled. Sin defiles not only human beings, but the earth as well. The earth becomes desecrated, polluted by crime, and requires absolution or atonement. In the case of murder, the atonement can be made to the land only by the blood of the murderer; in that of illicit sexual relations, by casting out the sinner.

It is indeed unique to speak of *tumah* (ritual impurity) as attached to Mother Earth. A meta-physical quality is ascribed to her. Indeed, sin and atonement apply to both man and earth. Why? Because man is a part of her; man is nature expressed in a meaningful existence. He can never free himself from that union.

"Earth" is not just the land but nature as a whole, the entire complex of physical conditions that make man's existence possible. As an organism, he depends upon his surroundings, and this dependence spells ontic unity and uniformity. Obedience to God means *I will give your rains in their time, the Land will yield its produce, and the tree of the field will give forth its fruit*. Disobedience—I will... *make your skies like iron and your land like copper. Your strength will be expended in vain; your land will not yield its produce, neither will the tree of the earth give forth its fruit* (26:4, 19-20).

When a community refuses to live in accordance with the divine law, Mother Nature becomes non-cooperative, refusing to subordinate herself to man's rule. With sin, the gap widens. Nature begins to resent the presence of man; in response, man attempts to subjugate an insurgent and malicious nature. The struggle, once begun, ends in man's defeat. Mother Earth spits out her unruly son. Man is cast out of his environment.

There is a very close kinship between man and nature. As long as man lives within the bounds set by his Creator which accentuate his naturalness, he remains *ben adam*, the son of Mother Earth. As long as man lives in unison with natural law, he remains protected from the defilement of sin.

But when he begins to sin, to grasp for something not belonging to him, he divorces himself

28 And let the land not vomit you out* for having defiled it, as it vomited out the nation that preceded you. 29 For anyone who commits any of these abominations, the persons doing so shall be cut off from the midst of their people. 30 And you shall observe My charge, not to commit any of the abominable practices that were done before you, and you shall not become defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

ושמרתם אתם את-הקתי ואת-משפטי ולא תעשו מכל התועבת האלה. In order to meticulously observe the *mishpatim* which form the very foundation of civilized society, and to avoid the abominations practiced by the Canaanites, the community must be trained to observe *chukim* as well as *mishpatim*. The imperative to *observe My chukim* precedes *My mishpatim*. Only in this way can one guarantee that *you shall not do like any of these abominations*.

One must teach the people how to surrender their intellectual pride and arrogance and commit themselves to the Almighty, even when we are unable to comprehend the moral necessity and practical utility of the *chok*. Secular ethics have failed because the concept of *chok* is not acceptable to secular man. If the integrity of the moral law is to be preserved, then one must accept the *chukim*, to abstain from acts that seem to hold great promise, and conversely, to act in ways that may sometimes seem illogical and even painful. (*Derashot Harav*, p. 237; see Appendix A in *Chumash Mesoras HaRav Sefer Shemos*)

~ ~ ~ ולא תקיא הארץ אתכם - And let the land not vomit you out. Exile from the Land of Israel is not a punishment *per se*; it is a natural consequence of sin. The Land does not tolerate sinful people, just as the body naturally rejects foreign tissue. The Holy Land can only accept holiness. (*Boston*, 1972; see also commentary on the *haftarah*)

כח ולא תקיא הארץ אתכם בטמאתכם אתה פאשר קאה את-הגוי אשר לפניכם: כט כי כל-אשר יעשה מכל התועבת האלה ונכרתו הנפשות העשות מקרב עמם: ל ושמרתם את-משמרתיי לבלתי עשות מחקות התועבת אשר נעשו לפניכם ולא תטמאו בהם אני יהוה אלהיכם: פ פ פ

(כח) ולא תקיא הארץ אתכם. משל לכן מלך שהאכילוהו והנקצה צמזמט: (ל) ושמרתם את משמרתיי. לזהיר ציט דצר מאוס שאין עומד צמעיו אלא מקיאו, כך ארץ ישראל אינה מקיימת עוצרי עצירה. ותרגומו ולא תרוקן, לשון ריקון, מריקה עזמה מהס: (כט) הנפשות העשות. הזכר חסלת פרישת אחרי מות

There is only a single response to this dilemma: the Almighty forbids stealing, and at Sinai we gave our assent. We will abide by Your will, whether we understand it or not.

Morality is not based on man's cognitive abilities, even in regard to *mishpatim*, since certain aspects are inaccessible to human moral exploration and illumination. The entire structure of morality would collapse should society actually permit their violation. Thus the Torah states here,

KEDOSHIM

19¹ And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, **2** Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy,* for I, the Lord, your God, am holy. **3** Every man shall revere his mother and his father,* and you shall observe My Sabbaths.* I am the Lord, your God. **4** You shall not turn to the worthless idols,

The Gemara (*Yevamos* 6b) states, *One is not to revere the Sanctuary but Him who commanded us regarding the Sanctuary.* Likewise, expressing *yirah* for a parent is tantamount to showing *yirah* for God. The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 31b) says that Rabbi Joseph would stand when he heard his mother's footsteps, saying that he was standing for the Divine Presence he heard approaching. Rabbi Joseph rose out of the awe and reverence which he was obligated to show God. The Divine Presence is contracted into the *Mikdash*, visits us on the "great and holy" day of Shabbos, and is also embodied in each father and mother. When a child shows reverence for his parent, he is expressing reverence for God.

Shabbos, reverence for parents and reverence for the *Mikdash* are thus connected, as all have a common theme: fulfillment of the *mitzvah* results in an expression of *yirah* for the *Shechinah*. (*Rabbi Joshua Rapps Parashah Series*)

Fear and love are mutually contradictory, but awe and love do not negate each other. On the contrary: they are entwined with each other. A great personality can bring about feelings of love and awe at the same time. When the storm of longing overpowers the lover and draws him to love, it also reveals the awe, which is a love as fierce as death.

This sometimes takes the form of silent suffering. I love the other and yearn for him because of his greatness and majesty, but this valuation also leads to the retreat of the lesser one in the face of the greater one. Coming closer leads to an axiological diminishing of one's self-image. Love contains equality of value, but also the negation of value.

Honor your father and your mother (Ex. 20:12) is juxtaposed with *Every man shall revere his mother and father*—honor and reverence go well together. The son does not fear his kind father and his gentle mother, and the Torah has never commanded us to fear our parents. Its emphasis is on reverence interwoven with enlightened, appropriate love. In this case, both reverence and love are rooted in gratitude. Similarly, our love and awe of God grow out of the experience of the connection between the universe and God. From this experiential awareness, the fiery attachment of love bursts forth, as well as the retreat of awe before His Majesty. (*From There Shall You Seek*, p. 67)

— *and you shall observe My Sabbaths.* The Zohar (*Parashas Terumah*) indicates that the plural *shabososai* signifies two Sabbaths, *Shabbos dele'eila* (the supernal Sabbath) and *Shabbos deletata* (the earthly Sabbath).

When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, God cursed him (*Gen.* 3:17-19). However, because God also blessed the Sabbath, Adam's curse becomes nullified when Shabbos arrives.

Adam's curse contains four components. The first component is hard labor: *With the sweat of your face shall you eat bread* (*Gen.* 3:19). The second is endless, uninterrupted, pointless work—*amal*, the type of work mentioned in *Ecclesiastes* (2:11): *Then I turned [to look] at all my deeds that my hands had wrought and upon the toil [amal] that I had toiled to do, and behold everything is vanity and frustration, and there is no profit under the sun.* The third component of the curse is *itzavon* (*Gen.* 3:17), the restlessness, fear and suffering that characterize competitive society. A person in need of a livelihood is

קדושים

יש א וידבר יהוה אל משה לאמר: ב דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני יהוה אלהיכם: ג איש אמו ואביו תיראו ואת שבתתי תשמרו אני יהוה אלהיכם: ד אל תפנו אל האילים

(3) דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל. מלמד שנאמרה פרשה זו צהקה, מפני שרוב גופי תורה תלוין בה: קדשים תהיו. הווי פרושים מן העריות ומן העצירה, שכל מקום שאתה מולא גדר ערוה אתה מולא קדושה, אשה וזה וקללה וגו', אני ה' מקדשכם. (להלן כא, זח, ו) ולא יסלל זרעו, אני ה' מקדשו (שם פסוק טו). קדשים יחיי, אשה וזה וקללה וגו' (שם פסוק יד): (4) איש אמו ואביו תיראו. כל אחד מכס תיראו אביו ואמו. זהו פשוטו. ומדרשו, אין לי אלא איש אשה מנין, כשהוא אומר תיראו הרי כאן שנים, אם כן למה נאמר איש, שהאיש סיפק בידו לעשות אבל אשה רשות אחרים עליה: אמו ואביו תיראו.

— *You shall be holy.* On the one hand, the Torah is concerned with the "trivial" single act; everything is quantified and exactly determined. On the other hand, the Torah wants not only that each component be in conformity with *halachic* rules, but that the whole be perfect—that one's lifestyle *in toto*, the overall impression, be faultless. Among the 613 commandments, we find *mitzvos* related to singular acts, such as the Sabbath, *tzitzis*, *kashrus*, and *tefillin*. We also find precepts that do not tell us what to do, but how to do what we have been commanded to do. For instance, the commandment of *You shall be holy* does not spell out any new duty. It is concerned only with "how" to do things, not "what" to do. The style, the method, and the perspective are the subject matter of the precept *You shall be holy*. Be careful and precise to the split second as far as your single acts are concerned. But also act in such a manner that your single actions may be integrated into a meaningful whole. For, as Nachmanides says on this verse, a human being may be an ugly voluptuary even as he complies with the law. (*Festival of Freedom*, p. 180)

— *Every man shall revere his mother and his father.* The Torah links the fear of one's parents and the keeping of the Shabbos. Shabbos is also linked with another commandment: *You shall keep My Sabbaths and revere My Sanctuary* (26:2).

The Gemara (*Kiddushin* 31b) explains that there are two forms of honor involving a parent—*kavod* (respect) and *mora* (reverence). The Gemara defines *kavod* as the physical care given to a parent, for example, bathing, clothing, and feeding. The child is responsible for the physical needs of the parent. The Gemara defines *mora* as acting in a reverent way towards the parent. For example, one may not sit in his father's chair, or contradict him.

Mora is a characteristic that applies solely to God. Giving reverence to a mortal being borders on the blasphemous. If so, why did the Torah command us to revere our parents? Moreover, the Torah also commands us to display reverence toward an object, as is the case with the *Mikdash* (verse 30). How is this possible?

nor shall you make molten deities for yourselves. I am the Lord, your God. 5 When you slaughter a peace offering to the Lord, you shall slaughter it for your acceptance.* 6 It may be eaten on the day you slaughter it and on the morrow, but anything left over until the third day, shall be burned in fire. 7 And if it would be eaten on the third day, it is abominable;*

וְאֵלֹהֵי מִסְכָּה לֹא תַעֲשֶׂוּ לָכֵם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: ה וְכִי תִזְבַּחְתֶּם זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם תִּזְבַּחְתֶּם: ו בְּיוֹם זִבְחֵכֶם יֵאָכַל וּמִמָּחֳרַת וְהַנּוֹתָר עַד-יְוֵם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בְּאֶשׁ יִשָּׂרֵף: ז וְאִם הֵאָכַל יֵאָכַל בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פְגוּל הוּא

the world unites with the Creator, recreating the wholeness of Creation as on the original Friday, a wholeness that will be replicated in the World to Come. This is why our Sages indicate that Shabbos is a foretaste of the World to Come.

In the Friday night prayers, we ask God to spread His *sukkas shalom*, His shelter of peace, over us. All evil forces depart, and a shelter of rest and peace descends from heaven and rests on earth. The world will be free of suffering, and there will no longer be death. This is the eschatological Shabbos, the *Shabbos dele'eila*. (*Darosh Darash Yosef*, pp. 249-252; *Beis Yitzchak*, Vol. 40, p. 288)

— לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם תִּזְבַּחְתֶּם - you shall slaughter it for your acceptance. In one section, the Torah writes you must be holy (verse 2) and you shall not steal, nor embezzle (verse 11) and also included the technical requirements concerning the offering of sacrifices. The transition from rules prescribing ethics to those detailing ritual is seamless. Sacredness is not limited to the Temple, where the sacrifices are offered, but also to places where *chesed* is practiced.

The Greeks identified religious action with the cultic gesture, and ethos was restricted to society. In their opinion, God was not concerned with morality. Christianity accepted this doctrine of existential unity in theory, but in practice, it split the human existence into two areas: the secular and the ecclesiastical. History tells us of the cruel and inhumane conduct of the Church Inquisitors.

I once read a short report by a German journalist about Franco. He portrayed Franco as a sincerely devout Catholic, a religious person who actually enjoyed religious services. He went to Church every Sunday, prostrated himself on the floor, banged his forehead against the cold stones of the Church and whispered, "Not my will, but Thy will, shall be done." However, as soon as he emerged out of the shadows of the Church, from the semi-darkness into the sunlight, he signed a death sentence for a young girl who was caught reading illegal literature.

Moral schizophrenia was resented by *Yahadus*. We must not separate the theological faith premise from the moral normative system.

There is danger that American piety is oblivious of the moral norm. Morality cannot be separated from faith; the worship of God cannot be separated from morality. (*Noraos Harav*, Vol. 5, pp. 28-31)

— פְּגוּל הוּא - it is abominable. Although *pigul* is invalid in the case of any sacrifice, the Torah here mentions the invalidation of *pigul* specifically in regard to *shelamim*. *Shelamim* is a peace offering, a voluntary sacrifice given to express thanks to God. The Midrash on the verse for your voice is pleasant and your appearance is comely (Song 2:14) interprets the pleasant voice in the verse as referring to song, while the comely appearance refers to the sacrifices. Both song and sacrifices are expressions of joy. This is the underlying meaning of the phrase לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם תִּזְבַּחְתֶּם (verse 5): the offering of the *shelamim* is a reflection of one's desire to express his love for God. However, once the decision is made to offer this sacrifice, it must be done in accordance with strict guidelines. The *shelamim* is a voluntary offering, but how it is to be offered is not in the province of the person making the offering. (*Moriah*, 1974)

ואלֹהֵי מִסְכָּה. מחילתן אלילים הם, ואם אמה פונה אחריהם סופך שאתה עושה אותם אלהות: לא תעשו לכם. לא תעשו לאחריים ולא אחריים לכם. ואם תאמר, לא תעשו לעזמכם אצל אחריים עושין לכם, הרי כבר נאמר (שמות כ, א) לא יהיה לך, לא שלך ולא של אחריים: (ס) וכי תזבחו וגו'. לא נאמרה פרשה זו אלא ללמד שלא תהא זביחתן אלא על מנת ליאכל בתוך הזמן הזה. שאם לקבוע להם זמן אכילה, הרי כבר נאמר (לעיל ז, טו) ואם נדר או נדבה זבח קרבנו וגו': לרצונכם תזבחוהו. תחלת זביחתו תהא על מנת נחת רוח שיהא לכם לרצון, שאם חוץ למקומו: פגול. מתועב כמו ומרק פגלים פליהם (שעיה סה, ד):

always frightened that someone will take his possessions away him. The Marxist concept of the class struggle reflects this anxiety. The fourth component of the curse is our mortality—for dust you are and to dust you shall return (Gen. 3:19). Adam's curse was to suffer continuous, exhausting, pointless labor that is by nature unproductive, resulting in conflict and ultimately, death.

The blessing of Shabbos relieves man from all four components of this curse. Work is dignified and ennobling as long as one knows when to stop. *And God completed on the seventh day His work* (Gen. 2:2). The Torah tells us that God worked and then stopped, so that we may imitate Him. On Shabbos, we are released from the monotony, jealousy and rancor that are often a part of mundane pursuits.

Endless work estranges people from their families. The Torah commands that the family rest together. Ties between parents and children are renewed on Shabbos. All members of the family are released from the curse of competition and alienation from their neighbors. The Talmud tells us of the Sambatyon River, which is so turbulent and dangerous during the week that no one can cross it, but becomes calm every Shabbos (*Sanhedrin* 65b). This is a reflection of *Shabbos deletata*.

The fourth component of the curse, the curse of death, is addressed in *Shabbos dele'eila*, alluded to in the final Mishnah in *Tamid*: "A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day" (Ps. 92:1): [meaning] a psalm, a song for the time to come, for the day which will be entirely Sabbath and rest for life everlasting.

Shabbos itself is associated with the World to Come, based on the narrative in *Genesis*: *And God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good* (Gen. 1:31). On the sixth day of creation the verse states that the world was "very good," a world of complete unity and totality, as implied by the word כָּל. The world was in a state of wholeness and perfection. After the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, however, the world was no longer whole, divided into disparate entities of good and evil, darkness and light. After the sin, the world reverted to being merely "good" as on the first five days of creation, as opposed to "very good" as recorded for the sixth day. On Shabbos, however,

it shall not be accepted. 8 And whoever eats it shall bear his sin, because he has profaned what is holy to the Lord, and that person shall be cut off from his people. 9 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not fully reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you collect the [fallen] individual grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am the Lord, your God. 11 You shall not steal. You shall not deny falsely. You shall not lie, one man to his fellow. 12 You shall not swear falsely by My Name, thereby profaning the Name of your God. I am the Lord. 13 You shall not oppress your fellow. You shall not rob. The hired worker's wage shall not remain with you overnight until morning. 14 You shall not curse a deaf person. You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person,* and you shall fear your God. I am the Lord.

to one who is physically blind, but to one who is intellectually or morally “blind” or “blinded” by strong emotions.

What if one actually were to place a rock in the path of one who cannot see? Would he be in violation of this prohibition? One can infer from the words of *Sefer Hachinuch* (Mitzvah 232) that this would not be the case. *Sefer Hachinuch* states that violation of this prohibition does not carry the punishment of lashes because there is no physical action associated with it. Obviously, actually placing a stone in front of someone who cannot see constitutes an action. Apparently *Sefer Hachinuch* considers only the interpretation of *לפני עור* as normative, and not its literal meaning.

This idea apparently conflicts with the maxim *ein mikra yotzei midei peshuto*, one cannot ignore the literal meaning of a verse (*Shabbos* 62b). How can *Sefer Hachinuch* completely ignore the literal meaning of this phrase?

It appears that placing a stone in front of a blind person is such a cruel, grotesque act that the Torah did not even think it worthy of mention. For a Jew to act with such evil intent would cause us to question his very Jewishness (see *Bamidbar Rabbah*, *Parashas Naso*, 8). Because the Torah is addressing the Jewish people exclusively, mentioning such a prohibition explicitly was unnecessary. (*Halachic Positions*, Vol. 1, pp. 175-176)

According to a passage in *Sanhedrin* 7a, the verse *one who praises a compromiser insults God* (Ps. 10:3) refers to Aaron. The Gemara relates that Aaron saw Hur slaughtered when he attempted to stop the people from making the Golden Calf. Aaron thought to himself that if he also refused to allow them to build the Calf, the people would murder him as well, and their sin would never be forgiven. Aaron reckoned that it was better that they make the Calf, with the possibility that God would forgive the sin, rather than kill him, with no such possibility of forgiveness.

The application of the phrase from *Psalms* to this incident clearly indicates that Aaron did not act appropriately—he should have allowed himself to be killed rather than acquiesce to the people's request. By extension, it can be inferred that one must give up his life rather than violate the prohibition of *לפני עור* in the case of idol worship. In fact, there is a difference of opinion between *Ba'al Hamaor* and *Nachmanides* whether one must give up his life rather than violate *לפני עור* in such a case, and this passage in the Gemara supports the opinion of *Ba'al Hamaor* that one should give up his life. One can also infer that the violation of *לפני עור* in the case of all three cardinal sins for which one must sacrifice his life rather than violate is tantamount to violating the cardinal sins themselves. (*Shiurei Harav - Sanhedrin*, pp. 74-75)

לא ירצה: ה ואכליו עונו ישא פיאת קדש יהוה חלל ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מעמיה: ט ובקצרכם אתקציר ארצכם לא תכלה פאת שדה לקצר ולקט קצירך לא תלקט: י וכרמך לא תעולל ופרט כרמך לא תלקט לעני ולגר תעזב אתם אני יהוה אלהיכם: יא לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו איש בעמיתו: יב ולא תשבועו בשמי לשקר וחוללת אתשם אלהיך אני יהוה: יג לא תעשק אתרעה ולא תגזל לא תלין פעלת שכיר אתה עד בקר: יד לא תקלל חרש ולפני עור לא תתן מכשל ויראת מאלהיך אני יהוה: שני חמישי כשהן מחוברין

(ח) ואכליו עונו ישא. צנותר גמור הכתוב מדבר, ואינו עונס כרת על הנשחט חוץ למקומו שכבר מיעטו הכתוב, וזהו צנותר גמור מדבר, וצמסכת כריתות למדוהו מגורה שיה: (ט) לא תכלה פאת שדה. שיניח פאה צסוק שדהו: ולקט קצירך. שצלים הנושרים צשעת קצירה אחת או שחיס, אצל שלש אינן לקט: (י) לא תעולל. לא תטול עוללות שצה, והן ניכרות, אחוה עוללת, כל שאין לו לא כתף ולא נטף: ופרט כרמך. גרגרי ענבים הנושרים צשעת צצירה: אני ה' אלהיכם. דיין להפרע, ואינו גוצה מכס אלא נפשות, שנאמר (משלי כב, כג) אל תקולל דל וגו' פי ה' יריב יריבס וגו' [וקצעת את קצעיכס נקש]: (יא) לא תגנבו. אזהרה לגונב ממון. אצל לא תגנב (שמות כ, יג) שצשעת הדצרות אזהרה לגונב נפשות, דבר הלמד מענינו דבר שחייצין עליו מיתח צית דין: ולא תכחשו. לפי שנאמר (לעיל ה, כג) וקשס צה משלס קרן וחומס, למדנו עונס אזהרה מנין, תלמוד לומר ונקשצ על שקר: ולא תשקרו. לפי שנאמר (שס) ונשצע על שקר ישלס קרן וחומס, למדנו עונס אזהרה מנין, תלמוד לומר ולא תשקרו: לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו ולא תשצעו. אס גנצת סופך לכחש, סופך לשקר, סופך לישצע לשקרי: (יג) ולא תשבועו בשמי. למה נאמר, לפי שנאמר (שמות כ, י)

You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person. Chazal have interpreted this verse in many ways. It cautions us against any careless word or act that in any manner could endanger the material or moral welfare of another. The term *blind* refers not

15 You shall commit no injustice in judgment; you shall not favor a poor person or respect a great man;* you shall judge your fellow with righteousness. 16 You shall not go around as a gossipmonger amidst your people. You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow's blood.* I am the Lord. 17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow,* but you shall not bear a sin on his account.

think that we might have been able to save many. There is no doubt, however, that had we properly grieved over the afflictions of our brothers, had we raised our voices and forcefully demanded that Roosevelt issue a sharp protest-warning, backed by concrete actions, we could have substantially slowed the process of mass murder. We were witnesses to the greatest and most terrible tragedy in our history—and we were silent.

I do not wish to enter here into a discussion of details. This is a very sad and disturbing chapter in our history. But we all sinned by our silence in the face of the murder of millions. Have we not been summoned before the divine judgment seat to answer for our terrible transgression against the prohibition *You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow's blood*, particularly when we stood idly by not just the blood of our fellow, but of our fellows, in their millions! And when I say “we,” I mean all of us—myself included—rabbis and laymen, Orthodox and freethinkers, the entire spectrum of Jewish political organizations: *the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel...both your woodcutters and your water drawers* (Deut. 29:9-10).

Do you know why we were so indifferent? Because our sense of peoplehood was flawed. We did not properly grasp the whole concept of shared fate and what it means to be a people. We lacked, as did Job to begin with, the attribute of *chesed*. It was because Job did not possess the sense of shared historical circumstances and shared suffering that he did not know how to pray on behalf of his friends. He was concerned only for his own well-being and for that of his family. (*Kol Dodi Dofek*, pp. 96-97)

Standing by idly without attempting to help someone in danger is a Biblical violation. If the bystander doesn't call for help and does nothing, his guilt is tantamount to “spilling of blood.” But is this also true for one who is lax in praying for the ill or indifferent about making a *mi sheberach* for one who is sick?

The *Zohar* indicates that Noah was responsible for the flood. He did not pray to God to spare the people, nor did he take the initiative to bring the people of his generation to repent. The Midrash (*Devarim Rabbah* 11:3) also reflects this point by stating that Noah was given the same proclamation of impending disaster as Moses after the episode of the Golden Calf. Noah was content simply to do everything that was commanded of him, assured that he would continue even though all others would perish. Moses, on the other hand, rejected a similar offer from God and prayed for the salvation of *Bnei Yisrael*.

We are not to regard our weapon of prayer lightly, nor our *mi sheberach* carelessly. They are not optional, but obligatory. (*Halachic Positions*, Vol. 2, pp. 45-46; see commentary on *Chumash Mesoras Harav - Sefer Bereishis*, pp. 380-381)

וְהוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עַמִּיתְךָ - *You shall surely rebuke your fellow*. The Gemara in *Yevamos* 65b states, *Just as it is a mitzvah for one to provide reproof if the reproof is heeded, so too is it a mitzvah not to reprove if the reproof is not to be heeded*. The wording of this statement suggests that, depending on the

טו לא תעשו עול במשפט לא-תשא פני-דל ולא תהדר פני גדול בצדק תשפט עמיתך: טז לא-תלך רכיל בעמיה לא תעמד על-דם רעה אני יהוה: יז לא-תשנא את-אחיה בלבבך הוכח תוכיח את-עמיתך ולא-תשא עליו חטא: ואת חבֵרְךָ וְלֹא תִקְבֵּל עַל דֵּי לֵיחַ חֹבְאֵ:

(טו) לא תעשו עול במשפט. מלמד שהדיין המקלקל את הדין קרוי עול, שנאמר, ומשוקץ, חרם, ומועבה. שֶׁהַעֲוֹל קרוי מועבה, שנאמר (דברים כה, טו) פי חוֹבְעָה ה' וגו' כל עשה עול, והמועבה קרויה שקץ וחרם, שנאמר (שם יט, לו) ולא קִבֵּיִל מוֹעֵבָה אֵל צִיָּקָה וְהֵייתָ חָרָם כְּמֹהוּ, שֶׁקֶץ מִשְׁקַלְנֵנוּ וגו': לא תשא פני דל. שלא תאמר עני הוא זה והעשיר חייב לפרנסו, אזכנו צדין ונמנא מחפרנסם בנקיות: ולא תהדר פני גדול. שלא תאמר עשיר הוא זה בן גדולים הוא זה, היאך אציישנו ונארה צבוסתו, עונש יש בדבר, לכך נאמר ולא תהדר פני גדול: בצדק תשפט עמיתך. כמשמעו. דבר אחר, הו דן את חצירך לכף זכות: (טז) לא תלך רכיל. אני אומר על שם שכל משלחי מדינים ומספרי לשון הרע הולכים צנתי רעים לרגל מה יראו רע או מה ישמעו רע לקפד צדוק, נקראים הולכי רכיל הולכי רגילה, אשפיו"מנטו בלע"ז. וראיה לדבר, שלא מצינו רכילות שאין כתוב בלשון הליכה, לא תלך רכיל, הלכי רכיל נחשת וצִרְזֵל (ירמיה ו, כח), ושאר לשון הרע אין כתוב בו הליכה מְלַשְׁנֵי בַּסֶּפֶר רַעִיו (תהלים קא, ה), ונאמן ליפרע: (יז) ולא תשא עליו חטא. לא תלצן את פניו בדבים:

וְלֹא תִהְיֶה פְּנֵי גְדוֹל - *you shall not...respect a great man*. Maimonides (*Sefer Hamitzvos, Lo Sa'aseh* 275) writes that it is forbidden for a judge to show favor to one of the litigants over the other, even if the litigant is great, honored and important. By writing that a judge should not single out one of the litigants *even* if he is worthy of honor, Maimonides indicates that the prohibition extends to the case where each of the litigants is equivalent in importance—the judge must not honor one litigant over the other in any circumstances. (*Shiurei Harav - Sanhedrin*, pp. 77-78)

וְלֹא תִעַמַּד עַל דַּם רֵעֶךָ - *You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow's blood*. Have we not transgressed against our obligation to participate in the suffering of the people, to witness and feel its burdens, as the verse states, *and he [Moses] looked at their burdens* (Ex. 2:11, and cf. Rashi *ad loc.*)? Let us be frank—during the terrible Holocaust, when European Jewry was being systematically exterminated in the ovens and crematoria, the American Jewish community did not rise to the challenge, did not act as Jews possessing a properly developed consciousness of our shared fate and shared suffering, and the obligation of shared action that follows therefrom. We did not sufficiently empathize with the anguish of the people and did very little to save our afflicted brethren. It is difficult to know how much we might have accomplished had we tried harder. Personally, I

18 You shall neither take revenge from nor bear a grudge* against the members of your people; you shall love your neighbor as yourself.* I am the Lord. 19 You shall observe My statutes: You shall not crossbreed your livestock with different species. You shall not sow your field with a mixture of seeds,* and a garment which has a mixture of shaatnez shall not come upon you. 20 If a man lies carnally with a woman, and she is a handmaid designated for a man, and she had not been [fully] redeemed nor had her document of emancipation been granted her, there shall be an investigation;

יח לא־תקום ולא־תטור את־בני עַמֶּךָ וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה: יט אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ בְהִמְתָּדָה לֹא־תִרְבִּיעַ כְּלָאִים שְׂדֵךְ לֹא־תִזְרַע כְּלָאִים וּבְגָד כְּלָאִים שִׁעֲטָנֹו לֹא יַעֲלֶה עֲלֶיךָ: כ וְאִישׁ כִּי־יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אִשְׁהוּ שִׁכְבַּת־זָרַע וְהוּא שִׁפְחָה נְחֻרְפַת לְאִישׁ וְהִפְדָּה לֹא נִפְדָּתָה אוֹ חֲפְשָׁה לֹא נְתַן־לָהּ בְּקִרְתָּהּ תִּהְיֶה

for our fellow man. This social responsiveness is derived from one's healthy self-regard, namely, as [you love] yourself. Individual importance is emphasized, but for goals beyond self-indulgence; personal fulfillment is valued, but for sublime purposes.

This may explain why the *Sheva Berachos* relate the personal happiness of the groom and bride to the Messianic fulfillment. *Soon, O Lord our God, may there be heard in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem a sound of gladness, a sound of joy, the sound of the bridegroom and the sound of the bride, the sound of rejoicing bridegrooms at their weddings* (based on Jer. 33:10-11). We find a similar correlation in Isaiah 62:5, *As the bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so shall God rejoice over thee [Zion]*. The couple is challenged to reach out to *Knesses Yisrael*, to identify with the strivings of the broader community, its travails and its triumphs, and thereby to hasten the coming of the Messiah. (*Reflections*, Vol. 2, pp. 62-63)

Maimonides (*Hilchos Avel* 14:1) writes that it is a positive rabbinic *mitzvah* to visit the sick and comfort mourners; even though these *mitzvos* are rabbinic, they fall under the general *mitzvah* of *you shall love your neighbor as yourself*.

Initially, Maimonides indicates that these *mitzvos* are rabbinic, but then notes that they fall under the rubric of a Biblical injunction. Although the act of comforting mourners is indeed a rabbinic *mitzvah*, there is a Biblical fulfillment. One finds a parallel in the *mitzvah* of prayer: although the *Amidah* was instituted by Ezra, its recitation constitutes also a fulfillment of the Biblical *mitzvah* of *to serve Him with all your heart* (*Deut.* 10:12). In both cases, the action behind the *mitzvah* is rabbinic, but there is an inner fulfillment, a *kiyum shebalev*, which is of Biblical origin.

In the case of onlookers to a funeral who do not know the deceased or the family, but still participate in the ritual of forming two lines through which the mourners pass, they have fulfilled the rabbinic *mitzvah* of comforting mourners without the Biblical fulfillment. (*Reshimos Shiurim – Maseches Berachos*, p. 259)

בְּהִמְתָּדָה לֹא תִרְבִּיעַ כְּלָאִים שְׂדֵךְ לֹא תִזְרַע כְּלָאִים – You shall not crossbreed your livestock with different species. You shall not sow your field with a mixture of seeds. Nachmanides, in his commentary on this verse, attributes the prohibition against mixing species (*kilayim*) to the quality of group-belonging with which God endowed plants and animals at the birth of organic life. There is no doubt that he has hit upon the *raison d’être* of the prohibition: the Torah looks askance at artificial changing of the group-traits. We find *kilayim* applicable to plant and animal alike. Unnatural mating for the purpose of developing an organic hybrid culture was prohibited. The Torah sees in such an act an attempt on man's part to interfere with the structural and functional patterns that are inherent in organic systems and to bring about unnecessary mutations of forms. (*The Emergence of Ethical Man*, pp. 25-26)

עם זה למצורו, מיטטי"ר בלע"ז, כמו חזיין לנאזי דאית בהון, שאנו מפרשין לשון כמוש פליטטר"א. ובלשון שעטנז, פירש מנחם ממצרת זמר ופשמיו: (כ) גהרפת לאיש. מיועדת ומיועדת לאיש, ואיני יודע לו דמיון במקרא. ובשפתה כנענית חזיה שפחה והליה צת חורין המאורסת לעבד עבדי שמונת בשפחה הכתוב מדבר: והפדה לא נפדתה. פדויה ואינה פדויה, וחסם פדיון בכסף: או חפשה. בשטר: בקרת תהיה. היא לוקה ולא הוא. יש על צית דין לבקר את הדבר שלא לחייבו מיתה, כי לא חפשה ואין קדושה קדושים גמורין. ורבותינו למדו מכאן שמי שהוא במלקות יהא בקריאה, שהדיינים המלקין קורין על הלוקה (דברים נח, נה"ט) אם לא תשמר לעשות וגו' והפלא ה' את מפקדו וגו' [ופירוש בקורת תהיה בקריאה תהיה]:

(יט) לא תקום. אמר לו השאילני מגלך, אמר לו לאו, למחר אמר לו השאילני קרדומך, אמר לו איני משאילך כדרך שלא השאלתני, זו היא נקימה. ואיזו היא נטירה, אמר לו השאילני קרדומך, אמר לו לאו, למחר אמר לו השאילני מגלך, אמר לו הא לך ואיני כמותך שלא השאלתני, זו היא נטירה, שנטר האיצה בלבו אף על פי שאינו נוקם: ואהבת לרעך כמוך. אמר רבי עקיבא זה כלל גדול בתורה: (יט) את הקותי תשמרו. ואלו הן, בהמתך לא תרביע כלאים וגו', חקיס אלו גזרת מלך שאין טעם לדבר: ובגד כלאים. למה נאמר לפי שנאמר (דברים כג יא) לא תלבש שעטנז קמר ופשמיו יתקדו, יכול לא ילבש גיזי זמר ואיני פשמן, תלמוד לומר נגד. מנין לרבות הלבדים, תלמוד לומר שעטנז, דבר שהוא שוע טווי ונוז. ואומר אני, נז לשון דבר הנמלל ושור זה

circumstances, through silence, one can fulfill this *mitzvah* just as it can be fulfilled by actual reproof.

The purpose of this *mitzvah* is to take a sinner and make him righteous. The Gemara in *Beitzah* 30a indicates that it is preferable for one to sin inadvertently than willfully, because an inadvertent sinner is on some level a righteous individual. If we give reproof knowing that the person will continue his sin, we transform him in a sense from a righteous to a sinful person. Thus, maintaining one's silence at the appropriate time is an integral part of this *mitzvah*. (*Mesorah*, Vol. 8, p. 55; *Nefesh Harav*, p. 294)

לֹא תִקום וְלֹא תִטור – You shall neither take revenge...nor bear a grudge. Revenge is a very primal emotion, yet the Torah has forbidden it. Imagine that I have a neighbor who is very selfish, helping no one nor lending out even insignificant items. Suddenly, this miser falls ill and asks me a favor: could he perhaps borrow a thermometer? Not only am I not allowed to refuse, I cannot even act differently with him than I would toward anyone else. I must bite my lip, give him what he asks for, sublimate my feelings of bitterness and revenge. I am allowed to display only love towards him. The Torah demands military-like discipline. Although a soldier might be insulted by his commander over a trivial matter, he must maintain his equanimity and respond, "Yes, sir!" (*Droschos Un Ksovim*, p. 178)

וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ – You shall love your neighbor as yourself. This verse, which Rabbi Akiva declared to be a cardinal precept of the Torah, *zeh klal gadol baTorah*, commands a caring concern

they shall not be put to death, because she had not been [completely] freed. 21 He shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, a guilt offering ram. 22 And the kohen shall effect atonement for him with the guilt offering ram, before the Lord, for the sin that he had committed; and he shall be forgiven for the sin that he had committed. 23 When you come to the Land and you plant any food tree, * you shall surely block its fruit [from use]; it shall be blocked from you [from use] for three years, not to be eaten. 24 And in the fourth year, all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the Lord. * 25 And in the fifth year, you may eat its fruit; [do this, in order] to increase its produce for you. I am the Lord, your God.

Later, after the Exodus, they acquired *kinyan haguf*, full ownership. Therefore, before the Exodus they had no right to develop an agricultural economy, to dig, to build, to destroy, to change the structure of the land. All they possessed was the right to enjoy the fruit, and that is exactly what the pastoral community did. It did not exploit the land as would an agricultural society. It only took whatever the land offered.

As they left Egypt, the Torah began to prepare the Israelites for the new challenge they were facing: the change from shepherds into farmers, the transformation of a simple pastoral society into a relatively complex agricultural society. Many actions in the Pentateuch are concerned with this change. (*Festival of Freedom*, pp. 127-128)

~ ~ ~ *And in the fourth year, all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the Lord.* Based on the plural form הלולים, Rabbi Akiva extends the scope of this verse, deriving the rule that one must praise God both before and after eating all food through recitation of blessings. Rabbi Akiva thus bases the obligation to make a *berachah* on the necessity to praise God for the food. On the other hand, the Rabbis' understanding of the role of *berachos* is based on a passage in *Berachos* 35a: *The Rabbis have learned: It is prohibited for a person to derive pleasure from this world without reciting a berachah, and anyone who indeed derives such benefit without a berachah has violated the prohibition of me'ilah. Rabbi Levi asked: One verse states, To the Lord is the world and its inhabitants (Ps. 24:1), and [an apparently conflicting verse] states, The heavens are heavens of the Lord, but the earth He gave to the children of men (Ps. 115:16). There is no conflict; one [verse refers to partaking] before a berachah [is made], while the second [refers to partaking] after a berachah [is made].*

The entire world is consecrated to God, or *hekdesh*. If one derives pleasure from this world without reciting a *berachah*, he has violated the prohibition of partaking of *hekdesh*, that is, the violation of *me'ilah*. Note that the transgression is not that of stealing; the infraction is the more severe sin of *me'ilah*.

Based on Rabbi Akiva's assertion, it would seem that not only does one avoid the *me'ilah* infraction by reciting a *berachah*, he also fulfills an obligation to praise God for the food. There could be a practical *halachic* implication to whether a *berachah* recitation merely obviates the *me'ilah* infraction or if there is a fulfillment (*kiyum*) of praise inherent in the obligation as well. According to the former view, if one has already eaten without a *berachah*, there would be no point to later reciting the *berachah*: *me'ilah* would already have taken place. If, however, in the recitation of *berachos* there is a concomitant *kiyum* of praise to God, then there may indeed still be reason to recite a belated *berachah*; the requirement to praise would not exhaust itself upon consumption. (*Reshimos Shiurim – Maseches Berachos*, pp. 400-401)

בשטר בקרמא תהי לא יומתון ארי לא אתחררת: כא וייתי ית אשמייה קדם יי לתרע משפן זמנא דכר לאשמא: כב ויכפר עלוהי כהנא בדכרא דאשמא קדם יי על חובתיה די חב וישתבק ליה מחובתיה די חב: כג ויארזי תעלון לארעא ותצבון כל אלו דמיכל ותרקון רחקא ית אביה תלת שנין יהי לכוון מרחק לאבדא לא ותאכל: כד וישתא רביעתא יהי כל אביה קדש תשפון קדם יי: כה וישתא חמשותא תיכלון ית אביה לאוספא לכוון עלותיה אגא יי אלהכון: לא יומתו פילא חפשה: כא והביא את-אשמו ליהוה אל-פתח אהל מועד איל אשם: כב וכפר עליו הכהן באיל האשם לפני יהוה על-חטאתו אשר חטא ונסלח לו מחטאתו אשר חטא: פ שלישי כג וכי-תבאו אל-הארץ ונטעתם פלעץ מאכל וערלתם ערלתו את-פריו שלש שנים יהיה לכם ערלים לא יאכל: כד ובשנה הרביעת יהיה כל-פריו קדש הלולים ליהוה: כה ובשנה החמישית תאכלו את-פריו להוסיף לכם תבואתו אני יהוה אלהיכם:

כי לא חפשה. לפיכך אין חייב עליה מיתה שאין קדושה קדושין, הא אם חופשה קדושה קידושין וחייב מיתה: (כב) ונסלח לו מחטאתו אשר חטא. לרבות את המזיד כשוגג: (כג) וערלתם ערלתו. ואטמתם אטימתו, יהא אטוס ונסתם מליהנות ממנו: שלש שנים יהיה לכם ערלים. מאימתי מונה לו, משעת נטיעתו. יכול אם הנגיעו לאחר שלש שנים יהא מותר, תלמוד לומר יהיה, צהייתו יהא: (כד) יהיה כל פריו קדש. כמעשר שני שכתוב צו (להלן כו, ל)

~ ~ ~ *When you come to the Land and you plant any food tree.* Man is a creative being in reference to nature. In cultivation of the soil, in scientific discovery, in all manner of creative work man cooperates with nature, sows and worships her. God Himself *kiyva-chol* has not found a more important occupation than farming: *And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden from the east (Gen. 2:8)*. Man should create new life; he should plant trees and engage in such creative work. The intimate close contact with the environment was recommended and approved by Judaism. The Jew whom God called upon was a worker, a farmer, a shepherd; men who lived in harmony and at peace with nature and saw God not in transcendent heavens, but descending from infinity into finitude. They had spoken to Him as to their fellow-men, in a friendly, neighborly fashion. To cultivate the ground means to worship: *avodah*. In it is expressed man's loyalty to himself and to his destiny. (*The Emergence of Ethical Man*, pp. 62-63)

The land was promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the form of a covenant concluded between the Almighty and the patriarchs. However, there was a stipulation in the agreement: its implementation was contingent upon the sojourn of Abraham's children in a strange land as bondsmen and servants. Prior to the fulfillment of this stipulation, the gift was held in abeyance; the finalization and the full consummation of the covenant took place after the Israelites met the challenge of *Your seed will be strangers (Gen. 15:13)*. Thus, their rights to the Promised Land were limited. The most they had was a *kinyan peiros*, the right to use the land and enjoy its produce.

26 You shall not eat over the blood.* You shall not act on the basis of omens or lucky hours. 27 You shall not round off the corner of your head, and you shall not destroy the edge of your beard. 28 You shall not make cuts in your flesh for a person [who died]. You shall not etch a tattoo on yourselves. I am the Lord. 29 You shall not defile your daughter by making her a harlot, lest the Land fall into harlotry and the land be filled with immorality. 30 You shall observe My Sabbaths and revere My Sanctuary. I am the Lord. 31 You shall not turn to [the sorcery of] Ov or Yid'oni; you shall not seek [these and thereby] defile yourselves through them. I am the Lord, your God. 32 You shall rise before a venerable person and you shall respect the elderly, and you shall fear your God. I am the Lord. 33 When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not taunt him. 34 The stranger who sojourns with you shall be as a native from among you,

שיבה תקום. יכול זקן אשמאי, תלמוד לומר זקן, אין זקן אלא שקנה חכמה: והדרת פני זקן. איזהו הדור, לא ישב זמקומו [ולא ידבר זמקומו] ולא יספור את דבריו. יכול יעזים עיניו כמי שלא ראהו, לכך נאמר ויראת פאלהיהו, שהרי דבר זה מסור ללבו של עושהו שאין מכיר בו אלא הוא, וכל דבר המסור ללבו נאמר בו ויראת מאלהיהו: (ב) לא תוננו. אונאת דברים, לא תאמר לו אמש היית עובד עבודה זרה ועשיתו אהה צא ללמוד תורה שנתנה מפי הגבורה:

כו לא תאכלו על-הדם לא תנחשו ולא תעוננו: כו לא תקפו פאת ראשכם ולא תשחית את פאת זקנד: כח ושרט לנפש לא תתנו בבשרכם וכתבת קעקע לא תתנו בכם אני יהוה: כט אל-תחלל את-בתך להזנותה ולא-תזנה הארץ ומלאה הארץ זמה: ל את-שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני יהוה: לא אל-תפנו אל-האבת ואל-הידענים אל-תבקשו לטמאה בהם אני יהוה אלהיכם: לב מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן ויראת מאלהיהו אני יהוה: ס רביעי ששי כשהו מחוברין לג וכי-יגור אתך גר בארצכם לא תוננו אתו: לד פאורח מקם יהיה לכם הגר | הגר אתכם

(כו) לא תאכלו על הדם. להרצה פנים נדרש צנסהדרין אזהרה שלא יאכל מזער קדשים לפני זריקת דמים, ואזהרה לאוכל מזהמת חולין עד שחלא נפשה, ועוד הרצה: לא תנחשו. כגון אלו המנחשין צחולה וצפופות, פתו נפלה מפיו, צני הפסיקו צדק: לא תעוננו. לשון עונות ושעות, שאומר יוס פלוני יפה להתחיל מלאכה, שעה פלונית קשה ללאת: (כז) לא תקפו פאת ראשכם. זה המשוה צדעיו לאחוריו אזנו ולפדחתו, ונמלא הקף ראשו עגול סביב, שעל אחוריו אזניו עקרי שערו למעלה מצדעיו הרצה: פאת זקנד. סוף הזקן וגזוליו, והן חמש, שחיס צכל לחי ולחי, למעלה אלל הראש שהוא רחצ ויש צו שפי פאות, ואחת למטה צנסטרו מקום חצור שני הלחיים יחד: (כח) ושרט לנפש. כן דרכן של אמוריים להיות משרטטין צשרס כשמת להם מת: וכתבת קעקע. כתצ המחוקה ושקוע שאינו נמחק לעולם, שמקעקעו צמחט והוא משחיר לעולם: קעקע.

prayer should be close to my bed—in other words, he made sure to pray immediately after arising. Kesef Mishneh notes that according to Rashi, Abba Benjamin refrained not only from doing work before he had prayed, but from learning Torah as well. Maimonides, however, seems to disagree, and prohibits only work before prayer, but not Torah study. Tosafos likewise disagree with Rashi and maintain that it is permitted to study Torah before praying. The dispute between Maimonides and Tosafos, on the one hand, and Rashi, on the other, seems to be about how to define the prohibition of לא תאכלו על-הדם. According to Maimonides and Tosafos, secular activities are prohibited before prayer, but Torah study, which is a spiritual endeavor, is permitted. According to Rashi, however, not only secular activities, but even spiritual endeavors are forbidden before one acknowledges God through prayer. (Reshimos Shiurim – Maseches Berachos, pp. 69-70)

This verse is used specifically to prohibit eating prior to praying Shacharis, but is not applied to eating before Minchah. Shacharis is a prayer for the necessities of life, and is thus a prayer for one's own "blood." A major theme in the Shacharis prayer is the indebtedness of man to God for his very existence, for the mere fact that he regains consciousness in the morning and finds that his five senses, his body and his mind function. This type of thanksgiving is best expressed in the morning meditation Elohai Neshamah. In contrast, in the prayer of Minchah, we request that whatever is gracious and beautiful in our lives should continue. This is a prayer that asks for more than basic human needs; it is a prayer for the finer things in life, as represented by the wine that was part of the Minchah offering. The Gemara thus states that one should always be vigilant in regard to the Minchah prayer (Berachos 6b). It is a thanksgiving prayer for everything that one has, and a petition for the good to continue. (Reshimos Shiurim – Maseches Berachos, pp. 559-560; Lecture on Synagogue and Prayer, 1969)

You shall not eat over the blood. Among the many halachos derived from this verse, the Gemara in Berachos 10b interprets it to mean that one should not eat before praying for his own blood (that is, his life). Maimonides writes (Hilchos Tefillah 6:4) that it is prohibited to eat anything or to do any work after dawn without having prayed Shacharis. As a source, Kesef Mishneh cites the statement of Abba Benjamin (Berachos 5a): All my life, I took great pains...that my

and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. * I am the Lord, your God. 35 You shall not commit a perversion of justice with measures, weights, or liquid measures. 36 You shall have true scales, true weights, a true ephah, and a true hin. I am the Lord, your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37 You shall observe all My statutes and all My ordinances, and fulfill them. * I am the Lord.

The difference between *merachem* and *rachaman* is that *merachem* describes an act, not a disposition. Whoever engages in loving or commiseration is called *merachem*, no matter how kind or merciful he is by nature. *Rachaman* describes not an action, but a trait, a temper, a bent in one's character, a disposition. The *rachaman* cannot help but to love. Even when he wants to be strict and rigid, he cannot do it, since his very personality is overflowing with love. *Rachamanus* means that love, and only love, is what one ought to give to people.

The fact that in Egypt we were exposed to all kinds of chicanery, that we were treated there like objects and not people, the fact that later in Persia we were sold by the king to the prime minister for slaughter and annihilation, engendered in us a sensitivity and emotional tenderness not to be found in anyone else. The Jew is saturated with compassion and mercy. We all know what a Jew feels when he says this boy is an orphan, this woman is a widow. The laws pertaining to the treatment of those lonely people bear witness to our sympathetic understanding and involvement in the travail of others.

Without the experience of Egypt and Persia, we would have remained emotionally coarse and tough. That is the reason for the frequent mention of the Exodus whenever the Torah speaks of our duty to respect the feelings of others, particularly the feelings of the defenseless, helpless, and lonely people. The Torah always reminds us that we were aliens in Egypt. (*Days of Deliverance*, pp. 22-23)

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־חֻקֵי יְהוָה וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפָּטֵי וְעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם - *You shall observe all My statutes and all My ordinances, and fulfill them.* In *Parashas Kedoshim*, the Torah presents a list of commandments, both prescriptive and prohibitive, and sums them up with this verse. What are some of these laws? Reverence for parents, the laws of *pe'ah* (leaving the corners of the field for the poor) and *leket* (leaving the gleanings of the sheaves for the poor). All of these laws seem beautiful, noble and understandable. What else do we encounter among the laws in *Kedoshim*? Do not steal from your neighbor, do not embezzle, do not oppress a worker, pay wages on time, do not place a stumbling block before the blind, do not hate your brother in your heart, love your fellow human being as yourself. All these laws are clearly understandable as necessary to lead a dignified and honorable life. So why does this verse mingle *chok* and *mishpat*?

This mingling carries with it an important message. The *chukim*, which are seemingly unreasonable and presented in enigmatic language, have a meaning that we cannot grasp. We must ultimately trust, however, that *chukim* are as reasonable as the *mishpatim*. God gave the nations of the world the seven Noahide laws, which are readily understood, but he did not give them *chukim*, which are not. Our special relationship with God obligates us to go beyond our logic and trust God completely. Only later, in retrospect, we may understand. Why, for example, is the State of Israel so severely maligned? This question, too, is on the level of *chok*, which requires complete trust in God. (*Darosh Darash Yosef*, pp. 245-246)

וְתַרְחֵם לִיָּהּ כְּנִפְתָּךְ אֲרֵי דַעְרֵיךָ תִּנְיָתוֹן בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם אֲנָא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֹן: לֹא לֹא תַעֲבֹדוּן שִׁקְרָא בְּדִין בְּמִשְׁחָתָא בְּמִתְקָלָא וּבְמִתְקָלָא: לֹא מֵאֲנָנִין דְּקִשׁוּט מִתְקָלֵן דְּקִשׁוּט מִכִּילֵן דְּקִשׁוּט וְהִינֵן דְּקִשׁוּט יְהוֹן לְכוּן אֲנָא יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֹן דִּי אֲפָקִית יְתְּכוּן מֵאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם: לֹא וְתִטְרוּן יֵת פִּל קִימֵי וְיֵת פִּל דִּיעֵי וְתַעֲבֹדוּן יְתְּהוֹן אֲנָא יְיָ וְאַהֲבַתְּ לֹא כְּמוֹד כְּיִגְרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: לֹא לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ עוֹל בְּמִשְׁפָּט בְּמִדָּה בְּמִשְׁקָל וּבְמִשׁוֹרָה: לֹא מֵאֲנִי צֶדֶק אֲבִי-צֶדֶק אֵיפֹת צֶדֶק וְתִין צֶדֶק יְהִיָּה לְכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר-הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם מֵאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם: לֹא וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם אֶת־כָּל־חֻקֵי וְאֶת־כָּל־מִשְׁפָּטֵי וְעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה: פ

(לד) כי גרים הייתם. מוס שצך אל תאמר לחצנך: אני ה' אלהיכם. אלהיך ואלהיו אני: (לה) לא תעשו עול במשפט. אם לדון הרי כבר נאמר (לעיל פסוק טו) לא תעשו עול במשפט, ומהו משפט השנוי כאן, היא המדה והמשקל והמשורה, מלמד שהמודד נקרא דין, שאם שקר במדה הרי הוא כמקלקל את הדין, וקרוב עול שנאוי ומשוקץ חרס ומועצה, וגורם לחמשה דברים האמורים בדין, מטמא את משקלותיו במלח להונות את הצדיות שאין מכירין בהם:

וְאַהֲבַתְּ לֹא כְּמוֹד כְּיִגְרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאַרְץ מִצְרַיִם - *and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.* In general, the Torah ethic is derived from experience. We have mercy on all uprooted and defenseless human beings in exile. *And you shall not mistreat a stranger, nor shall you oppress him, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt (Ex. 22:20).* We are burdened with an ethical norm to help because we remember how we felt when we were in distress.

This casts a light upon our mysterious historical destiny. Our nation was born in the crucible of exile, bondage, and suffering. We emerged as a people from the sand dunes of the Sinai Desert, where we wandered forty years. Why could we not rise as a people in our own land, in prosperity and abundance? The answer is simple. If our morality was to be one of kindness and *chesed*, it could not have been formulated for people who knew not what suffering is. Only people in exile could understand and appreciate a morality of kindness. Therefore, *galus* was a central experience in the life of our patriarchs and it is still a major experience in our lives. (*Abraham's Journey*, p. 197)

Egypt is a central experience that underlies the very morality of the Jew. The unique morality of the Jew is rooted in a very sensitive, exceptionally tender and warm approach to man. The Torah is concerned with *kevod haberiyos*, human dignity. The latter must not be abused. It must not be denied to the weak and the helpless. Sensitivity and compassion are the central axis of our moral experience. To hurt the feelings of a person by uttering some innocuous remark is a severe transgression.

We have two terms for kindness—mercy and compassion, *rachamim* and *rachamanus*. The term *rachamim* is derived from the verb *rachem*, which basically means to love. A *merachem* is one who sympathizes. *Rachmanus* is derived from *rachaman*. The latter is an adjectival noun meaning one who is compassionate.

with his daughter in law both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed a depravity; their blood is upon themselves. 13 And a man who lies with a male as one would with a woman* both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon themselves. 14 And a man who takes a woman and her mother it is evil counsel. They shall burn him and them in fire, and there shall be no evil counsel in your midst. 15 And a man who lies with an animal, shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. 16 And a woman who comes close to any animal so that it will mate with her you shall kill the woman and the animal;* they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon themselves. 17 And a man who takes his sister, whether his father's daughter or his mother's daughter, and he sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness it is chesed,*

(bestiality and homosexuality) apply to non-Jews as well and form part of a universal religion that is based upon the concept of man and personality. (*The Emergence of Ethical Man*, p. 27)

וְהָרַגְתָּ אִתָּהּ אִשָּׁה וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה - you shall kill the woman and the animal. Through the juxtaposition of the words אִשָּׁה and בְּהֵמָה, the Gemara in *Sanhedrin* 15a derives the rule that just as the capital punishment for the woman who practices bestiality is handed down by a court of twenty-three judges, so too is the death sentence for the animal. The very next line in *Sanhedrin* 15a derives from the juxtaposition in the verse regarding a bull that kills a man, *the bull shall be stoned, and also its owner shall be put to death* (Ex. 21:29), that the death sentence of the bull is handed down by a court of twenty-three, just as a death sentence for its owner. Why is this rule regarding the destructive ox not also derived from the juxtaposition in our verse?

In the case of bestiality, it is the human's act which condemns the animal. For this reason, one might think, the animal is sentenced by the same type of court as the person involved. In the case of the goring bull, when the bull is sentenced for its own act of goring, one might think that the bull could be sentenced by a lesser court. To obviate such an assumption, a separate *derashah* is used in the latter case. (*Shiurei Harav - Sanhedrin*, pp. 206-207)

הַסֵּד הוּא - it is chesed. *Chesed* is almost impossible to translate literally. The conventional English equivalent of *chesed*—lovingkindness—does not convey the gist of the idea. What is intriguing and strange is the fact that in Hebrew, the word *chesed* is applied in an antithetical manner, semantically denoting two mutually exclusive extremes. On the one hand, *chesed* signifies the ideal ethical deed, bordering on the superhuman; on the other hand, it also has the connotation of the most sordid and base behavior. It is needless, of course, to introduce passages from the Bible in which *chesed* is used in the positive sense; the Bible abounds in them. Yet, the crime of incest is also termed *chesed* by the Bible.

What does this strange usage of *chesed* indicate? The answer was given by Maimonides in the *Guide for the Perplexed* (III:53): *In our commentary to the Ethics of the Fathers, we have explained the expression chesed as denoting an excess [in some quality]. It is especially used of extraordinary kindness. Chesed is practiced in two ways: first, we show kindness to those who have no claim whatsoever upon it; second, we are kind to those to whom it is due, but in a greater measure than is due to them. In the Bible, the term chesed occurs mostly in the sense of showing kindness to those who have no claim to it whatsoever. For this reason, the term chesed is employed to express the good bestowed upon us by God—"I will mention the*

את־כַּלְתּוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם תָּבֵל עֲשׂוֹ דְמִיָּהֶם בָּם: יג וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־זָכָר מִשְׁכַּבִּי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה עֲשׂוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ דְמִיָּהֶם בָּם: יד וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקַּח אֶת־אִשָּׁה וְאֶת־אִמָּהּ זָמָה הוּא בְּאֵשׁ יִשְׂרָפוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶת־הֶן וְלֹא־תִהְיֶה זָמָה בְּתוֹכְכֶם: טו וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן שְׁכַבְתּוֹ בְּבִהְמָה מוֹת יוֹמָת וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה תִּהְרַגוּ: טז וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרַב אֶל־כָּל־בְּהֵמָה לְרִבְעָה אֹתָהּ וְהָרַגְתָּ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ דְמִיָּהֶם בָּם: יז וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִקַּח אֶת־אָחֹתוֹ בֶּת־אָבִיו אֹו בֶּת־אִמּוֹ וְרָאָה אֶת־עֶרְוֹתָהּ וְהִיא תִרְאֶה אֶת־עֶרְוֹתוֹ חֵסֵד הוּא

(יב) תבל עשו. גנאי. לשון אחר, מזלזלין זרע האב צורע הנז: (יג) משכבי אשה. מכניס כמכחול צספופרת: (יד) ישרפו אותו ואתהן. אי אמה יכול לומר אשתו הראשונה ישרפו, שהרי נשאה צהיתר ולא נאסרה עליו. אלא אשה ואמה הכתובין כאן שמהן לאסור, שנשא חמותו ואמה. ויש מרבותינו שאומרים, אין כאן אלא חמותו, ומהו אמהן את אמהן מהן, ולשון יוני הוא הן אמת: (טו) ואת הבהמה תהרגו. אם אדם חטא צהמה מה חטאה, אלא מפני שצאה לאדם תקלה על ידה לפיכך

אמר הכתוב חסד. קל וחומר לאדם שידוע להצניח צין טוב לרע וגורם רעה לחצירו לעצור עצירה. כיוצא בצדד אמה אומר אבד פאצדון את כל המקמות (דברים יב, ט), הרי דברים קל וחומר, ומה אילנות שאינן רואין ואינן שומעין על שצאת תקלה על ידם אמרה תורה השחת שרף וכלה, המטה את חצירו מדרך חיים לרכי מיחה על אמת כמה וכמה: (יז) חסד הוא. לשון ארמי חרפה חסודא. ומדרשו, אם תאמר קין נשא אחותו, חסד עשה המקום לצנות עולמו ממנו, שנאמר (תהלים פט, א) עולם חסד יצננה:

Rashi (19:2) notes that wherever we find a barrier to illicit sexual relationships, we also find *kedushah*. This is the reason we read the section regarding illicit sexual relationships during *Minchah* of Yom Kippur. The initial portion of *Parashas Acharei Mos*, which is read during *Shacharis*, details the Yom Kippur Temple service, which is the process through which *kedushah* is restored to the congregation of Israel. The other reading on Yom Kippur relates to *kedushah* that can be attained by each and every Jew through refraining from forbidden sexual relationships. (*Rabbi Joshua Rapps Parashah Series*)

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־זָכָר מִשְׁכַּבִּי אִשָּׁה - And a man who lies with a male as one would with a woman. Both bestiality and homosexuality are considered unnatural acts. Man is enjoined from a carnal relationship with a mate that does not belong to his kind. Man is also prohibited from any sexual relationship between male and male, for by the laws of nature, established and sanctioned by the act of creation, mating is a male-female relationship.

These motives are not to be found exclusively in the realm of man, but in organic life as such. Man should behave like the plant in its natural environment, whose fruition is automatic (by the wind or insects) and follows a certain uniform, pre-established sequence. Both prohibitions

and they shall be cut off before the eyes of the members of their people; he uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his sin. 18 And a man who lies with a woman who has a flow, and he uncovers her nakedness he has bared her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from the midst of their people. 19 And you shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister or your father's sister, for he would be baring his close relative; they shall bear their sin. 20 And a man who lies with his aunt he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness; they shall bear their transgression; they shall die childless.* 21 And a man who takes his brother's wife it is a repulsive act; he has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless. 22 And you shall observe all My statutes and all My ordinances, and fulfill them, then the Land, to which I am bringing you to dwell therein, will not vomit you out. 23 You shall not follow the practices of the nation that I am sending away from before you, for they committed all these [sins], and I was disgusted with them. 24 So I said to you, You shall possess their land, and I shall give it to you to possess it a land flowing with milk and honey. I am the Lord your God,

ונכרתו לעיני בני עמם ערות אהותו גלה עונו ישא יח ואיש אשר ישכב את-אשה דוה וגלה את-ערותה את-מקרה הערה והוא גלתה את-מקור דמיה ונכרתו שניהם מקרב עמם: יש וערות אהות אמך ואחות אביך לא תגלה כי את-שארן הערה עונם ישאו: כ ואיש אשר ישכב את-דדתו ערות דדו גלה חטאם ישאו ערירים ימתו: כא ואיש אשר יקח את-אשת אחיו נדה הוא ערות אחיו גלה ערירים יהיו: כב ושמרתם את-פלא-חקתי ואת-פלא-משפטי ועשיתם אתם ולא-תקיא אתכם הארץ אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה לשבת בה: שביעי כג ולא תלכו בחקת הגוי אשר-אני משלח מפניכם כי את-כל-אלה עשו ואקץ בם: כד ואמר לכם אתם תירשו את-אדמתם ואני אתננה לכם לרשת אתה ארץ זבת חלב ודבש אני יהוה אלהיכם

Chapter Four [of the Eight Chapters which preface the commentary to the Ethics of the Fathers], and his deeds are greater than his wisdom. Therefore he is called a chasid, in the sense of excess, because exaggeration in a matter is called chesed, whether the exaggeration is for good or for bad.

Maimonides again emphasizes that *chesed* means excess, both in the positive and the negative sense. Whenever one transcends the normal bounds of the good and excels in his deeds beyond the call of ethical duty, he acts in accordance with the norm of *chesed*; and whenever the situation is reversed and one engages in the perpetration of an abhorrent and offensive action, denying all standards of decency and losing his sense of moral shame, his behavior is stamped as *chesed*—limitless depravity and evil. (*Out of the Whirlwind*, pp. 208-209)

עֲרִירִים יָמָתוּ - they shall die childless. The word עֲרִירִים does not mean alone, but rather suggests an existential loneliness. One is alone when he is cut off from social contact, the way a *metzora* is isolated from contact with others (13:46). After the destruction of the Temple, all Jerusalem's inhabitants were expelled and the city was left desolate and alone: *O how has the city that was once so populous remained alone! She has become like a widow!* (Lam. 1:1). Loneliness, on the other hand, suggests that a person is cut off from his connection to the coming generations. Abraham asked (Gen. 15:2): *O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am going* עֲרִירִי: Abraham was not suggesting that he was alone in the sense that he had no friends—but he was lonely because he had no offspring. Loneliness differs fundamentally from aloneness; it occurs when one is detached from the future. A person may be satisfied in his day-to-day life, but can feel loneliness in the sense of feeling adrift. The fear of loneliness forces us to cleave to our parents even after their death. This fear lies behind the instinct to build a house, to raise children. A person wishes to cleave to the cycle of generations; he is reborn with the birth of his own children and lives with them, through them, and for them. (Yemei Zikaron, p. 188)

(י) הערה. גלה, וכן כל לשון ערוה גלי הוא, והו"ו יורדת צמיחה לשם דבר, כמו ועוה מגורת ולא קם ולא זע (אסתר ה, ט), וכן אחוה מגורת אח. והערה זו נחלקו זה רבותינו, יש אומרים זו נשיקת שמש, יש אומרים זו הכנסת עטרה: (יט) וערות אהות אמך. שנה הכוזב באזהרתן, לומר שהזהר עליהן צין על אחות אביו ואמו מן האב צין על אחיותיהן מן האם, אבל ערות אשת אחי אביו לא הזהיר אלא על אשת אחי אביו מן האב: (כ) אשר ישכב את דדתו. המקרא הזה צא ללמד על כרת האמור למעלה שהוא צנוע הליכת ערירי. ערירים. כתרומו

צלא ולד, ודומה לו וְאֶנְכִי הוֹלֵךְ עִרְרִי (בראשית טו, ט). יש לו צנים קוצרן, אין לו צנים מת צלא צנים, לכך שנה צמי מקראות אלו, ערירים ימותו, ערירים יחיו (להלן פסוק כ). ערירים ימותו, אם יהיו לו צנעת עזירה לא יהיו לו כשימותו, לפי שקוצרן צמי. ערירים יהיו, שאם אין לו צנעת עזירה יהיה כל ימיו כמו שהוא עכשיו: (כ) נדה היא. השכיחה הזאת מנוחה היא ומאוסה. ורבותינו דרשו לאסור הערה זה כנדה, שהערה מפורשת זה אֵת מִקְרָה הַעֲרָה (לעיל פסוק יח): (כג) ואקץ. לשון מיאוס, כמו קָצַפְתִּי צָפִי (בראשית כ, מו), כאדם שהוא קץ צמוגו:

chesed of the Lord” (Is. 63:7). On this account, the very act of creation is an act of God’s chesed—“The world is built by chesed” (Ps. 89:3); that is, the building of the universe is an act of chesed. Also in the enumeration of God’s attributes, Scripture says, “And abundant in chesed and truth” (Ex. 34:6).

In his commentary to the *Ethics of the Fathers* (Avos 5:6), Maimonides says as follows: *The chasid is the wise man who has inclined somewhat to an extreme in his ethical attributes, as we have explained in*

Who has distinguished you from the peoples. 25 And you shall distinguish between clean animals and unclean ones, and between unclean birds and clean ones; thus you shall not make yourselves disgusting through [unclean] animals and birds and any [creature] which crawls on the earth, that I have distinguished for you to render unclean. 26 And you shall be holy to Me, for I, the Lord, am holy, and I have distinguished you from the peoples, to be Mine. 27 And a man or a woman who has [the sorcery of] Ov or Yid'oni, shall surely be put to death; they shall pelt them with stones; their blood is upon themselves.

לשמה. לאסור: (כ) ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי. לומר ואצדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי, שמהא הצדלאתם מהם לשמי, פורש מן העצירה ומקבל עליו עול מלכות שמים: (כ) כי יהיה בהם אוב וגו'. כאן נאמר זהם מיתה, ולמעלה יאמר אדם נפשי קלה בצער חזיר, אי אפשי ללבוש כלאים, אצל יאמר אפשי ומה אעשה ואצי שצממים גזר עלי, תלמוד ושגגתם חטאת. וכן בכל חייצי מיתות שנאמר זהם כרת: חסלת פרשת קדושים

אשר-הבדלתי אתכם מן-העמים: מפטיר כה-והבדלתי אתם בין-הבהמה הטהרה לטמאה ובין-העוף הטהור לטהור ולא-תשקצו את-נפשתיכם בבהמה ובעוף ובכל אשר תרמש האדמה אשר-הבדלתי לכם לטמא: כו והייתם לי קדשים כי קדוש אני יהוה ואבדל אתכם מן-העמים להיות לי: כו ואיש און-אשה כיי-יהיה בהם אוב או ידעני מות יומתו באבן ירגמו אתם דמיהם בהם: פ פ פ

(כ) והבדלתם בין הבהמה הטהורה לטמאה. אין צריך לומר בין פרה לממור שהרי מוצלגין ונכרין הם, אלא בין טהורה לך לטמאה לך, בין שנשחט רוצו של סימן לנשחט חזיו, וכמה בין רוצו לחזיו מלא שעה: אשר הבדלתי לכם