

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT ACHAREI MOT - KEDOSHIM

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

THE REAL MEANING OF VEA-HAVTA LEREACHA KAMOCHA!

A cruel husband once approached his wife and told her "I'm the boss and you're nothing." She instantly replied, "Well I guess then... that makes you the boss of nothing!"

How much wisdom was captured in those few lines and wasted on a joke. The wife's response didn't deny that he was the boss - in fact, she readily agreed with him. She merely explained to him over what he was the boss. In other words, if you treat a wife like she's nothing, then you are the boss of nothing. Treat her like a person then you are the boss of a person. Treat her like a queen, then you are the boss of a queen - that is a King. Would you like to be a king? Fine - just treat her like a queen!

In this weeks Parsha we read one of the most famous statements that has resounded for generations - "VeAhavta LeReacha Kamocha - you should love your neighbour like yourself". So famous is this statement that R Akiva said this is a Klal Gadol BaTorah - a great rule in the torah. This is a profound mitzvah. We all love ourselves, very very much! The torah seems to command that we take that same love and focus it on all those around us. Yet the Ramban finds this hard to accept. How can it be that you should love your friend equally to yourself? There is a rule in the Gemara: "Chayecha Kodmin." - Your

live always takes precedence. The Gemara Bava Metziah (62a) states that if two people in the desert finding a canteen with enough water in it to keep only one person alive. The one who has it uses it, and is not supposed to give it to his friend. He must tend to his own life first, thus it seems he must love himself more than others.

Thus asks the Ramban how can it be that we're instructed here to love a friend equally to our love for our self, when we know that the Torah supports a person's survival instinct and says that ultimately your own life comes first? What is the real meaning of VeAhavta LeReacha KaMocha?

The Ramban explains that the Torah is commanding us here to love our friends also, in a similar way (Kamocha) that we love ourselves. The Ramban takes the phrase Kamocha as an overstatement for emphasis. That desire that we have regarding ourselves, to live and be well, should carry over to others. The Ramban supports his view by the fact that Torah doesn't say "et reacha", rather "lereacha." "LeReacha means towards your friend, but not exactly the same. We know that we are not expected to love the person of our neighbour as much as we love our own self. However, we are expected to love our fellow in all areas, as we love all good for ourselves. Similarly the Rambam (Mada 6:3) writes that we should speak in praise of our neighbours, be careful with the honour and the property of others - as we are with our own.

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KIDS ZONE
Quiz & Comic

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

VeAhavta LeReacha KaMocha is a very hard mitzvah to complete. It is a constant mitzvah, and requires much self inspection before applying it to others. We meet so many people in our daily lives, and we immediately form views about them. We relate to different people differently, yet we are told with one blanket statement – treat them all with love, put yourselves in their shoes and look out for their interests just as you would for your own.

The Chida writes that this Mitzvah is most manifest between a husband and wife. In the outside world, it might be easy for us to show our kindness, after all, everyone is watching, so we need to impress. Yet when it comes to behind doors, that is when we are really being put to the test. When a man comes home from work he should not expect the dinner on the table, he should not view as the

woman's obligation, rather he should see it as kindness, she worked hard for it and spent quality time; put himself in her shoes. Similarly the women should not take for granted the husbands work, she should view it as Chesed.

We can now understand why this mitzvah was placed in the Parsha of Kedoshim.

What does holiness have to do with loving your neighbour. Ofcourse by doing the mitzvah you bring unity and happiness but does that lead to holiness. The answer is that to acquire holiness two things need to occur. The first is to love your neighbour exemplify in Ben Adam LeChavero and the second is to do it in a manner of Kedusha.

A true Torah-observant home is certainly most conducive to the Divine Presence. However, we should remember that as important as observance of Mitsvot is, it is possible as Ramban says (19:2) for a person to be

in technical compliance with every halachic requirement, and nevertheless be a vulgar person. The Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 13:3) states that the Mitsvot were given to us for no reason other than to refine our characters.

R Shhlomo Zalman Auerbach was accompanied by a student before he entered his home, R Shlomo Zalman paused to brush the dust from his coat. He explained to the student, "The Talmud says that the Shechina dwells amongst man and wife. Do you think it is respectful to be in the presence of the Shechina with a dusty garment?"

If we were to approach married life with VeAhavta LeReacha KaMocha constantly on our minds, seeking the best for our partner as well as for ourselves, really understanding what they have been through that day, and infuse our relationship with Kedusha then we will ultimately become One.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

FROM THE INSIDE OUT

One of the most sacred rituals performed on Yom Kippur was the offering of the ketoret (incense) by the Kohen Gadol in the Kodesh HaKodashim. This unique service, performed only once a year, symbolized the deepest connection between the people of Israel and their Creator.

During the time of the Second Beit HaMikdash, a sharp disagreement arose between the Sages of the Oral Torah and the Tzedokim (Sadducees), a sect that rejected the authority of the Oral Tradition. The dispute centered on how this incense offering should be conducted.

According to the Sadducees, the incense should be placed on the

coals outside the Holy of Holies, so that the Kohen Gadol would enter only after the chamber was already filled with smoke and fragrance. In contrast, the Sages ruled that the Kohen Gadol must bring in two separate pans—one with coals and one with incense—and only inside the Holy of Holies should he combine them, so that the fragrance would rise there, in the innermost sanctum, before G-d.

This was more than a technical dispute; it reflected a deep philosophical divide. The Sadducees viewed Jewish life from the outside in. They believed one should first look outward—observe the world, understand its values and agendas—and only then turn inward to the Torah to find alignment or justification. To them, Judaism should be shaped in response to

external reality. Our Sages rejected this view entirely. To them, Judaism begins from the inside out. The truth and values of the Torah must remain eternal and unshaken by changing times. Rather than reshape Judaism to fit the world, one must reshape oneself according to the inner light of Torah.

This conflict was not theoretical. It is told that Yochanan Kohen Gadol, who served for eighty years, ultimately adopted the Sadducee view late in life—and long awaited the chance to perform the incense service according to their interpretation. But the Sages held fast: true atonement, true connection, can only come when one enters the Holy of Holies with humility, guided by the enduring wisdom of the Torah—not by the passing trends of the outside world.



RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

לְמַנְצַחַ עַל־הַגִּתִּית מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד - Chapter 8

STANDING UP FOR OUR MESORAH

Part Two – King David's Response to Outside Philosophers

The thrust of the challenge posed by outside philosophers is:

Why would Hashem have focused His interest on tiny planet Earth and vulnerable man? Many other planets are bigger, higher and more sophisticated than ours. In the words of the Malbim - Would an craftsman construct silver vessels weighing 6 kilograms each for the sake of one metal needle?

In dealing with this query, King David turns our attention to the following verse which actually features twice in this chapter

Hashem our G-d, how splendid is your name in the whole land as you cast your splendour on the heavens (Tehillim 8;1,10)

It is well documented that the purpose of creation is to point to the existence of Hashem Himself (See Pirkei Avot 6;11) as the verse states

"Anything which is called in my name and brings Me glory I created, fashioned and also made (Yeshaya 43)"

The four letter name of Hashem (yud-key-vav-key) used in our chapter is the name which symbolizes the creative face of Hashem. Indeed, the Hebrew word for "coming into being" is "havayah" and is arrived at by re-arranging the letters of the four letter name itself.

King David is telling us that if a person wishes to see the creative side of Hashem, they need to look into the "land" – planet Earth and not anywhere else. Indeed it is only through the wisdom which is recognizable on this planet do we come to recognize the wisdom of the creation of the universe also. Just because the sun is so much larger than the earth, with many planets surrounding it does not mean it is the greatest creation on show. We evaluate the greatness of a craftsman not by the size of his work but by the wisdom and understanding involved in constructing it. If one invents a machine, the machine is not judged by how big it is but rather by what features it has and any innovative ideas involved in its design. In fact, quite to the contrary, the ultimate achievement is an

invention of original design which results in a small compact object. A small wristwatch with a highly sophisticated mechanism is more impressive than a large Grandfather clock with the same mechanism.

Stars and planets all stay rigidly in place by virtue of a gravity-like force, similar to the force which pulls an object towards Earth. There are other individual physical forces like wind force which affects the makeup of the atmosphere and rainfall. But these are all single, albeit fundamental, forces. If we begin to look at other creations on earth we see something much more impressive. We see grain and other crops which, aside from their interplay with basic biological forces, also exhibit incredible characteristics, such as their ability to feed off fertile land and to reproduce, resulting in an exact copy of themselves with similar blossoms, flowers and seeds. When we then turn to the creation of man we discover even more breathtaking wonders such as the faculty of sight and the amazing processes involved in delivering a picture to one's brain as well as the ability to hear.

The crowning act of genius involves the granting of the gift of intellect to man and the ability to speak. Speech is not simply a physical process. Speech is the precise point at which the spiritual and physical meet. The act of uttering words gives expression to the soul itself. This is an incredible feat of genius. By way of analogy, engraving a design onto some precious metals such as gold is a very straight forward process because those soft materials lend themselves to engraving. It is much more difficult to engrave onto a basic metal such as steel and if an artisan can do so effectively, then he is clearly of exceptional talent. So too, in this case, it is one thing to show great wisdom in the creation of the body of man himself but how can we even begin to appreciate the impossible genius involved in infusing a physical body with a spiritual Neshama (soul)?

The nations of the world say

מִה־אָנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֵנוּ וְכִי־תִפְקְדֵנוּ: (8,5)
"What is man that he should even be mentioned or remembered?"

Man is simply part of the animal kingdom, with one outstanding characteristic - the faculty of speech. (This is of course a convenient perspective to take. When we view ourselves as nothing more than a high-grade donkey then we need not take responsibility for our actions or recognize any authority in the world). However this

perspective is fundamentally flawed. When considering if a given object is part of a wider category of other such objects one needs to look at the essence of that thing and then place it with other objects with a similar essence. For example, a whale can be placed under the category of "fish" because it dwells in the sea. It does have one unique characteristic – namely that it gives birth to live young rather than just laying eggs. However this characteristic does not take it out of the "fish" category because the method by which it reproduces is not its essence. However man's ability to speak is his essence. Man's intellect remains long after his body decays. Man is not a living thing which speaks. Man is a speaker which happens to be a living thing.

The philosophers view man as just another species but what they do not understand is that

וְתִתְּפָרְהוּ מֵעַט מְאֹלָהִים – Hashem has made him a little less than divine (8,6).

Man does not belong in this world. His place is amongst the angels except that he has a body which compels him to live amongst strangers.

This is a compelling mussar. We have seen gedolim of our generation of whom it could be said "he was not of this world". R' Chaim Kanievsky had almost nothing other than his Torah learning and tefillah. An angel on earth. If we can appreciate who we actually are then we have taken a great step in our growth as individuals. How much more so is this lesson relevant in our times. There is no place for Hashem in the virtual world of Facebook, Twitter and the like. These are forums where one can have what they want when they want it without taking responsibility. Many connect to such sites so that they can disconnect from their true self and their sense of purpose.

Hashem's most wondrous creation is not the infinitely vast universe or the colossal sun or any other planet. Aside from the greater complexity of creations found on earth such as that shown by plant life and the animal kingdom, there is a creation of unspeakable genius which is the injection of an angel into a physical body. Here Hashem reveals His true greatness and his plan for ethereal man to carefully negotiate his attachment to material form and to prove his worth. This is why planet earth and mankind are the true centre of Hashem's masterplan.

Hashem our G-d, how splendid is your name in the whole land as you cast your splendour on the heavens (Tehillim 8;1,10)



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Acharei Mot - Kedoshim

ACHREI MOT

G-d instructs the kohanim to exercise extreme care when they enter the Mishkan. On Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol is to approach the holiest part of the Mishkan after special preparations and wearing special clothing. He brings offerings unique to Yom Kippur, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is "for G-d" and is offered in the Temple, while the other is "for Azazel" in the desert. The Torah states the individual's obligations on Yom Kippur: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must "afflict" oneself. We are to abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing and marital relations.

Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered. The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman's monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

KEDOSHIM

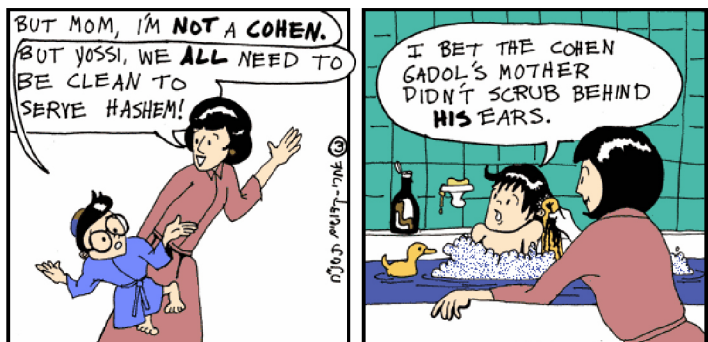
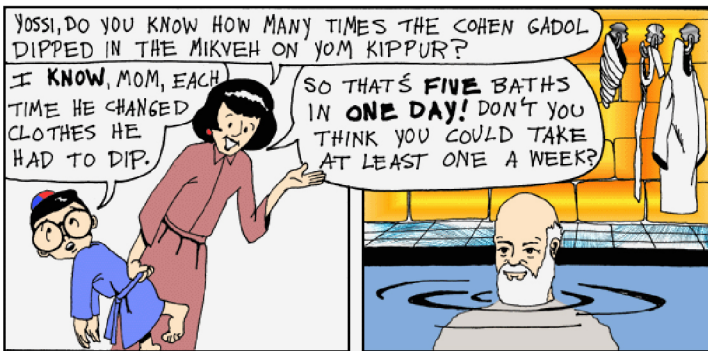
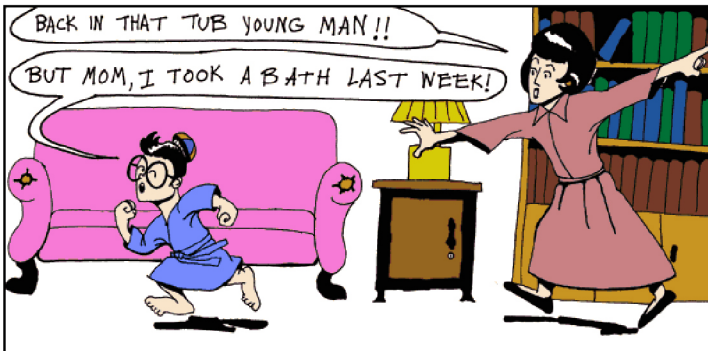
The nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught:

Prohibitions: Idolatry; eating offerings after their time-limit; theft and robbery; denial of theft; false oaths; retention of someone's property; delaying payment to an employee; hating or cursing a fellow

Jew (especially one's parents); gossip; placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks; perversion of justice; inaction when others are in danger; embarrassing; revenge; bearing a grudge; cross-breeding; wearing a garment of wool and linen; harvesting a tree during its first three years; gluttony and intoxication; witchcraft; shaving the beard and sideburns; tattooing.

Positive: Awe for parents and respect for the elderly; leaving part of the harvest for the poor; loving others (especially a convert); eating in Jerusalem the fruits from a tree's fourth year; awe for the Temple; respect for Torah scholars, the blind and the deaf.

Rabbi Sinclair,
Seasonsofthemoon.com



Q

1. For what sin does the goat Chatat atone?
2. After the Yom Kippur service, what is done with the four linen garments worn by the Kohen Gadol?
3. Where were the fats of the Chatat burned?
4. Who is solely responsible for attaining atonement for the Jewish People on Yom Kippur?
5. From one point in history, installation of the Kohen Gadol through anointing was no longer used but was conducted by donning the special garments of that office. From when and why?
6. What is the penalty of karet?

A

1. 16:16 - For unknowingly entering the Beit Hamikdash in the state of tumah.
2. 16:23 - They must be put into geniza and not be used again.
3. 16:25 - On the outer Mizbe'ach.
4. 16:32 - The Kohen Gadol.
5. 16:32 - Anointing ceased during the kingship of Yoshiahu. At that time, the oil of anointing was hidden away.
6. 17:9 - One's offspring die and one's own life is shortened.