



TORAH



# חומש ויקרא

# THE TORAH

*With an Interpolated English Translation  
and Commentary Based on the Works of  
The Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson*  
וצוקללה"ה נבג"מ זי"ע

**Chumash Vayikra**  
*The Book of Leviticus*

**Parshat Kedoshim**



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**THE TORAH - CHUMASH VAYIKRA**  
WITH AN INTERPOLATED ENGLISH TRANSLATION  
AND COMMENTARY BASED ON THE WORKS OF  
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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# קְדוּשִׁים Kedoshim

## Overview

As we have seen,<sup>1</sup> the lesson we learn from the sequence of the four preceding *parashiot*—*Shemini*, *Tazria*, *Metzora*, and *Acharei*—is that true holiness is living a holy life in *this* world, rather than trying to escape it or renounce it. Once it has taught us this lesson, the Torah proceeds with the details of how holiness is in fact achieved. This is the subject of the present *parashah*, *Kedoshim*, which means “holy.”

*Parashat Kedoshim* comprises a dizzying assortment of seemingly unrelated topics and commandments, many of which are in fact treated elsewhere in the Torah, as well. How are we to make sense of this?

The answer is to be found in the opening words of the *parashah*: “You shall be holy, for I, God, your God, am holy.” As we will see, this means that our holiness derives from God’s holiness.

What is holiness? The Hebrew word for “holy” (*kadosh*) means “separate,” “removed,” and “above and beyond.” Relative holiness means being “beyond” (i.e., in a separate category from) surrounding entities; absolute holiness means being “beyond” everything, beyond the limitations of this world. God is thus axiomatically absolutely and infinitely holy. Since He created the world, He is by definition categorically beyond it and any of its characteristics. God is absolutely unlimited by time, space, or any of the conceptions of creation.

So by being told that we are to be holy “because I, God, your God, am holy,” we are being told that we, too, can partake of God’s otherness, that the heights of holiness we can reach are infinite, just as God is infinite.

This is another reason why *Kedoshim* follows *Acharei*. *Yom Kippur*, the opening topic of *parashat Acharei*, is both the embodiment and apex of the process of *teshuvah*, the reinstatement of Divine consciousness after a fall. In this process, we learn how to break out of the rut of our natural life and make a spiritual quantum leap. The entropic force of natural spiritual reality dictates that all creation be locked in a downward spiral of degeneration and degradation. *Teshuvah* belies this “truth.” Through *teshuvah*, we can attain heights of holiness that our natural sense of logic tells us are beyond our grasp.

Thus, only after having experienced *teshuvah*, after having become expert at defying the gravitational pull of earthly reality, are we ripe for the call of *Kedoshim*: “Be as holy as I

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1. Overview to *parashat Acharei*.

am, and ascend infinitely in this holiness, for the source of your holiness is Me—and I am infinite.”

To be beyond nature means to live with the awareness that nature poses no contradiction to Divinity. The holier we are, the more capable we are of infusing Divine consciousness into all aspects of creation previously locked into their worldly orientation. There is no aspect of life that is beyond our capacity to elevate, so long as we are connected to God and at one with His will. Therefore, all aspects of life—from the lowest depths of idolatry to the loftiest ideals of love for our neighbor—come within the purview of *parashat Kedoshim*. It is this all-embracing scope of holiness that is expressed by the mélange of laws comprised within this *parashah*.<sup>2</sup>



In most years, *parashiot Acharei* and *Kedoshim* are read on the same Sabbath, which means that they share a common denominator. Inasmuch as the subject of the beginning of *parashat Acharei* is the observance of *Yom Kippur* in the Temple—in which the holiest place (the Holy of Holies in the Temple), the holiest person (the high priest), and the holiest time (*Yom Kippur*) all come together—and inasmuch as the name of *parashat Kedoshim* means “holy,” it is clear that the common denominator of these two *parashiot* is the concept of holiness.

As we know,<sup>3</sup> the name of *parashat Acharei* means “after,” referring to the fact that God gave the commandment that opens that *parashah*—the order of the Temple rites performed on *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement—after the deaths of Aaron’s two eldest sons. Although we have noted that Nadav and Avihu were wrong in desiring to escape this world and expire in the ecstasy of Divine rapture, this does not mitigate the fact that they did indeed reach exalted heights of Divine consciousness and closeness to God—heights to which we should all aspire.

In this light, the name *Acharei* alludes to the lesson that no matter how high we climb on the ladder of holiness, even if we reach the heights reached by Nadav and Avihu, there is always an “after” awaiting us, a higher level to reach. The details of how to attain ever-higher levels of holiness and the power that fuels this process, as described above, are given in *parashat Kedoshim*.

The lesson we learn from the combination of these two *parashiot*, beyond the lesson we learn from their sequence, is thus that our ascent in holiness must be continuous and infinite, each level infinitely surpassing our previous level, inasmuch as we draw our capacity for spiritual progress from God’s own holiness, which is infinite.<sup>4</sup>



Nonetheless, in some years *parashiot Acharei* and *Kedoshim* are read separately, indicating that they are also significantly different from each other—different enough to warrant being focused on at different times. And in fact, if we look closely, we can discern that their messages indeed seem to be diametrically opposed. *Parashat Acharei*, as we have noted, underscores the fact that the essential concern of religious life should be engaging this world and sanctifying it, rather than trying to avoid or escape it. The very word *Kedoshim*, in contrast, implies, as we have also noted, separateness from the material world and its inherent limitations. It would seem that this awareness should foster a more ascetic, abstinent attitude

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2. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 116-123.

3. Overview to *parashat Acharei*.

4. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 12, pp. 91-94.

toward life—the very opposite of embracing and engaging the material world, even in order to sanctify it.

Indeed, there are those among us whose lives mainly reflect one or the other of these opposites approaches to life; there are also periods in all of our lives when we emphasize one or the other of them. For example, those of us who have overcome their human/animal drives and are therefore only motivated by the innate drives of their Divine souls can confidently engage the material world without fear of being lured by its various enticements. In contrast, those of us who are still struggling with their human/animal drives will be much more circumspect in their dealings with the material world, tending rather to avoid its temptations whenever possible. Nonetheless, even those of us in this latter category do experience a measure of freedom from these drives when they immerse themselves in prayer or the study of the Torah, temporarily shedding their self-awareness and identifying wholly with their inner Divine dimension.

On the other hand, the fact that in most years these two *parashiot* are read together implies that we are meant to unify these two opposites. We have seen<sup>5</sup> how the ability to encompass both sides of a paradox is the earmark of Judaism; this unification of *Acharei* and *Kedoshim*, of separation from the world and involvement with it, is another example of this. When we identify with our Divine souls completely—either on an ongoing basis, as is possible for those who have overcome their human/animal drives, or temporarily, as is possible for those who are still struggling with these drives—we can manifest God’s ability to live both sides of a paradox, in this case, being “in the world” and “outside the world,” or self-aware and non-self-aware, simultaneously.

In other words, the involvement with the world associated with *parashat Acharei* necessitates sustaining self-awareness, inasmuch as the ongoing task of self-refinement and refining the world requires us to measure our progress as we grow spiritually and elevate the world we live in. In contrast, the dissociation from the world associated with *parashat Kedoshim* is predicated upon abnegating self-awareness, identifying totally with God and His desires for us. Living the paradox of *Acharei-Kedoshim* means devoting ourselves to the task of self-refinement out of pure devotion to God and His agenda rather than as means toward self-fulfillment or betterment per se.

This paradox is evident in the standard blessing we recite before performing many commandments: “Blessed are You, God, our God, *who has sanctified us* with His commandments and commanded us to...” First, we acknowledge God as having sanctified us—that is, made us holy and separate from the world, devoted solely to His will. From this perspective, all commandments are the same: they are all means of fulfilling His desire for us, and it is immaterial how this desire expresses itself. But then we go on to finish the blessing: “and has commanded us to do such and such,” acknowledging the particular efficaciousness of this specific commandment.

By living this paradox, transcending the straitjacketing limitations of this world, we hasten the day when God will release us from all the ontological “straitjackets” of exile: the final, ultimate Redemption.<sup>6</sup>

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5. Overview to *parashat Vayikra*.

6. *Hitva'aduyot* 5745, pp. 1929-1942; *Sefer HaSichot* 5750, vol. 2, pp. 429-432.

ONKELOS

19:1 ומליל יי עם משה למימרי:  
 2 מליל עם כל כנשתא דבני  
 ישראל ותימר להון קדישין תהון  
 ארי קדיש אגא יי אלהכון: 3 גבר  
 מן אמה ומן אבוהי תהון דחלין  
 וית יומי שביא דיילי תשרון אגא יי  
 אלהכון: 4 לא תתפנון בתר טעון  
 ודחלן דמתכא לא תעבדון לכוון  
 אגא יי אלהכון: 5 וארי תכסון  
 נכסת קדישין קדם יי לרעוא לכוון  
 תכסנה:

19:1 וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: 2 דְּבַר אֶל־כָּל־עַדְתַּת  
 בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם קִדְשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי  
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 3 אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שִׁבְתֵּיתִי  
 תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 4 אֶל־תִּפְנוּ אֶל־הָאֱלִילִים  
 וְאֵלֵהֶם מִסִּכָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: 5 וְכִי  
 תִּזְבַּחְוּ זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה לְרִצְוֹנְכֶם תִּזְבַּחְהוּ:

RASHI

חייבים בכבודי, לפיכך לא תשמע לו לבטל את  
 דברי. איזהו מורא? לא ישב במקומו, ולא ידבר  
 במקומו, ולא יסתר את דבריו. ואיזהו כבוד? מאכיל  
 ומשקה, מלביש ומנעיל, מכניס ומוציא: 4 אל תפנו  
 אל האילים. לעבדם. "אלילים" לשון "אל", כלא  
 הוא חשוב: ואלהי מסכה. תחלתן אלילים הם, ואם  
 אתה פונה אחריהם — סופך לעשותן אלהות: לא  
 תעשו לכם. לא תעשו לאחרים, ולא אחרים לכם.  
 ואם תאמר: לא תעשו לעצמכם, אבל אחרים עושין  
 לכם, הרי כבר נאמר: "לא יהיה לך", לא שלך ולא  
 של אחרים: 5 וכי תזבחו וגו'. לא נאמרה פרשה זו  
 אלא ללמד שלא תהא זביחתן אלא על מנת ליאכל  
 בתוך הזמן הזה, שאם לקבע להם זמן אכילה, הרי  
 כבר נאמר: "ואם נדר או נדבה זבח קרבנו" וגו':  
 לרצונכם תזבחהו. תחלת זביחתו תהא על מנת נחת  
 רוח, שיהא לכם לרצון, שאם תחשבו עליו מחשבת  
 פסול, לא ירצה עליכם לפני: לרצונכם. אפימינוט.  
 זהו לפי פשוטו. ורבותינו למדו מכאן למתעסק  
 בקדשים שפסול, שצריך שיזבחו לשחט:

2 דבר אל כל עדת בני ישראל. מלמד שנאמרה  
 פרשה זו בהקדמה, מפני שרב גופי תורה תלוין  
 בה: קדשים תהיו. הוון פרושים מן העריות ומן  
 העבירה, שכל מקום שאתה מוצא גדר ערוה,  
 אתה מוצא קדשה — "אשה זנה וחללה וגו' אני  
 ה' מקדשכם". "ולא יחלל ורעו אני ה' מקדשו".  
 "קדשים יהיו" — "אשה זנה וחללה" וגו': 3 איש  
 אמו ואביו תיראו. כל אחד מכם תיראו אביו ואמו,  
 זהו פשוטו. ומדרשו: אין לי אלא איש, אשה מנין?  
 כשהוא אומר: "תיראו", הרי כאן שנים. אם כן, למה  
 נאמר "איש"? שהאיש ספק בידו לעשות, אבל אשה  
 רשות אחרים עליה: אמו ואביו תיראו. כאן הקדים  
 אם לאב, לפי שגלוי לפניו שהבן ירא את אביו יותר  
 מאמו, ובכבוד הקדים אב לאם, לפי שגלוי לפניו  
 שהבן מכבד את אמו יותר מאביו, מפני שמשדלתו  
 בדרים: ואת שבתתי תשמרו. סמך שמירת שבת  
 למורא אב, לומר: אף על פי שהזהרתך על מורא  
 אב, אם יאמר לך: חלל את השבת! אל תשמע לו,  
 וכן בשאר כל המצות: אני ה' אלהיכם. אתה ואביו

1. ויקרא כא, דח. 2. שם, טו. 3. שם, ו. 4. שם, ו. 5. קידושין ל, ב. 6. שמות כ, יא. 7. שמות כ, ב. 8. ויקרא ו, טו. 9. פיוס. 10. חולין יג, א.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

enabling us to partake of God's infinity by revealing our transcendental essence.<sup>8</sup>

**4 You must not turn toward idols:** This verse is the basis for the law that forbids gazing at idols or studying idolatrous rites<sup>9</sup> even if we do not intend to practice idolatry. This prohibition is intended both to distance us from any temptation to engage in idolatrous practices and to keep us from any sensual or intellectual contact with idolatry itself, for such contact renders us spiritually "defiled," i.e., somewhat numbed to holiness.

An exception to this rule is studying idolatry in the context of studying the Torah. In order to properly avoid the transgression of idol worship, we must

perforce familiarize ourselves with exactly which types, aspects, and forms of idolatry the Torah forbids. Indeed, one of the longer tractates of the Talmud (*Avodah Zarah*, "Idolatry") is devoted, among other things, to the rites of various ancient forms of idol worship. We thus see that, in the context of Torah study, we are not only allowed to study the various forms of idolatry but required to do so.

Spiritually, we are required to study the laws of forbidden things (of which idolatry is only one example) because this is one of the few ways through which we can elevate them. The Hebrew word for "permitted" (מותיר) means "untied"; permitted things are "free" to be elevated by our direct

8. *Sefer HaMa'amaram* 5744, pp. 62-63. 9. *Shabbat* 149a; *Tosefot ad loc.*, s.v. *veDiyukni Atzmah*; *Mishneh Torah*, *Avodat Kochavim* 2:2; *Shulchan Aruch*, *Yoreh Deah* 142:15; cf. *Deuteronomy* 12:30.

## Holiness Laws

19:1 God spoke to Moses, saying,

2 “Generally, when you convey My teachings to the people, their attendance at these lessons is optional, and indeed, not all of them attend. The following passages of the Torah, however, are so fundamental that when you convey them, attendance will be obligatory.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, at this lesson **you must speak to the entire congregation of the Israelites**. Begin this lesson by **saying to them, ‘You must be holy, for I, God, your God, am holy**, and holiness is achieved chiefly by distancing yourself from forbidden relations—such as were listed above<sup>2</sup>—in addition to following the instructions that I am about to convey.

3 You have been taught that you must honor your parents,<sup>3</sup> which means that you must feed, clothe, and escort them whenever necessary. In addition to honoring them, **everyone must respect his mother and his father**, which means that you must not sit in their seats, not speak when it is their turn to speak, and not contradict them explicitly. Even though children naturally respect their fathers more than their mothers and honor their mothers more than their fathers, you must be careful to respect your mother as much as you do your father and to honor your father as much as you do your mother.

Married women are exempt from the duty to honor their parents<sup>4</sup> whenever doing so would conflict with their marital obligation to obey their husbands. Similarly, all of you are exempt from the duty to honor your parents whenever doing so would conflict with your obligation to obey Me. Thus, for example, if your parent tells you to desecrate the Sabbath, you must not obey him; **you must instead observe My Sabbaths, for I, God, am God of both of you**—and you must both obey My will.<sup>5</sup>

4 You have been taught that you must not worship idols.<sup>6</sup> In addition, **you must not even turn your thoughts toward worshipping idols**, contemplating how you might worship them—even though you know that they are **worthless** and their worship pointless—**in order that you not eventually come to believe in them and thus make them into molten deities for yourselves**. You may not make idols for others, even if you do not worship them; nor, as you have been taught, may you possess idols made by others, even if you did not make them yourselves. **I am God, your God**, who may be relied upon to reward you for fulfilling this commandment and to punish you for transgressing it.

5 You have been taught that peace-offerings must be eaten within two days of being slaughtered,<sup>7</sup> and additionally, that **when you slaughter a peace-offering to God, you must slaughter it** with the intention that it be **acceptable** by Me by being eaten within the time limit that I have set for it, i.e.,

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∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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3 **You must be careful to respect your mother as much as you do your father and to honor your father as much as you do your mother:** What comes naturally to us, be it good or bad, is limited by our nature. By demanding that we go beyond our natures, the Torah frees us of our natural limitations,

1. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 19, p. 325, note 27. *Sefer HaZikaron*. 2. 18:1-23. 3. Exodus 20:12. 4. Mizrahi. 5. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 26, p. 255, note 13. 6. Exodus 20:3. 7. Above, 7:16.

— ONKELOS —

6 ביומא דיתנבס יתאכל וביומא דבתרוהי ודישתאר עד יומא תליתאה בנורא יתוקד: 7 ואם אתאכלא יתאכל ביומא תליתאה מרחק הוא לא לא יהי לרעוא: 8 ודייכלנה חובה יקבל ארי ית קדשא דין אחל וישיצי אנשא ההוא מעמה: 9 ובמחצדכון ית חצדא דארעכון לא תשיצי פאתא דחקלה למחצד ולקטא דחצדך לא תלקט: 10 וכרמך לא תעלל ונתרא דכרמך לא תלקט לעניי ולגיורי תשובך יתהון אנא יי אלהכון: 11 לא תגנבו ולא תכדבו ולא תשקונו אנש בחברה:

6 ביום זבחכם יאכל וממחרת והנותר עד-יום השלישי באש ישרף: 7 ואם האכל יאכל ביום השלישי פגול הוא לא ירצה: 8 ואכליו עונו ישא בייאת-קדש יהוה חלל ונכרתה הנפש ההוא מעמיה: 9 ובקצרכם את-קציר ארצכם לא תכלה פאת שדה לקצר ולקט קצירך לא תלקט: 10 וכרמך לא תעולל ופרט פרמך לא תלקט לעני ולגר תעזב אתם אני יהוה אלהיכם: 11 לא תגנבו ולא-תכחשו ולא-תשקרו איש בעמיתו:

— RASHI —

אינהו עוללות? כל שאין לה לא כתרף ולא נטף: ופרט כרמך. גרגרי ענבים הנושרים בשעת בציחה: אני ה' אלהיכם. דין להפרע, ואיני גובה מכם אלא נפשות, שנגמר: "אל תגזל דל וגו' כי ה' יריב ריבם" וגו': 11 לא תגנבו. אזהרה לגונב ממון, אבל "לא תגנבו" שבעשרת הדברות, אזהרה לגונב נפשות, דבר הלמד מענינו, דבר שחובין עליו מיתת בית דין: ולא תכחשו. לפי שנגמר: "וכחש בה", משלם קרן וחמש, למדנו ענש, אזהרה מניין? תלמוד לומר: "ולא תכחשו": ולא תשקרו. לפי שנגמר: "ונשבע על שקר", ישלם קרן וחמש, למדנו ענש, אזהרה מניין? תלמוד לומר: "ולא תשקרו": לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו ולא תשבעו. אם גנבת, סופך לכחש, סופך לשקר, סופך לשבע לשקר:

6 ביום זבחכם יאכל. בשתזבחהו תשחטוהו על מנת לאכלו בזמן זה שקבעתי לכם כפר: 7 ואם האכל יאכל וגו'. אם אינו ענין לחוץ לזמנו, שהרי כפר נאמר: "ואם האכל יאכל מבושר זבח שלמיו" וגו', תנהו ענין לחוץ למקומו. יכול יהיו חובים פרת על אכילתו? תלמוד לומר: "והנפש האכלת ממנו עונה תשא", ממנו ולא מחברו, יצא הנשחט במחשבת חוץ למקומו: פגול. מתעב, כמו: "ומרק פגלים כליהם": 8 ואכליו עונו ישא. בנותר גמור הכתוב מדבר, ואינו ענוש פרת על הנשחט חוץ למקומו, שקבר מעטו הכתוב. וזה בנותר גמור מדבר. ובמסכת פרייתות: למדוהו מגזרה שוה: 9 לא תכלה פאת שדה. שיינה פאה בסוף שדהו: ולקט קצירך. שבילים הנושרים בשעת קצירה, אחת או שתיים, אבל שלש אינן לקט: 10 לא תעולל. לא תטל עוללות שבה, והן נפרות.

11. ויקרא ז, יח. 12. שם. 13. ישעיה סה, ד. 14. ה, א. 15. משלי כב, כבכג. 16. שמות כ, יב. 17. ויקרא ה, כב. 18. שם.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

involvement. In contrast, the word for "forbidden" (אסור) means "tied down"; forbidden things cannot be elevated by our direct involvement with them. Nevertheless, we can elevate even these "tied down," forbidden aspects of reality indirectly by studying the Torah's discussion of them. In the Torah, these forbidden entities are not subjects of study in their own right but form an intrinsic part of the Divine plan, seen in the context of their im-

plications vis-à-vis holiness. They thus assume the holiness of the Divine wisdom they are a part of.<sup>24</sup> **11 You must not steal:** As was seen above,<sup>25</sup> we can elevate forbidden entities by studying their natures and implications vis-à-vis holiness as detailed in the Torah. In addition, since, as the Ba'al Shem Tov teaches,<sup>26</sup> everything we see can teach us some lesson in how to better fulfill our Divine mission and spiritual potential, we can also elevate a forbidden

— A CLOSER LOOK —

[6] **Your intention to eat it beyond this time limit.** According to the Oral Tradition, the list of acts that disqualify a sacrifice if it is offered up

with this articulated intention includes, besides slaughtering: receiving the animal's blood in the designated vessel, transporting the blood to the

24. *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5743, pp. 85-87. 25. On v. 4. 26. *Keter Shem Tov* (ed. Kehot, 2004) addendum 224 (= addendum 128 in 1998 and prior editions).

6 that **it be eaten on the day you slaughter it and**, if any meat is left over, **on the next day;**<sup>10</sup> **and** furthermore, **that anything left over until the third day must** not be eaten but rather **be burned in fire.**<sup>11</sup> If, when you slaughter it, you articulate<sup>12</sup> your intention to eat it beyond this time limit, the sacrifice becomes invalid and ineffectual.

7 Not only if the sacrifice is slaughtered with the intent **that it be eaten on the third day**, but also if it is slaughtered with the intent that it be eaten anywhere other than in the prescribed *place* for eating it, **it is contemptible and it will not be accepted** as valid. Nevertheless, only a person who eats meat of a sacrifice that was slaughtered with the intent to eat it outside its prescribed *time* is punishable by excision;<sup>13</sup> one who eats meat of a sacrifice that was slaughtered with the intent to eat it outside its prescribed *place* is only punishable by lashes.<sup>14</sup>

8 In contrast, **whoever eats** flesh that was slaughtered with the proper intention but has been left over beyond its prescribed time **will bear his sin, because he has profaned what is holy to God.** Specifically, **that person will be cut off from his people**, i.e., he will die prematurely and childless.<sup>15</sup>

### Fallen Gleanings

9 **When you reap the harvest of your land, you must not fully reap the last corner of your field** that you reap; rather, you must leave some of it uncut.<sup>16</sup> **Nor may you gather the one- or two-ear gleanings of your harvest** that fall from your hand while you are reaping your field; if three or more ears fall from your hand, however, you may pick them up.<sup>17</sup>

10 **You must not glean** the young grapes of **your vineyard** that grow on the part of the vine not sufficiently developed<sup>18</sup> to have its grapes hanging from either a stem or ancillary shoots.<sup>19</sup> **Nor may you collect the fallen individual grapes of your vineyard.**<sup>20</sup> **You must leave** all of these required leavings **for the poor and the convert**, the latter because he has no land-inheritance to farm. **I am God, your God**, who may be relied upon to punish you—even with death<sup>21</sup>—if you ignore these obligations.

All these compulsory leavings are exempt from tithes.<sup>22</sup>

### Social Behavior

11 **You must not steal** money or property. If you do, you may be tempted to deny your sin; therefore be aware that **you must not falsely deny** someone's claim that you received an article from him on deposit or as a loan, or that you received money from him in a business partnership or as a loan, or that you robbed him, or that you withheld his wages, or that you found something he lost. And if you do deny such a claim, you may then be tempted to bolster your claim by swearing to that effect; therefore be further aware that **you must not lie to one another** by swearing falsely regarding having done any of these five things. (The corrective punishment for this misdeed was described previously.<sup>23</sup>)

10. Above, 7:18. 11. Above, 7:17. 12. See Deuteronomy 17:1. 13. Above, 7:18. 14. *Mishneh Torah, Pesulei HaMukdashin* 18:3, *Sanhedrin* 1:4 (#54). 15. Exodus 12:15; Rashi on 17:9, above, and 20:20, 23:30, below. 16. Below, 23:22; cf. Deuteronomy 24:20. 17. Below, 23:22. 18. *Pe'ah* 7:4; *Tosefta, Pe'ah* 3:11; *Y. Pe'ah* 7:3. 19. Deuteronomy 24:21. 20. *Ibid.* 14:22. 21. Proverbs 22:22-23. 22. Deuteronomy 14:22; Rashi on Deuteronomy 14:27. 23. Above, 5:21-26.

ONKELOS

12 וְלֹא תִשְׁבְּעוּ בְשֵׁמִי לְשָׁקֵר וְחִלַּלְתָּ אֶת־שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
וְחָחַל יָת שְׁמַא דְאֱלֹהֵךְ אָנָּא יְיָ  
13 לֹא תַעֲשֶׂק יִת חֲבֵרְךָ וְלֹא תִינּוֹס  
לֹא תְבִית אַגְרָא דְאֲגִירָא לְוִתְךָ עַד  
צִפְרָא:

12 וְלֹא־תִשְׁבְּעוּ בְשֵׁמִי לְשָׁקֵר וְחִלַּלְתָּ אֶת־שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ  
אֲנִי יְהוָה: 13 לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂק אֶת־רֵעֶךָ וְלֹא תִגְזֹל לֹא־תִלְוֶן  
פְּעֻלַת שְׂכִיר אֶתְךָ עַד־בְּקָר:

RASHI

יום הכתוב מדבר, שיציאתו מששקעה חמה, לפיכך  
זמן גבוי שָׁקֵר כָּל הַלֵּילָה. ובמקום אחר<sup>36</sup> הוא אומר:  
"ולא תבוא עליו השמש", מדבר בשכיר לילה,  
שהשלמת פעלתו משיגלה עמוד השחר, לפיכך זמן  
גבוי שָׁקֵר כָּל הַיּוֹם, לפי שנתנה תורה זמן לבעל  
הבית, עונה לבקש מעות:

12 וְלֹא תִשְׁבְּעוּ בְשֵׁמִי. לְמָה נֶאֱמַר? לְפִי שְׁנֵאמְרוּ:  
"לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת שֵׁם ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוֹא", וְכוּל לֹא יְהֵא  
חֵיב אֶלָּא עַל שֵׁם הַמִּיחָד, מִנִּין לְרִבּוּת כָּל הַכְּנוּיִין?  
תְּלַמּוּד לֹמַר: "וְלֹא תִשְׁבְּעוּ בְשֵׁמִי לְשָׁקֵר", כָּל שֵׁם  
שֵׁשׁ לִי: 13 לֹא תַעֲשֶׂק. זֶה הַכּוּבֵשׁ שֶׁכֵּר שְׂכִיר: לֹא  
תִלְוֶן. לְשׁוֹן נִקְבָּה, מוֹסֵב עַל הַפְּעֻלָּה: עַד בְּקָר. בְּשָׂכִיר

19. שמות כ, ו. 20. דברים כד, טו.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

"stealing" refers to taking secretly, whereas "rob-  
bing" refers to taking openly and brazenly. Sin can  
only be considered "robbing," since God is both  
omnipresent and omniscient.<sup>36</sup>

**You must not oppress your fellow by not paying  
him on time:** Based on the statement in the Book  
of Psalms<sup>37</sup> that God "declares His words to [the  
descendants of] Jacob, His rules and ordinances to  
[the descendants of] Israel," the sages teach us that  
all God's commandments are, so to speak, His own  
rules that He Himself follows.<sup>38</sup>

In this context, the Jewish people can be conceived  
of as being God's "employees." Every time we per-  
form a commandment, we have carried out God's  
instructions. Why then does God not reward us on  
that very day? How can He postpone our reward  
for the World to Come? Is that not withholding a  
laborer's wages?

The answer is that no, it is not, because we have not  
yet finished our "job." As we have seen, the pur-  
pose of the world's creation is that we make it into  
a home for God, i.e., that all humanity attain Divine  
consciousness. Every time we fulfill a command-  
ment, a part of us or of the world is being refined,  
revealing the Divine light within creation. As a re-  
sult of our collective efforts throughout history, our  
"job" will ultimately be completed and the Divine

energy enlivening all of existence will be apparent.  
This is the essence of the Redemption, and, more  
specifically, of the Resurrection, when "God's glory  
will be revealed, and all flesh will perceive it to-  
gether,"<sup>39</sup> meaning that our physical eyes will be so  
refined that they will perceive the Divinity animat-  
ing all reality.

Accordingly, the job for which we have been "hired"  
by our Creator will only have been completed after  
the Redemption, at which time we will indeed im-  
mediately receive our pay in full.<sup>40</sup>

Alternatively, God does indeed reward us daily,  
but He knows that were we to be fully aware of  
our reward, the following day's work would pose  
no challenge to our free choice. It would therefore  
be "worth" much less, and the reward we would  
earn for that day's (and all subsequent days') work  
would be concomitantly less. As a favor to us, there-  
fore, God hides our reward from us for the time be-  
ing, figuratively locking it up in a safe deposit box.

At the same time, however, in order that there be  
no doubt that our reward has indeed been given to  
us, God gives us the key to the lock. As Maimonides  
states,<sup>41</sup> everyone should act as if he or she has the  
capacity to tip the balance of the world toward re-  
demption, thereby ushering in the messianic era,  
with one good deed.<sup>42</sup>

36. See further on Leviticus 5:23. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 25, pp. 398, 455-457. 37. 147:19. 38. *Shemot Rabbah* 30:9. 39. Isaiah 40:5.  
40. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 29, pp. 138-140. 41. *Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah* 3:4. 42. *Hitva'aduyot* 5744, vol. 4, pp. 2301-2302.

12 You have been taught that you must not swear in vain using My Name.<sup>27</sup> In addition, **you must not swear falsely by any other Name of Mine,**<sup>28</sup> or even by an appellation referring to Me (such as “the Merciful One,” etc.), **thereby profaning the Name of your God. I am GOD,** who may be relied upon to punish you if you transgress this prohibition.<sup>29</sup>

13 **You must not oppress your fellow,** if he is your employee, by not paying him on time.<sup>30</sup> **You must not rob.**

**The hired day-worker’s wage,** which is due him at sunset, may be paid to him any time during the night, but **it must not remain with you through the entire night, i.e., until morning.**<sup>31</sup>

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✧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ✧

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character trait or action by learning from it. Thus, Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli listed seven traits of a thief that we should emulate:

1. He works silently, modestly, and without fanfare.
2. He is prepared to face danger in order to carry out his mission.
3. He pays full attention even to the smallest detail.
4. He works hard.
5. He works quickly, not wasting any time.
6. He is confident and optimistic.
7. If he does not succeed the first time, he tries again and again.

If we apply these traits to positive endeavors, we have not merely avoided stealing but elevated its redeeming characteristics, as well.<sup>32</sup>

**13 You must not rob:** Since God is the essence of good, everything He created is good. The reason why our lives do not always seem good is because we lack the breadth of perspective to see them as such.<sup>33</sup> But this condition only began to character-

ize reality in the wake of the primordial sin in the Garden of Eden; it is up to us to restore reality to its pristine state in which God only acts in ways that we can readily perceive as good. The more we merit, the more we can actualize this reality, even prior to the ultimate messianic Redemption.

Unfortunately, however, the reverse is also true: whenever we commit a misdeed, we plunge reality further into the darkness of exile, in which God’s goodness is hidden from us. Thus, whenever we experience some aspect of life as “bad,” it is because, on account of our own misdeeds (individual or collective), the forces of evil—which conceal Divinity—have “robbed” that aspect from the realm of revealed goodness and appropriated it for themselves.

This is the allegorical meaning of the Torah’s injunction, “You must not rob.” We must take care not to feed the forces of evil by misdirecting the Divine energy entrusted to us, i.e., by misusing an object, a moment, a talent, an emotion, or any other gift.

In contrast, the commandment “You must not steal”<sup>34</sup> has no parallel allegorical correlate, for

✧ A CLOSER LOOK ✧

[continued...] Altar, and applying the blood to the Altar. Disqualifying intentions also include, besides eating the flesh beyond its prescribed time period: applying its blood to the Altar beyond its prescribed time period and burning up its fat-portions beyond the prescribed time period. Furthermore, this law applies not only to peace-offerings but to any offering slaughtered with the intention of eating it, applying its blood to the Altar, or burning up its fat-portions on the Altar after the prescribed times for doing so. Sac-

rifices of fowl can be invalidated this way when they are killed and when their blood is squeezed onto the Altar.

Similarly, grain-offerings can be disqualified by articulating the intention to eat them or offer them up after their prescribed times when their memorial portions are removed, when the portion is placed in its designated vessel, when the portion is transported to the Altar, and when it is burned in fire.<sup>35</sup>

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27. Exodus 20:7. 28. See Introduction. 29. Rashi on Exodus 6:2. 30. See Deuteronomy 24:14-15. 31. See Deuteronomy 24:14. 32. *HaYom Yom*, 3 Iyar. 33. See on Exodus 33:18-23. 34. *Mishneh Torah, Pesulei HaMekudashim* 13, 18. 35. Above, v. 11.

— ONKELOS —  
 14 לא תלוט דלא שמע וקדם  
 דלא חזי לא תשים תקלא ותרחל  
 מאלהך אָנאּ? 15 לא תעבדון  
 שקר בדין לא תסב אפי מספינא  
 ולא תהדר אפי רבא בקשטא  
 תדינה לחברך: 16 לא תיכול  
 קורצין בעמך לא תקום על דמא  
 דחברך אָנאּ?!

14 לֹא־תִקְלַל חֵרֶשׁ וְלִפְנֵי עוֹר לֹא תִתֵּן מִכְשָׁל וְיִרְאֵת  
 מֵאַלְהֵיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:  
 שני (חמישי במחוברין) 15 לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּ עוֹל׃ בְּמִשְׁפָּט  
 לֹא־תִשָּׂא פְּנֵי־דָל וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פְּנֵי גָדוֹל בְּצַדֵּק הַיִּשְׁפָּט  
 עִמִּיתְךָ: 16 לֹא־תִלְךָ רֵכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל־דָּם  
 רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

## — RASHI —

הָרַע, הוֹלְכִים בְּבֵתֵי רַעִיָּהִם לְרַגֵּל מֵה יִרְאוּ רַע אִו  
 מֵה יִשְׁמְעוּ רַע לְסַפֵּר בְּשׂוֹק, נִקְרָאִים "הוֹלְכֵי רֵכִיל",  
 הוֹלְכֵי רֵגִילָה, אִישְׁפִּימִינִיט בְּלַעֲזוּ.<sup>24</sup> וְרִאָּה לְדַבְּרֵי,  
 שְׁלֹא מִצִּינּוּ רֵכִילוֹת שְׂאִין כְּתוּב בְּלִשׁוֹן הַלִּיכָה: "לֹא  
 תִלְךָ רֵכִיל", "הוֹלְכֵי רֵכִיל נִחְשָׁת וּבְרִזְלוּ".<sup>25</sup> וְשָׂר לִשׁוֹן  
 הָרַע אִין כְּתוּב בּו הַלִּיכָה, "מְלִשְׁנֵי בִסְתֵר רַעֲהוּ"<sup>26</sup>  
 "לִשׁוֹן רַמְיָה"<sup>27</sup>, "לִשׁוֹן מְדַבֵּרַת גְּדוֹלוֹת"<sup>28</sup>. לְכָף  
 אֲנִי אוֹמֵר שֶׁהַלִּשׁוֹן "רֵכִיל" — לִשׁוֹן הוֹלֵךְ וּמְרַגֵּל,  
 שֶׁהַכֹּף נִחְלָפַת בְּגִימָל, שְׂכַל הָאוֹתִיוֹת שְׁמוֹצְאֵיהֶם  
 מִמְּקוֹם אֶחָד מִתְחַלְפוֹת זֹו בְּזוֹ, בִּי"ת בְּפ"א וּבְגִי"ו,  
 גִּימ"ל בְּכ"ף וְקו"ף, נו"ן בְּלָמ"ד וְרִי"ש, וַיִּז"ן בְּצַד"י.  
 וְכוּ׃<sup>29</sup> "וַיִּרְגַּל בְּעַבְדְּךָ", רַגֵּל בְּמִרְמָה לֵאמֹר עָלֵי רַעֲה.  
 וְכוּ׃<sup>30</sup> "לֹא רַגֵּל עַל לִשְׁנֹו". וְכֵן רוֹכֵל, הַסּוֹחֵר וּמְרַגֵּל  
 אַחֵר כֵּל סוֹחֵרָה, וְכֵן הַמוֹכֵר בְּשָׁמַיִם לְהַתְקַשֵּׁט  
 בָּהֶם הַנְּשִׁימ, עַל שֵׁם שְׁמַחֵר תְּמִיד בְּעִירוֹת, נִקְרָא  
 "רוֹכֵל" לִשׁוֹן רוֹגֵל. וְתַרְגּוּמוֹ: "לֹא תִיכּוֹל קוֹרְצִין",  
 כְּמוֹ: "וְאַכְלוּ קִרְצִיהוֹן דֵּי יְהוּדֵינָא", "אַכֵּל בַּה  
 קִרְצָא בִּי מִלְּכָא"<sup>32</sup>. נִרְאֶה בְּעִינֵי, שְׁהִיָּה מִשְׁפָּטָם  
 לְאַכֵּל בְּבֵית הַמִּקְבֵּל דְּבִרְיָהֶם שׁוּם הַלְעָטָה, וְהוּא  
 גָּמַר חוּזֵק, שְׂדַבְּרֵיו מְקִימִים וּמַעֲמִידִם עַל הָאָמֶת,  
 וְאוֹתָהּ הַלְעָטָה נִקְרָאת "אַכִּילַת קִרְצִין", לִשׁוֹן "קִרְץ  
 בְּעִינֵיו"<sup>33</sup>, שְׂכֵן דְּרָף כֵּל הוֹלְכֵי רֵכִיל לְקִרְץ בְּעִינֵיהֶם  
 וְלָרְמוֹ דְּבִרֵי רֵכִילוֹתָן, שְׁלֵא יְבִינּוּ שְׂאֵר הַשּׁוֹמְעִים:  
 לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל דָּם רַעֲךָ. לְרִאוֹת בְּמִיתָתוֹ וְאַתָּה יְכוֹל  
 לְהַצִּילוֹ, כְּגוֹן טוֹבַע בְּנֵהָר וְחִיָּה אוֹ לְסִטִּים בְּאִים  
 עָלֵיו: אֲנִי ה'. נֶאֱמָן לְשַׁלֵּם שְׂכָר, וְנֶאֱמָן לְפָרַע:

14 לֹא תִקְלַל חֵרֶשׁ. אִין לִי אֶלָּא חֵרֶשׁ, מִנִּין לְרַבּוֹת  
 כֵּל אָדָם? תְּלַמוּד לּוֹמֵר:<sup>21</sup> "בְּעַמָּה לֹא תֹאֵר". אִם כֵּן,  
 לְמָה נֶאֱמַר "חֵרֶשׁ"? מֵה חֵרֶשׁ מִיָּחַד שֶׁהוּא בְּחַיִּים,  
 אִף כֵּל שֶׁהוּא בְּחַיִּים. יֵצֵא הַמֵּת שְׂאִינּוּ בְּחַיִּים: וְלִפְנֵי  
 עוֹר לֹא תִתֵּן מִכְשָׁל. לִפְנֵי הַסּוֹמֵא בְּדַבְּרֵי, לֹא תִתֵּן  
 עֵצָה שְׂאִינָה הוֹגְגַת לוֹ, אֵל תֹּאמֹר: מִכֵּר שְׂדָף וְקַח  
 לָךְ כְּמוֹר, וְאַתָּה עוֹקֵף עָלָיו וְנוֹטְלָה הִימְנוֹ: וְיִרְאֵת  
 מֵאַלְהֵיךָ. לְפִי שֶׁהַדַּבָּר הַזֶּה אִינּוּ מְסוּר לְבִרְיוֹת  
 לִידַע אִם דַּעְתּוֹ שֶׁל זֶה לְטוֹבָה אוֹ לְרַעָה, וְיְכוֹל  
 לְהַשְׁמֵט וְלוֹמֵר: לְטוֹבָה נִתְכַּנְּנֵתִי, לְפִיכָף נֶאֱמַר בּו:  
 "וְיִרְאֵת מֵאַלְהֵיךָ", הַמְּבִיר מִחֻשְׁבוֹתֶיךָ. וְכֵן כֵּל דַּבֵּר  
 הַמְּסוּר לְלִבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם הַעוֹשֶׂהוּ וְאִין שְׂאֵר הַבְּרִיּוֹת  
 מְבִירוֹת בּו, נֶאֱמַר: "וְיִרְאֵת מֵאַלְהֵיךָ": 15 לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ  
 עוֹל בְּמִשְׁפָּט. מְלַמֵּד שֶׁהַדִּין הַמְּקַלֵּק אֶת הַדִּין קְרוּי  
 "עוֹל", "שְׂנֵאוּי" וְ"מִשְׁקָץ", "חֵרֶם" וְ"תוֹעֵבָה", שֶׁהַעוֹל  
 קְרוּי תוֹעֵבָה, שְׂנֵאֲמַר:<sup>22</sup> "כִּי תוֹעֵבַת ה' וְגו' כֵּל עֲשֵׂה  
 עוֹל", וְהַתוֹעֵבָה קְרוּי חֵרֶם וְשִׁקָץ, שְׂנֵאֲמַר:<sup>23</sup> "וְלֹא  
 תִבִּיא תוֹעֵבָה אֵל בֵּיתְךָ וְהִיִּיתָ חֵרֶם כְּמֵהוּ, שִׁקָץ  
 תִּשְׁקָצוּנּוּ" וְגו': לֹא תִשָּׂא פְּנֵי דָל. שְׁלֹא תֹאמֹר: עִנִּי  
 הוּא זֶה וְהַעֲשִׂיר חֵיב לְפָרְסוֹ, אֲזַכְּנּוּ בְּדִין וְנִמְצָא  
 מִתְּפָרֵס בְּנִקְיוֹת: וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פְּנֵי גָדוֹל. שְׁלֹא תֹאמֹר:  
 עֲשִׂיר הוּא זֶה, כֵּן גְּדוֹלִים הוּא זֶה, הִיאֵף אֲבִישְׁנּוּ  
 וְאַרְאֶה בְּבִשְׁתּוֹ, עֲנֵשׁ יֵשׁ בְּדַבְּרֵי. לְכָף נֶאֱמַר: "וְלֹא  
 תִהְדָּר פְּנֵי גָדוֹל": בְּצַדֵּק תִּשְׁפֹּט עִמִּיתְךָ. כְּמִשְׁמְעוּ. דַּבֵּר  
 אַחֵר: הָיִי דָן אֶת חֲבֵרְךָ לְכָף וְכוּת: 16 לֹא תִלְךָ רֵכִיל.  
 אֲנִי אוֹמֵר: עַל שֵׁם שְׂכַל מְשֻׁלָּחֵי מְדִינִים וּמְסַפְּרֵי לִשׁוֹן

21. שמות כב, כז. 22. דברים כה, טו. 23. שם ז, כז. 24. רגול. 25. ירמיה ו, כח. 26. תהלים קא, ה. 27. שם קכ, ג. 28. שם יב, ד. 29. שמואלב יט, כח. 30. תהלים טו, ג. 31. דניאלג, ח. 32. ברכות נח, א. 33. משלי ו, יג.

## — CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

The Rebbe writes in a letter:

You write about meeting a Jew in the course of your travels who comes to the synagogue to help make up a Minyan [i.e., the quorum of ten needed for prayer], yet at the same time reads the newspaper.... [F]or my part, I make the following two extreme observations: First, I see in it the extreme Jewish attachment which one finds in

every Jew. For here is a person who has wandered off to a remote part of the world and has become so far removed as to have no concept of what prayer is or what a house of God is, etc., yet one finds in him that Jewish spark..., "the Divine soul which is truly a part of God."<sup>56</sup> This divine soul, which is the inheritance of every Jew, seeks expression as best it can, and in the case of this particular

56. *Tanya*, chapter 2.

**14 You must not curse** any living person,<sup>43</sup> even a **deaf person** who cannot hear you cursing him. You are, however, not liable to punishment for cursing someone after his death.

**You must not** figuratively “**place an obstacle before a blind person,**” i.e., when you perceive that someone is not fully informed or aware of the issues surrounding a particular situation, you must not give him advice that is in your best interest rather than his, even if your advice is not to his detriment. Even though you may be able to deceive other people into believing that your advice was in his best interest, you cannot deceive Me; **you must therefore fear your God.**<sup>44</sup> **I am God,** who may be relied upon to punish you if you transgress this prohibition.

- ◆ *Second Reading (Fifth when combined)* **15 You must commit no injustice in judgment.** I consider any judge who perverts justice to be unjust, hateful,<sup>45</sup> loathsome,<sup>46</sup> condemned to destruction,<sup>47</sup> and an abomination.<sup>48</sup> Such a judge defiles the Holy Land, desecrates My Name, causes the Divine Presence to depart from the Jewish people, causes the people to die by the sword, and causes them to be exiled from their land.<sup>49</sup> When serving as a judge in a case wherein a poor litigant is pitted against a wealthy one,, **you must not be partial to the poor** litigant by ruling contrary to the law in order that the outcome of the case be in the his favor, reasoning that the wealthy litigant in any case is required to support the poor. Conversely, **you must not show misplaced respect to a great man** by ruling in his favor contrary to the law in order not to shame such him publicly, reasoning that doing so is a sin.<sup>50</sup> Rather, **you must judge your fellow with righteousness** irrespective of his financial or social status. But whenever possible, judge your fellow leniently.

**16 You must not go around as a gossipmonger among your people.**

**You must not stand idly by** when you see **your fellow Jew’s blood** being shed if it is clear that you can rescue him, even if doing so will entail possible danger

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❧ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ❧

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**14 You must not place an obstacle before a blind person:** If this instruction were meant to be taken literally, it would be superfluous, since the laws regarding personal damages have already been laid down in *parashat Mishpatim*.<sup>51</sup> It also cannot be meant to refer to giving bad advice to someone who is “blind” and ignorant in a certain area, since that, too, is covered in the prohibition against causing damage. Rather, this verse forbids giving sound advice with ulterior motives. For example, you may not tell a naïve person to sell his field and buy a donkey so that you can then buy his field. Even if this advice is actually advantageous for the “blind” person, it is still prohibited on account of the motivation of the advisor.

The Torah here teaches us the proper approach towards helping others. In order to optimally benefit

another person, we must rid ourselves of any self-oriented motivation, focusing instead solely on the needs of the other person.<sup>52</sup>

**15 You must judge your fellow with righteousness:** Our sages exhort us to “be extremely humble in relation to every person,”<sup>53</sup> i.e., to consider ourselves less worthy than anyone else. Yet, objectively speaking, how can we consider ourselves less meritorious than those who appear to be unworthy of our respect? The answer is found in another saying of our sages: “Do not judge your fellow until you reach his place.”<sup>54</sup> In other words, we all have our challenges; the fact that we do not succumb to a particular temptation while another person does, does not make us superior to him. Who can measure the effect of his upbringing, environment, or inborn character weaknesses against the temptations he faces?<sup>55</sup>

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43. Exodus 22:27. 44. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, pp. 141-148. 45. Deuteronomy 12:31. 46. Deuteronomy 7:26. 47. *Ibid.* 48. *Ibid.*, 25:16. 49. *Sifra, Kedoshim* 4:1, cited by Rashi on v. 35, below. 50. Below, v. 17; see Genesis 38:25. 51. Exodus 21:33-4. 52. Rashi, as explained in *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, pp. 141-148. 53. *Avot* 4:10. 54. *Ibid.*, 2:4. 55. *Tanya*, chapter 30.

ONKELOS

17 לא תשני ית אחור בלבך  
אוכחא תוכח ית חברך ולא תקבל  
על דילה חובא: 18 לא תקום  
ולא תשר דבבו לבני עמך ותרחם  
לחברך פותך אגא י?

17 לֹא-תִשְׁנֵא אֶת-אָחִיךָ בְּלִבְּךָ הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת-  
עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא-תִשְׁאָא עָלָיו חֲטָא: 18 לֹא-תִקְוֶם וְלֹא-תִמְרָר  
אֶת-בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאֶהְבֵּת לְרַעְךָ כַּמּוֹד אֲנִי יְהוָה:

RASHI

לו: לאו, למחר אמר לו: השאילני מגלף, אמר לו:  
הא לך, ואיני כמותך שלא השאלתני — זו היא  
נטירה, שנוטר האיבה בלב, אף על פי שאינו נוקם:  
ואהבת לרעך כמוך. אמר רבי עקיבא: 34 וזה כלל גדול  
בתורה:

17 וְלֹא תִשְׁאָא עָלָיו חֲטָא. לא תלבין את פניו ברבים:  
18 לא תקום. אמר לו: השאילני מגלף, אמר לו: לאו,  
למחר אמר לו: השאילני קרדמה, אמר לו: איני  
משאילך כדרךך שלא השאלתני — זו היא נקימה.  
ואינו היא נטירה? אמר לו: השאילני קרדמה, אמר

34. תורת כהנים.

CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

his father asked why he was interested, he replied that he simply wanted to know, but said nothing more. I asked your father why he did not recount the entire incident to his father, and he replied: 'Is it not bad enough that I embarrassed someone? Should I have sinned further by gossiping?'

Gossip is not only prohibited when it is spoken; it is also an offense when it is just thought—in some ways a more serious offense. As Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi says in an impassioned letter to his followers:

My beloved and dear ones! I beg you, please, exert all your heart and soul to implant brotherly love in your hearts. It is written, "Let no one think evil of his fellow."<sup>68</sup> [Such evil] should never occur to you, and if it does, push it away from your heart "as smoke is driven away [by the wind],"<sup>69</sup> [treating it] exactly as if it were an idolatrous thought. For gossip is as grave an offense as idolatry, adultery, and murder,<sup>70</sup> and if this is true of speech [how much truer is it of thought], for the greater impact of thought as compared to that of speech,<sup>71</sup> whether for the good or for the bad, is known to all the wise of heart.<sup>72</sup>

**If it is clear that you can rescue him, even if doing so will entail possible danger to your own life:** According to the principles of Divine providence, the very fact that we see someone endangered in this manner proves that we are able to save him; otherwise, God would not have arranged for us to see him in these circumstances.

This same is true concerning spiritual danger. When we see people around us in spiritual danger, we are enjoined to do everything possible to save them, even if it entails personal danger. Humility or claims of personal ineffectualness are no excuse, for if we were not able to help them out of their predicament, it would not have come to our attention.<sup>73</sup>

**17 You must indeed rebuke your fellow:** Rebuke is a delicate matter; if done improperly, it can cause more harm than good. Thus, the instruction to admonish one's friend follows the instruction not to hate your brother, for rebuke should be only motivated by love, remaining free of barbs and caustic remarks. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak of Lubavitch compared rebuke to administering an injection: the needle must be free of any germs; the doctor and his attendants must wear white clothes and sterilize their hands. Similarly, someone giving rebuke must have pure motives (his "clothes," i.e., means of expression—thought, word, and deed—must be "white") and be assured his "injection" will not cause harm.<sup>74</sup>

**18 You must love your fellow as yourself:** The Torah commands us to love our fellow Jew and to love God.<sup>75</sup> (It also commands us to love converts,<sup>76</sup> in order to make it clear that the commandment to love our fellow Jew also includes them.)

The followers of Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi once asked him: "Which mode of worship is greater—love or God or love of one's fellow?" He replied: "Love of God and love of one's fellow are both engraved upon the soul of every Jew. Yet the Torah states an unqualified verse: 'I love you, says God'<sup>77</sup>—so love of one's fellow is greater, since one loves the loved one's beloved."<sup>78</sup> On another occasion he said: "'Love your fellow as yourself' is the vessel for 'Love God, your God.'<sup>79</sup> Also: "The commandment to love your fellow Jew applies even to a Jew whom you have never seen."<sup>80</sup>

According to the Talmud,<sup>81</sup> our love for a fellow Jew must extend even to a criminal facing capital punishment, whom we are to execute in the least humiliating way because of our love for him.<sup>82</sup> (Indeed, according to some opinions,<sup>83</sup> the Hebrew word for "your fellow" [רעך] is to be understood as meaning

67. Chanoch LaNa'ar, p. 9. 68. Zachariah 8:17. 69. Par. Psalms 68:3. 70. Y. Peah 1:1; Midrash Tehilim 12:2; Arachin 15b; Mishneh Torah, Dei'ot 7:3. 71. Tanya, chapter 16; Torah Or 71a; Likutei Torah 3:51d ff, etc. 72. Igeret HaKodesh 22. 73. Likutei Sichot, vol. 32, pp. 120-126. 74. Igrot Kodesh Admor Mehorayatz, vol. 3, p. 291. 75. Deuteronomy 6:5, 11:1. 76. Below, v. 34; Deuteronomy 10:19. 77. Malachi 1:2. 78. HaYom Yom, 28 Nisan. 79. HaYom Yom, 6 Tishrei. 80. HaYom Yom, 3 Adar II, 15 Kislev. 81. Sanhedrin 45a. 82. Likutei Sichot, vol. 17, p. 217, note 17. 83. Yad Ramah on Sanhedrin 52b; cf. Maharam Shick al Taryag Mitzvoth, mitzvah 244. Likutei Sichot, vol. 17, p. 217, note\*\* on note 17.

to your own life. You are not, however, required to try to rescue him if doing so would entail either (a) certain danger to your life or (b) possible danger to your life that also renders your chance of rescuing him doubtful.<sup>57</sup> The only exception to this is someone who attempts to entice others into serving idols; you must not rescue such a person.<sup>58</sup>

**I am God**, who may be relied upon to reward you for your good deed and punish you if you transgress these prohibitions.

**17 You must not hate your brother Israelite in your heart.**

**You must indeed rebuke your fellow** when you see him committing some misdeed, **but you must** do so in such a way that you **not commit** the **sin** of embarrassing him in public<sup>59</sup> **on his account.**

**18 You must not take revenge from** a fellow Israelite, i.e., retaliate a wrong he has done you. For example, you must not refuse to loan him something just because he refused to loan you something. Furthermore, **you must not even bear a grudge against the members of your people**, i.e., be resentful even if you do not retaliate. For example, if you loan something to someone who had refused to loan you something, you must not remind him of his past refusal.

The principle underlying the just-mentioned commandments,<sup>60</sup> as well as all others between you and your fellow Israelites, is that **you must love your fellow Israelite as yourself**, meaning that you must treat him with the same consideration with which you treat yourself.<sup>61</sup> **I am God**, who may be relied upon to reward you for doing so. The only exception to this is someone who attempts to entice others into serving idols;<sup>62</sup> such a person is the sole example of someone whom you are not allowed to love.<sup>63</sup>

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— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

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*Jew, it seeks expression in at least enabling other Jews to pray congregationally. My other observation...is as follows:...it can easily be seen what great things could have been accomplished with this particular Jew if, at the proper time he should have received the right education in his early life, or at least the proper spiritual guidance in his adult life. This consideration surely emphasizes the mutual responsibility which rests upon all Jews, and particularly on those who can help others.*"<sup>64</sup>

**16 You must not go around as a gossipmonger:** According to the Talmud, gossip "kills" three people: the speaker, the listener, and the object of the gossip.<sup>65</sup> That the speaker and listener are punished is understandable, but why should the object of the gossip be punished? The answer is that speaking of another person's evil does more than disparage him. Words have the power to bring latent energy into actuality. When we speak about a person's negative traits, it actualizes them and reinforces them. As a result, his behavior takes a turn for the worse

and he thus incurs punishment.

Conversely, when we speak about the good traits of another person, we reveal and reinforce those traits. We can thus be a positive or negative influence on people; the choice is ours.<sup>66</sup>

*The mother of Rabbi Shalom DovBer of Lubavitch, Rebitzen Rivkah, told the following story to her grandson, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak:*

*"Once, when your father was around four years old, the tailor delivered a garment he had sewn for me. While the garment was being examined, your father innocently removed from the tailor's pocket a piece of the fabric he had been given to sew the garment. The tailor was terribly embarrassed and began to excuse himself for keeping the excess fabric for himself.*

*After the tailor had left, I told your father that he had indirectly shamed the tailor, and your father began to cry. A few weeks later, he asked his father, Rabbi Shmuel, how to atone for the misdeed of shaming another. When*

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57. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 32, pp. 120-125. 58. Deuteronomy 13:9. 59. See Genesis 38:25. 60. In vv. 11-18. 61. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, pp. 215-219. 62. Deuteronomy 13:9. 63. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, p. 217, note 17. 64. From a letter dated 16 Tamuz, 5720 (July 11, 1960). 65. *Arachin* 15b. 66. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 27, p. 163.



## Mixing Species

**19 You must observe My following rules: You must not crossbreed your livestock. You must not sow your field with a mixture of two or more species of grain or vegetables.<sup>84</sup> You must not wear a garment or piece of felt made out of a mixture of wool and linen that has been pressed, woven, or twisted together.<sup>85</sup>** Separate pieces of raw wool and linen, however, may be worn at the same time, as may separate garments of wool and linen.<sup>86</sup>

### — CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

“your wicked one.”) Similarly, Rabbi Moshe Cordevero says that “one should accustom oneself to introduce the love for humanity into one’s heart, even for the wicked, as if they were even closer than brothers.”<sup>87</sup>

*Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk, a student of the Chasidic master Rabbi DovBer of Mezeritch, told the following to his brother, Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli: “One evening, when it was my turn to attend to our teacher, I heard his voice calling to me from his room. I entered his room and he said to me: ‘Meilech, do you hear what they are saying on high? Love for a fellow means to love the completely wicked just as one loves the completely righteous.’”<sup>88</sup>*

We will note later<sup>89</sup> that inasmuch as an emotion cannot be compelled, the commandment to love God actually means to contemplate ideas that lead to the love of God. The same applies to loving our fellow Jew: In order to summon sentiments of love for total strangers, especially for those whose deeds are less than attractive, we should contemplate, firstly, the fact that we are all God’s precious children.<sup>90</sup>

*The Roman general, Timius Rufus, asked Rabbi Akiva: “If your God is a lover of the poor, why does He not sustain them?” Rabbi Akiva answered that God allows us to earn merit when we sustain the poor. The general then challenged Rabbi Akiva with a parable: “A king who is angry with his servant sends him to prison and orders that no one feed him. One man goes and feeds him. When the king hears of this, will he not be angry? And you [Jews] are called ‘servants [of God]!’” Rabbi Akiva retorted with a parable of his own: “A king who is angry with his son sends him to prison and orders that no one feed him. One man goes and feeds him. When the king hears of this, will he not send the man a gift? And we are called ‘children [of God]!’”<sup>91</sup>*

Secondly, being that we all share the same Father, we are all siblings, not strangers. We can therefore love our fellow as ourselves, since our siblings are just as much our parents’ children as we are—even if they do not act accordingly.

Thirdly, inasmuch as the Father that all we share is God, it follows that since God is one—meaning

that He is one, non-composite essence and is not divided into “parts”—then in our ultimate source, we are also one, and there are no differences between us. Therefore, the more we train ourselves to perceive the true essence of things rather than their appearances, the more we perceive our fellow Jews as one and the same as ourselves. From this perspective, we will naturally “love our fellows as ourselves,” since we and they are one and the same. In this context, considering our fellow Jews siblings is not an end—inspiring us to overlook their faults just as familial love makes us overlook our siblings’ faults—but a means—encouraging us to abstract our perspective on our fellow Jews even further, leading us to see them and ourselves as part of the same Divine essence.<sup>92</sup>

This level of abstraction transcends what “they are saying on high”—i.e., that we must love the completely wicked just as we love the completely righteous—for at this level, there is no distinction between one Jew and the next, and whether one is righteous or wicked is immaterial. Without this level of abstraction, however, it is hard to love someone “as ourselves,” since the reality of the physical distinction between us (and all the other differences attributable to the physical distinction) will always interpose itself.

This explains how Hillel, when asked by a prospective convert to teach him the whole Torah while standing on one foot, could answer, “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary.”<sup>93</sup> It is easy enough to understand how all of the Torah’s social commandments can be reduced to the love of one’s fellow, but how can all its commandments that do not relate to one’s relationship with others be reduced to this commandment?<sup>94</sup> The answer is that this commandment can be fulfilled only if we elevate our perspective to that of the Divine soul; this elevation is indeed the goal of all of the Torah’s commandments.<sup>95</sup>

Finally, once we have abstracted our consciousness to the level at which we perceive everything’s essence rather than its manifestation, this

<sup>84</sup>. See also Deuteronomy 22:9. <sup>85</sup>. See also *ibid.*, 22:21. <sup>86</sup>. *Mishneh Torah, Kilayim* 10:11. <sup>87</sup>. *Tomer Devorah* 2. <sup>88</sup>. *Sefer HaSichot* 5700, p. 117. <sup>89</sup>. On Deuteronomy 6:5. <sup>90</sup>. Exodus 4:22; Deuteronomy 14:1; *Avot* 3:14. <sup>91</sup>. *Bava Batra* 10a and Maharsha *ad loc.*; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, p. 219. <sup>92</sup>. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 2, pp. 300, 435 ff; *ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 159; *ibid.*, vol. 15, p. 90; *ibid.*, vol. 17, p. 222, note 65. <sup>93</sup>. *Shabbat* 31a. <sup>94</sup>. See, e.g., Rashi *ad loc.* <sup>95</sup>. *Tanya*, chapter 32.

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20 וגבר ארי ישׁכוב עם אתמא שכבת זרעא והיא אמתא אחידא לגבר ואתפרקא לא אתפרקת בכספא או חריתא לא אתידיבת לה בשטר בקרמא תהי בה לא יומתון ארי לא אתחררת: 21 וייתי ית אשמה קדם יי לתרע משפן זמנא דכר לאשמא: 22 ויכפר עלויה כהנא בדכרא דאשמא קדם יי על חובתה די חב וישתבק לה מחובתה די חב: 23 וארי תעלו לארעא ותצבון כל אילן דמיכל ותרחקון רחקא ית אבה תלת שנין יהי לבון מרחק לאבדא לא יתאבל:

20 וְאִישׁ כִּי־יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אִשְׁהוֹ שְׁכַבְת־זָרַע וְהוּא שִׁפְחָה נִחְרַפֶּת לְאִישׁ וְהִפְדָּה לֹא נִפְדָּתָה אוֹ חֲפְשָׁה לֹא נָתַן לָהּ בְּקָרְתָּ תְהִיָּה לֹא יוּמָתוּ כִּי־לֹא חֲפְשָׁה: 21 וְהִבִּיא אֶת־אֲשָׁמוֹ לַיהוָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֵיל אֲשָׁם: 22 וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן בְּאֵיל הָאֲשָׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל־חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְנִסְלַח לוֹ מִחַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא: פ  
 שְׁלִישִׁי 23 וְכִי־תִבְאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וְנִטְעַתֶם כָּל־עֵץ מֵאֲכָל וְעַרְלָתֶם עַרְלָתוֹ אֶת־פְּרִוֹ שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים יִהְיֶה לָכֶם עַרְלִים לֹא יֵאָכֵל:

— RASHI —

לעשות וגו' והפלא ה' את מכתבו וגו': כי לא חפשה. לפיכך אין חיב עליה מיתה, שאין קדושיה קדושין. הא, אם חפשה — קדושיה קדושין וחיבין מיתה: 22 ונסלח לו מחטאתו אשר חטא. לרבות את המזיד כשוגג: 23 וערלתם ערלתו. ואטמתם אטימתו, יהא אטום ונסתם מלהנות ממנו: שלש שנים יהיה לכם ערלים. מאימתי מונה לו? משעת נטיעתו. יכול אם הצניעו, לאחר שלש שנים יהא מתר? תלמוד לומר: "יהיה", בהוייתו יהא:

20 נִחְרַפֶּת לְאִישׁ. מיעדת ומיחדת לאיש, ואיני יודע לו דמיון במקרא. ובשפחה פנענית שחציה שפחה וחציה בת חורין, המאנסת לעבד עברי שמתר בשפחה, הכתוב מדבר: והפדה לא נפדתה. פדויה ואינה פדויה, וסתם פדיון — בכסף: או חפשה. בשטר: בקרת תהיה. היא לוקה ולא הוא, יש על בית דין לבקר את הדבר, שלא לחיבה מיתה, "כי לא חפשה" ואין קדושיה קדושין גמורין. ורבותינו למדו מכאן, שמי שהוא במלקות — יהא בקריאה, שהדינים המלקין קורין על הלוקה: "אם לא תשמר

39. כריתות יא, א. 40. דברים כח, נחנט.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

is irrelevant, and therefore there is no instance of crossbreeding permitted by the Torah.<sup>108</sup>

**23 And you plant there any tree that produces fruit that can be eaten as food:** The Midrash notes that God's first act after creating the world was to plant the Garden of Eden,<sup>109</sup> and that this verse implies that the same is expected of the Jewish people; upon arriving in the Land of Israel, agricultural planting was to be their first endeavor.<sup>110</sup>

The importance given to planting stresses the centrality and fundamental psychological position of agriculture in civilization in general, as well as in spiritual life. Just as trees and plants constantly bear fruits, so too, we may not act in a contextual vacuum. We must fulfill our Divine mission in a manner that bears fruit—that affects ourselves and others in a lasting and meaningful way.<sup>111</sup>

**23-25 Its fruit must be blocked from your use for three years:** All the Torah's commandments

are aimed at rectifying the primordial sin, but in the case of this commandment, the association is explicit. Adam, as we know,<sup>112</sup> was created on Friday afternoon and was immediately issued his first commandment: not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge.<sup>113</sup> From the perspective of the Midrash (which both differs from and complements that of the contextual meaning of the text), this commandment was to remain in effect for only three hours, until the Sabbath, at which time Adam was to use this fruit to sanctify the Sabbath. (Thus, from the perspective of the Midrash, the forbidden fruit was the grape rather than the fig.<sup>114</sup>) Unfortunately, Adam yielded to his impetuous desire to rectify reality on his terms rather than muster the modicum of patience and self-control that he was asked to demonstrate: He ate of the fruit before sundown, thereby precipitating the existential fall of reality we are working to rectify to this very day. In order to rectify his sin of refusing to wait

108. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 29, pp. 122-129. 109. See Genesis 2:8. 110. *Vayikra Rabbah* 25:3. 111. *Igrot Kodesh*, vol. 22, p. 378. 112. Genesis 1:24-31. 113. *Ibid.* 2:16-17. 114. *Ibid.* 2:9.

## Violating a Betrothed Partial Bondwoman

20 As you have been taught,<sup>102</sup> a Jewish bondman who is already married to a Jewish woman is allowed to also marry a non-Jewish bondwoman. You have also been taught<sup>103</sup> that a non-Jewish bondwoman may gain her freedom before the end of her term of service either if someone pays for her release or if her Jewish master frees her himself, and that once she is freed she assumes the status of a full Israelite woman. Finally, you will soon be taught<sup>104</sup> that adultery—even if committed when a couple is only betrothed<sup>105</sup>—is a capital crime.

Now, if a Jewish **man conducts carnal relations with a woman, and** this woman happens to be a non-Jewish **bondwoman who has been designated** by betrothal for her master's Jewish bondman, **and she has not yet been fully redeemed** (since only part of the redemption money has been paid), **nor has freedom been granted her by her master, there must be an investigation** by the court to determine whether she is in fact fully free, for if she is, both she and her paramour are liable to the death penalty, like any Israelite who commits adultery. If it is determined that she is not fully free, then **they must not be put to death, because she had not been completely freed**, and therefore, her betrothal was not a full betrothal. Nonetheless, 21 she is punishable by lashes, and the paramour **must bring his guilt-offering to God, i.e., to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting; specifically, he must bring a ram as a guilt-offering.**

22 **The priest must then effect atonement for him before God—by means of the guilt-offering ram—for the sin that he intentionally committed.** If he committed this sin unintentionally (for example, if he was not aware that the woman was betrothed), **he will be forgiven** by this same means of atonement **for the sin that he committed** unintentionally.

## Fruit

- ◆ *Third Reading* 23 **When you enter the Promised Land and you plant there any tree that produces fruit that can be eaten as food, you must at first block its fruit from use: Its fruit must be blocked from your use for three years, which you must count from the time the tree was planted. The fruit produced by the tree during these three years must not be eaten—even after these three years have passed.**<sup>106</sup>

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### ∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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and therefore not healthy; trying to blend them artificially will only lead to clashes and chaos.

Therefore, it is only the mixture of fibers that can possibly be allowed, because they each retain their discrete identities even when combined. But even so, their mixture is only allowed in the environment of the Temple, where God's presence is openly revealed, or in the context of performing God's commandment to affix ritual tassels on four-cornered garments, for

in these two contexts, the forces they represent lose their self-assertion in the experience of God's presence, as we have seen previously.<sup>107</sup> Outside of these contexts, however, their mixture is forbidden.

In contrast, crossbreeding plants or animals is precisely the type of mixture that frustrates God's purpose in creation, since the original species lose their unique identity in the formation of the new breed. With such a mixture, the issue of context

<sup>102</sup>. Exodus 21:2-6. <sup>103</sup>. Ibid. 21:26. <sup>104</sup>. Below, 20:10. <sup>105</sup>. See Introduction, and on Numbers 30:7. <sup>106</sup>. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 103-106. <sup>107</sup>. On Exodus 28:5.

— ONKELOS —  
 24 ובשתא רביעתא יהי כל אבה  
 קדש תשבחו קדם יי: 25 ובשתא  
 חמישתא תיכלון ית אבה לאוספא  
 לכוך עללתה אנא יי אלהכון:

24 ובשנה הרביעת יהיה כל-פריו קדש הלולים ליהוה:  
 25 ובשנה החמישית תאכלו את-פריו להוסיף לכם  
 תבואתו אני יהוה אלהיכם:

— RASHI —

שבשכרה אני מברך לכם פרות הנטיעה. היה רבי  
 עקיבא אומר: דברה תורה כנגד יצר הרע, שלא  
 יאמר אדם: הרי ארבע שנים אני מצטער בו חנם,  
 לפיכך נאמר: "להוסיף לכם תבואתו": אני ה'.

24 יהיה כל פריו קדש. כמעשה שני שכתוב בו:  
 "וכל מעשר הארץ וגו' קדש לה'", מה מעשה הארץ  
 אינו נאכל חוץ לחומת ירושלים אלא בפדיון, אף זה  
 כן. ודרך זה "הלולים לה" הוא, שנושאו שם לשבח  
 ולהלל לשמים: 25 להוסיף לכם תבואתו. המצוה  
 הזאת שתשמרו תהיה "להוסיף לכם תבואתו",

.41 ויקרא כז, ל.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

our Divine soul. Important as this may be, in order to elevate the body and the human/animal soul we have to engage the physical world and reveal God's presence in it. Thus, by limiting his focus only to categorically holy pursuits, refusing to thank God for His simple, physical kindnesses, the scholar in the story was missing the point. In the words of the sages, "Anyone who declares 'I have nothing [in life] but the study of the Torah' does not even have that."<sup>122</sup>

The other side of this coin is that in order to properly elevate the fruit of the fifth year and beyond, we must first eat the fourth-year fruit in an atmosphere of consummate holiness. It is specifically the intense

and unmitigated experience of union with God divorced from any involvement with the mundane that provides us with the heightened Divine consciousness and spiritual strength to successfully engage the material world and transform it into holiness, rather than allowing it to drag us down into its materiality.

This dynamic may be compared to the sages' prohibition against eating before morning prayers<sup>123</sup> (except in order to pray with full concentration<sup>124</sup>). Until we renew our Divine consciousness each morning through meditative prayer, communing with God without any thought of mundane distractions, we are not spiritually fit to elevate physical food.<sup>125</sup>

INNER DIMENSIONS

[23-25] Its fruit must be blocked from your use for three years: In Kabbalistic terminology, the tree represents *Z'eir Anpin*, and the earth in which it is planted represents *malchut*. Thus, when a tree is planted, *Z'eir Anpin* is drawn into *malchut*. This happens in stages, with the lowest three aspects of *Z'eir Anpin* being implanted within *malchut* during the first three years. These levels (*netzach*, *hod*, and *yesod*) are the orientation within *Z'eir Anpin* toward practical application, which requires a certain level of self-consciousness. For this reason, the fruit that grows during this period is appropriated by the forces of evil—the three totally impure *kelipot*—and is therefore forbidden. In the fourth year, the energy is drawn from *tiferet*, leading the fruit to be a statement of praise and thanks to God. In the fifth year and on, when the fruit is drawn from the highest aspects of *Z'eir Anpin*,

there is no capacity for any misdirection of their energy, and thus they are permitted to be eaten anywhere.

From a somewhat broader perspective, the first three years correspond to the three spiritual worlds of *Beriah*, *Yetzirah*, and *Asiyah*. As expressed in their names, these worlds reflect a degree of consciousness in which something exists other than God; something has been created, formed, and made. As such, there is an opening for the forces of impurity to be nurtured. The fourth year corresponds to *Atzilut*, whose holiness imbues the fruit of that year with holiness. By the fifth year, there is already a revelation of *keter*, of the pure Divine light that transcends the dichotomy between holiness and mundaneness, allowing them to be experienced simultaneously.<sup>126</sup>

122. *Yevamot* 109b. 123. *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 89:3-4; *Sefer HaMa'amarim* 5689, pp. 84-85. 124. *Shulchan Aruch HaRav, Orach Chaim* 89:5. 125. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 134-138. 126. *Likutei Torah* 2:29c; *Sefer HaMa'amarim Melukat*, vol. 3, pp. 135-136; *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 134-135.

**24 In the fourth year, all its fruit** produced that year **will be holy**, in that it must be either brought to the Temple city and eaten there or redeemed monetarily; in the latter case, the money must be brought to the Temple city and be used to purchase food that you must then consume there (the same way the second tithe must be treated).<sup>115</sup> The purpose of requiring you to visit the Temple city is so that, being there, you will be inspired to offer **praises to God**.

**25 In the fifth year, you may eat its fruit** freely; its fruit is from then on subject only to the other rules applicable to produce. Since I know that you may resent having to care for the tree for four years without being allowed to eat its fruit (either at all or freely), I therefore inform you that as a reward for observing these restrictions, the fruit of the subsequent years will be both exceptionally abundant and exceptionally satisfying. Furthermore, whereas you must usually fulfill My commandments without regard to any reward you might earn thereby, in this case you may fulfill these commandments expressly **in order that the tree increase its produce for you** in its subsequent fruit-bearing years. **I am God, your God**, who may be relied upon to fulfill My promise in this regard.<sup>116</sup>

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∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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three hours, we are required to wait three years before we partake of any tree-fruit. By treating the fourth-year fruit in a holy manner,<sup>117</sup> eating it in the holy city of Jerusalem as an act of praise to God, we rectify the fact that Adam did not first taste the fruit as part of his sanctification of the Sabbath.<sup>118</sup>

Whereas the fruit of the first three years is forbidden and the fruit of the fourth year is holy, the fruit of the fifth year is simply mundane. Yet the Torah states that the purpose of the entire process is for the sake of the fifth year—“so that the tree increase its produce for you.”<sup>119</sup> This seems counterintuitive: Shouldn't the goal of this process be holiness rather than mundaneness?

The answer is that holiness per se is not the goal of life; the goal is to invest the mundane with holiness, for only thus can we make all aspects of life into God's home, thereby fulfilling the purpose of creation. When we take the fruit of the fifth and following years, which is not intrinsically holy, and make use of it for holy purposes—as a reason and reminder to praise God for satisfying our needs and desires—we are accomplishing precisely that. This is especially true when we recognize that the bountiful blessings of the fifth year are a direct result of our having heeded God's instructions regarding the fruit of the preceding four years.

*In the beginning of his career, very few people had ever heard of the Ba'al Shem Tov. He wandered anonymously from town to town in search of opportunities to help his brethren, both materially and spiritually. He would often*

*ask the simple people whom he met about their health and finances. He knew that they would invariably answer with praises and thanks to God, and these words of praise were ever so precious in his eyes.*

*In one town, there lived an elderly scholar who had totally disassociated himself from the pleasures of the flesh. For more than fifty years, he had spent all his weekdays fasting in a secluded room, cloaked in his talit and tefilin, constantly studying the Torah and abstaining from any mundane conversation. Only late at night would some bread and water cross his lips, after which he would immediately return to his studies.*

*The Ba'al Shem Tov, dressed as a simple villager, visited this old sage and asked him about his health and needs. When the old man ignored his repeated inquiries, the Ba'al Shem Tov loudly declared: “Why do you deprive God of His sustenance?” Noticing the scholar's shock at hearing such seemingly sacrilegious words, the Ba'al Shem Tov explained: “We Jews are sustained through the beneficence that God grants us. What is God sustained by? To paraphrase the words of King David:<sup>120</sup> ‘And you, O Holy One, what are You sustained by? You sit upon (i.e., are sustained by) the praises of Israel.’ God derives satisfaction and sustenance from the thanks and praises offered by the Jewish people in gratitude for their physical well-being.”<sup>121</sup>*

The elderly Torah scholar in this story was indeed serving God. Nevertheless, the Ba'al Shem Tov told him that that is not enough. Although we do make limited use of the body and the human/animal soul in studying the Torah, it is mainly a way of manifesting

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<sup>115.</sup> Below, 27:30-31; Deuteronomy 12:6, 11, 17, 14:23-26, 15:22. <sup>116.</sup> *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 22, pp. 108-113. <sup>117.</sup> As described in v. 24. <sup>118.</sup> *Siftei Kohen, Kedoshim; Likutei Torah* 2:29a ff; *Sichot Kodesh* 5714, p. 176. <sup>119.</sup> V. 25. <sup>120.</sup> Psalms 22:5. <sup>121.</sup> *Sefer HaMa'amarim Yiddish*, pp. 138 ff.

— ONKELOS —  
 26 לָא תִיבְלוּן עַל דְּמָא לָא תִנְחָשׁוּן וְלֹא תִעֻנְגּוּן: 27 לָא תִקְפּוּן פְּאָתָא דְרִישְׁכּוֹן וְלֹא תִחַבְלִי יָת פְּאָתָא דְדַקְנָה: 28 וְחַבּוּל עַל מִית לָא תִתְנּוּן בְּבִסְרְכוֹן וְרוּשְׁמִין חֲרִיתִין לָא תִתְנּוּן בְּכוּן אָנָּא יְיָ:

26 לֹא תֹאכְלוּ עַל־הַדָּם לֹא תִנְחָשׁוּ וְלֹא תִעֻנְגּוּ: 27 לֹא תִקְפּוּ פֶּאֶת רֵאשֵׁיכֶם וְלֹא תִשְׁחִית אֶת פֶּאֶת זְקִנְךָ: 28 וְיִשְׂרָט לְנֶפֶשׁ לֹא תִתְנּוּ בְּבִשְׂרְכֶם וּכְתַבֶּת קַעֲקַע לֹא תִתְנּוּ בְּכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה:

— RASHI —

לְמַעַלְה מִצְדָּעֵי הַרְבֵּה: פֶּאֶת זְקִנְךָ. סוֹף הַזְקָן וּגְבוּלָיו, וְהוּן חֲמֵשׁ: שְׁתֵּים בְּכָל לַחִי וְלַחִי לְמַעַלְה אֵצֶל הָרֵאשׁ, שֶׁהוּא רָחֵב וְיֵשׁ בּוֹ שְׁתֵּי פְּאוֹת, וְאַחַת לְמַטָּה בְּסִטְרוֹ, מְקוֹם חִבּוּר שְׁתֵּי הַלְחָיִים יַחַד: 28 וְיִשְׂרָט לְנֶפֶשׁ. כֵּן דִּרְבָּן שֶׁל אַמּוּרִיִּים, לְהִיּוֹת מִשְׂרָטִין בְּשָׂרָם בְּשִׁמַּת לָהֶם מַת: וּכְתַבֶּת קַעֲקַע. כְּתַב הַמְחַקֶּה וְשָׂקוּעַ, שְׂאִינּוּ גִמְחָק לְעוֹלָם, שֶׁמְקַעְקְעוּ בְּמַחַט וְהוּא מִשְׁחִיר לְעוֹלָם: קַעֲקַע. לְשׁוֹן "וְהוֹקַע אוֹתָם"<sup>143</sup>, "וְהוֹקַעֲנוּם"<sup>144</sup>, תוֹחֲבִין עַץ בְּאֶרֶץ וְתוֹלִין אוֹתָם עֲלֵיהֶם, וְנִמְצָאוּ מְחֻקִּין וְתוֹחֲבִין בְּקַרְקַע, פּוֹרְפוּינִיט בְּלַעֲזָא:<sup>145</sup>

26 לֹא תֹאכְלוּ עַל הַדָּם. לְהַרְבֵּה פָּנִים נִדְרָשׁ בְּסִטְהֵדְרִין:<sup>142</sup> אֲזַהֲרָה שֶׁלֹּא יֹאכַל מִבֶּשֶׂר קְדָשִׁים לְפָנָי וְרִיקַת דָּמִים, וְאֲזַהֲרָה לְאוֹכַל מִבְּהֵמַת חֲלִין טָרֵם שֶׁתִּצָּא נִפְשָׁה, וְעוֹד הַרְבֵּה: לֹא תִנְחָשׁוּ. כְּגוֹן אֵלּוּ הַמִּנְחָשִׁין בְּחֻלְדָּה וּבְעוֹפּוֹת: פְּתוּ נִפְלָה מִפִּי, צָבִי הַפְּסִיקוּ בְּדַרְבֵּי: לֹא תִעֻנְגּוּ. לְשׁוֹן עוֹנוֹת וְשִׁעוֹת, שְׂאוּמֵר: יוֹם פְּלוּנִי יִפֶּה לְהַתְחִיל מְלֹאכָה, שְׁעָה פְּלוּנִית קָשָׁה לְצֵאת: 27 לֹא תִקְפּוּ פֶּאֶת רֵאשֵׁיכֶם. זֶה הַמְשָׁוָה צְדָעֵי לְאַחֲרֵי אָנּוּ וּלְפִדְחָתוֹ, וְנִמְצָא הַקָּף רֵאשׁוֹ עֵגַל סָבִיב, שֶׁעַל אַחֲרֵי אָנּוּ עֲקָרֵי שְׁעָרוֹ

142. סג, א. 43. במדבר כה, ד. 44. שמואלב כא, ו. 45. תקוע.

— A CLOSER LOOK —

[27] **By removing the hair:** “Removing” in this context means cutting the hair on the temples so short that the hair cannot be bent back on itself and touch the skin where it grows,<sup>143</sup> i.e., 5 mm or 0.2 inch.<sup>144</sup> In many Jewish communities, it is customary to let the temple-hair (or some of the temple-hair) grow into side-locks of various lengths, either as a halachic stringency,<sup>145</sup> as a way of fulfilling this commandment elegantly or artistically,<sup>146</sup> or as a distinctive sign of Jewish identity.<sup>147</sup> Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, however, did not grow side-locks, and this is also Chabad practice.<sup>148</sup>

This prohibition does not apply to women, since it is linked to the prohibition against cutting the beard.<sup>149</sup>

**You must not destroy the edge of your beard:** It is thus technically permitted to shave the portions of the beard between the “edges” with a razor, or remove the entire beard with scissors,<sup>150</sup> and for the latter reason some halachic authori-

ties permit removing the beard with powder, scissors, or certain types of electric clippers that operate with a scissor-like action and whose blades do not cut the stubble closely.<sup>151</sup>

However, the sages of the Talmud considered the beard an integral part of God’s beautification of the male face,<sup>152</sup> and in Jewish mysticism the beard represents and expresses the flow of certain aspects of Divine beneficence and mercy into the world.<sup>153</sup> For these and other reasons,<sup>154</sup> many halachic authorities either frown upon or prohibit removing the beard—or even trimming it—in any manner.<sup>155</sup>

The exceptions to the prohibitions against removing the hair of the temples and the beard are the initiation rites of Levites<sup>156</sup> and the purification rites of the Nazirite<sup>157</sup> and someone suffering from *tzara’at*,<sup>158</sup> all of which require shaving the entire head (or body) with a razor, including the temples and the beard.

143. Nidah 6:12 (52b); Makot 3:5, 20b; cf. Mishneh Torah, Nezirut 5:11. 144. Minchat Yitzchak 4:113:5. 145. Yam shel Shelomo on Yevamot 12:18. 146. Responsa Torah LiShmah 389; Responsa Be’er Moshe 1:61:5. 147. E.g., Ben Ish Chayil, second sermon for Shabbat Zachor (27b in Jerusalem 1901-1910 edition). 148. Sha’ar HaMitzvot and Ta’amei HaMitzvot, Kedoshim; Igrot Kodesh, vol. 20, p. 10. 149. Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 181:6. 150. Ibid. 181:10. 151. See authorities cited in Pe’at Zekanecha, pp. 72-90, and in Hadrat Panim – Zakan. 152. Bava Metzvia 84a; cf. Yevamot 80b, Shabbat 152a. 153. See Sha’ar HaMitzvot, Kedoshim; Ta’amei HaMitzvot, Kedoshim; Eitz Chaim 13:9, etc. 154. E.g., Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 181:11. 155. E.g., Be’er Heiteiv on Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 181:5; Responsa Noda BiYehudah 2, Yoreh Deah 80; Responsa Tzemach Tzedek, Yoreh Deah 93, etc. as collected in Hadrat Panim – Zakan. 156. Numbers 8:7. 157. Ibid. 6:18. 158. Above, 14:8.

## Blood

**26 You must not eat** the meat of an animal **before** its **blood** is fully shed: although you are permitted to cut flesh from an animal as soon as it has been ritually slaughtered, you may not eat this flesh until the carcass has stopped moving.<sup>127</sup>

## Divination

**You must not act on the basis of omens or supposedly auspicious times.**<sup>128</sup>

## Haircutting and Shaving

**27 You must not round off** the hair of your head—thereby making the border of your hair an even circle—by removing the hair that covers **the corner of your head** in front of the ears, i.e., the temples (See Figure 1).

**You must not destroy any edge of the five edges of your beard**—the chin, the two cheeks, and the two temples (See Figure 2)—with a razor.<sup>129</sup>



Figure 1. Temple Hair

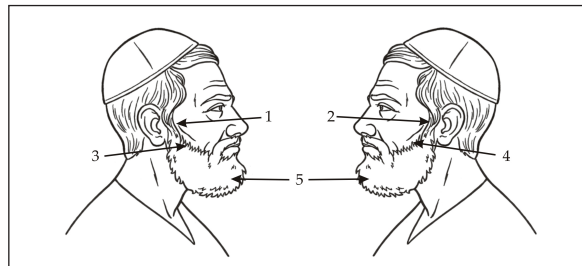


Figure 2. Corners of the Beard

## Mourning

**28** When a close relative—a parent, a sibling, a child, or a spouse<sup>130</sup>—dies, you must express your grief by observing the following mourning practices on the day of death, until nightfall.<sup>131</sup> (a) you must rend your garments;<sup>132</sup> (b) you may not eat the second tithe<sup>133</sup> or any sacrifices;<sup>134</sup> (c) regular priests must not offer up sacrifices<sup>135</sup> or receive a share of the skins of sacrifices offered up during this time.<sup>136</sup> In addition, you must eat a “meal of consolation” after the burial, prepared for you by non-mourners;<sup>137</sup> and you must let your hair grow uncut for 30 days following the death.<sup>138</sup> The high priest, however, is not allowed to observe any of these restrictions.<sup>139</sup>

It is proper to eulogize the dead. You must also observe mourning practices for Jewish leaders when they die.<sup>140</sup>

Nevertheless, you must not mourn excessively: **You must not make cuts in your flesh for a person** who died, as do the Amorites;<sup>141</sup> if you make multiple cuts in your flesh, you are liable to punishment by lashes for each cut.<sup>142</sup> **You may not etch a tattoo on yourselves. I am God**, who may be relied upon to punish you for transgressing these prohibitions.

<sup>127</sup>. Cf. Deuteronomy 12:23. <sup>128</sup>. Deuteronomy 18:10. <sup>129</sup>. Rashi on 21:5, below. <sup>130</sup>. See below, 21:2. <sup>131</sup>. Rashi on 10:19, above; *Mishneh Torah, Ma'aser Sheini* 3:6. <sup>132</sup>. Above, 10:6. <sup>133</sup>. Deuteronomy 26:14. <sup>134</sup>. *Mishneh Torah, Ma'aser Sheini* 3:7. <sup>135</sup>. Rashi on 10:19, above. <sup>136</sup>. Above, 7:7-8; *Mishneh Torah, Ma'aser Sheini* 3:7. <sup>137</sup>. *Sanhedrin* 63a, cited by Rashi on v. 26, above. <sup>138</sup>. Rashi on Numbers 6:5. <sup>139</sup>. Below, 21:12. <sup>140</sup>. Rashi on 10:6, above. <sup>141</sup>. Below, 21:5; Deuteronomy 14:1. <sup>142</sup>. Rashi on 21:5, below.

— ONKELOS —

29 לא תחל ית ברתך לאטעיותה ולא תטעי ארעא ותתמלי ארעא עצת חטאין: 30 ית יומי שבאי דיילי תשרון ולבית מקדשי תהון דחלין אנא יי? 31 לא תתפנון בתר בדין ודכורו לא תתבעון לאסתאבא בהון אנא יי אלהכון:

29 אַל־תַּחֲלִל אֶת־בְּרַתְךָ לְהִזְנוֹתָהּ וְלֹא־תִזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ וּמִלֵּאָה הָאָרֶץ זְמָה: 30 אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וּמִקְדָּשַׁי תִּירְאוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה: 31 אֶל־תִּפְנוּ אֶל־הָאֲבֹת וְאֶל־הַיְדֻעִים אֶל־תִּבְקְשׁוּ לְטַמְּאָהּ בָּהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

— RASHI —

שבתתי תשמרו, אין בגין בית המקדש דוחה שבת: 31 אל תפנו אל האבת. אזהרה לבעל אוב וידעוני. "בעל אוב" — זה פיתום המדבר משוקיו. "ידעוני" — המכניס עצם חיה ששמה "ידוע" לתוך פיו, והעצם מדבר: אל תבקשו. להיות עסוקים בם, שאם תעסקו בם — אתם מטמאין לפני, ואני מתעב אתכם: אני ה' אלהיכם. דעו את מי אתם מחליפין במי:

29 אל תחלל את ברתך להזנותה. במוסר בתו פנויה לביאה שלא לשם קדושים: ולא תזנה הארץ. אם אתה עושה כן, הארץ מזנה את פרותיה לעשותן במקום אחר ולא בארצכם, וכן הוא אומר: "וימנעו רבבים" וגו'; 30 ומקדשי תיראו. לא יפגס בהר הבית לא במקלו ולא במנעלו ובאפגדתו ובאבק שעל רגליו. ואף על פי שאני מזוהרם על המקדש — את

.46 ירמיה ג, ג.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

it is limited by how deeply we can understand and meditate on God's greatness.

In contrast, the selflessness we evince by submitting to God's will and observing the dictates of Jewish law is not at all limited by our ability to probe God's greatness; it is absolute, and therefore infinitely more profound. From this perspective, the practical expression of reverence for the Sanctuary is more crucial—a more fundamental component of our relationship with God—than is the emotion of reverence we are meant to feel.

The absolute nature of the laws of reverence for the Sanctuary is reflected in the fact that they apply even when the Temple is not standing. Thus, even today, we are not allowed to build homes in the style of the Temple or make ornaments or furniture that imitate the design of the furnishings of the Temple, such as a seven-branched Candelabrum.<sup>167</sup>

We observe these laws even today because their observance is dependent not upon the emotions we feel toward the physical building but upon our devotion to God's will. As the sages state, ever since the permanent Temple was built in Jerusalem, the Divine presence has never departed from the Temple's location;<sup>168</sup> it is therefore the Divinity resting in the location that we revere, much more than the building itself.<sup>169</sup>

This explains why the commandment to revere the

Sanctuary is mentioned in connection with the observance of the Sabbath. Just as we do not revere Sabbath itself but He who instructed us to observe it, so too, it is not the Temple itself that we revere but He who directed us to revere it.<sup>170</sup> By the same token, just as Sabbath observance is eternal, so too is the reverence for the Temple eternal.<sup>171</sup>

When the Temple is standing and God's presence is openly revealed in it, it is only natural that we show reverence for it. Our feelings of awe for the holy edifice are so intense that very little self-discipline, if any, is required to compel us to behave respectfully. Thus, when the Temple is standing, our selfless devotion to God's will in observing the rules regarding its reverence is somewhat obscured.

During exile, in contrast, our observance of these rules—like our observance of all the Torah's commandments—is much more an expression of our unflinching devotion to God's will despite the lack of any open Divine revelation. Our fear and awe of God are therefore expressed much more powerfully when we are in exile than they are when the Temple is standing.

Nonetheless, by revering the Sanctuary in accordance with Jewish law, we increase our yearning for its restoration. This, along with our continued devotion to God's will, will hasten the messianic Redemption and the rebuilding of the Temple.<sup>172</sup>

167. *Mishneh Torah, Beit HaBechirah* 7:9-10. 168. *Ibid.* 6:16. 169. *Ibid.* 7:1. 170. *Yevamot* 6a; *Mishneh Torah, Beit HaBechirah* 7:1. 171. *Mishneh Torah, Beit HaBechirah* 7:7. 172. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 37, pp. 55-60.

## Prostitution

**29 You must not defile your unmarried daughter by making her a prostitute** or otherwise permitting her to engage in extramarital relations,<sup>159</sup> **lest I punish you by making the land “engage in prostitution,”** i.e., yield the produce you sow in it elsewhere, **and lest the land be filled with immorality.**<sup>160</sup>

## The Sabbath and the Sanctuary

**30 As you have been taught,**<sup>161</sup> **you must observe My Sabbaths** even with regard to the construction of the Tabernacle: You may not violate the Sabbath in order to re-erect the Tabernacle at any encampment in our imminent desert trek, nor in order to build the permanent Temple once we reach the Promised Land. This injunction, however, should not at all detract from your respect for the Tabernacle. **You must revere My Sanctuary** by not entering the Tabernacle precincts while holding your walking staff, while wearing shoes,<sup>162</sup> while wearing a money-belt, or before washing the dust off your feet. **I am God,** who may be relied upon to punish you for transgressing these prohibitions.

## Divination, continued

**31 You must not turn to divination** by propping up a corpse under your armpit and thereby speaking from it, **or to divination** by placing the bone of an animal called a *yido'a* in your mouth and thereby speaking from it.<sup>163</sup> **You must not seek** to divine the future by these means and thereby spiritually **defile yourselves through them. I am God, your God;** it is wholly inappropriate to seek enlightenment from spiritual sources other than Me.

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### ∞ CHASIDIC INSIGHTS ∞

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**30 You must revere My Sanctuary:** There are two aspects of the reverence we are to show God's Sanctuary. The first is the emotion of reverence we are to feel towards the edifice that God has chosen as the earthly abode of His presence.<sup>164</sup> The second is the practical expression of reverence, which, according to Jewish law, includes not carrying a walking staff, not wearing shoes, not carrying a purse or a money-belt, not having dust upon one's feet, and spitting while inside the sacred precincts. Whereas the emotion of reverence is required only vis-à-vis the Sanctuary and its Courtyard, the laws regarding the practical demonstration of reverence would apply—once the people would be organized into three concentric camps<sup>165</sup>—also to the entire Levite camp, or its equivalent when the Temple is standing, the Temple Mount.<sup>166</sup>

The difference between these two aspects of reverence is rooted in the different ways we arrive at the emotions of fear, awe, and reverence. In general,

the difference between love and fear (and its allied emotions, awe and reverence) is that love more actively involves the ego. In order to love someone or something, we must first be aware of ourselves and what we love. Although we do focus on the objects of our love, we focus not on the object per se but on how it fulfills some need or desire of ours. In contrast, fear is usually a spontaneous reaction to the object that inspires it. We are only marginally aware of ourselves when we are struck with fear by something; if anything, our awareness of ourselves evaporates in the face of the impending danger (or overpowering awe).

In particular, however, the awe of God may also be divided into two levels, contrasted as well by the degree to which the ego is involved. When we feel awe of God because of our own recognition of God's greatness vis-à-vis ourselves, our sense of self is involved. And since our feeling of awe and selflessness is the product of our own contemplation,

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<sup>159</sup>. Deuteronomy 23:18. <sup>160</sup>. See Jeremiah 3:2-3. <sup>161</sup>. Exodus 35:1-2. <sup>162</sup>. See Exodus 3:5. <sup>163</sup>. See below, 20:6, 27; Deuteronomy 18:11. <sup>164</sup>. *Sifra* on this verse; *Sefer HaMitzvot*, active commandment 21. <sup>165</sup>. See Numbers 1:54. <sup>166</sup>. *Mishneh Torah, Beit HaBechirah* 7:2-7. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 37, p. 59.

— ONKELOS —  
 32 מן קדם דסבר באורייתא תקום  
 ותהדר אפי סבא ותדחל מאלקהי  
 אנא יי: 33 וארי יתגיר עמך  
 גיורא בארעכון לא תונון יתה:  
 34 כיציבא מנכון יהי לכון גיורא  
 דיתגיר עמכון ותרחם לה כותך  
 ארי דרין הויתון בארעא דמצרים  
 אנא יי אלהכון: 35 לא תעבדון  
 שקר בדין במשחתא במתקלא  
 ובמבלתא:

32 מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן ויראת מאלהיך  
 אני יהוה: ם  
 רביעי (ששי במחוברין) 33 וכי יגור אתה גר בארצכם  
 לא תוננו אותו: 34 באזרח מכם יהיה לכם הגר | הגר  
 אתכם ואהבת לו כמוך כייגרים הייתם בארץ מצרים  
 אני יהוה אלהיכם: 35 לא תעשו עול במשפט במדה  
 במשקל ובמשורה:

— RASHI —  
 אני: 35 לא תעשו עול במשפט. אם לדין — הרי כבר  
 נאמר: "לא תעשו עול במשפט", ומדוע "משפט"  
 השנוי כאן? הוא "המדה והמשקל והמשורה". מלמד  
 שהמודד נקרא "דין", שאם שקר במדה — הרי הוא  
 במקלקל את הדין, וקרוי "עול", "שנאוי" ו"משקץ",  
 "חרם" ו"תועבה", וגורם לחמשה דברים האמורים  
 בדין: מטמא את הארץ, ומחלל את ה', ומסלק את  
 השכינה, ומפיל את ישראל בחרב, ומגלה אותם  
 מארצם: במדה. זו מדת הארץ: במשקל. במשמעו:  
 ובמשורה. היא מדת הלח:

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —  
 As opposed to outright stealing (or other forms of unlawful appropriation), the use of false measures involves the pretense of proper behavior. The person who uses them is indeed measuring his wares, seemingly in order to charge his customer correctly; however, he is at the same time cheating him. This duplicity is the root of all dishonesty, ultimately leading to more overt theft—and worse.  
 Such is the craft of the evil inclination in general. Aware that attempting to convince us to openly rebel against our Creator will undoubtedly fail, he attempts to trick us through duplicity. "I agree," he begins, "that our every action must be 'measured,' carried out in full compliance with Jewish law. But what would be so terrible if the 'measures' were slightly off? Even if you do insist on keeping an honest measure," he continues, "keep another one as well: Apply God's laws to your life fully when dealing with spiritual matters. But when interacting with the material world or conducting business, surely there is some room for compromise."  
 We can now understand why this commandment is linked with the Exodus from Egypt. According to Maimonides,<sup>179</sup> although the Egyptians' actions against the Jews were pre-ordained collectively, they were still culpable individually because each individual Egyptian could have chosen not to be a party to the oppression. Nonetheless, they chose evil, and were therefore punished (not for what they did, but) because of the evil in their hearts that made them so choose. Even Pharaoh was culpable, although it could be argued that as the nations'

~ A CLOSER LOOK ~  
 [32] **A wise and elderly person:** Although the contextual understanding of the Torah obligates us to show respect only to a wise elderly person, the legal interpretation of the Torah requires that we also rise before any person who is superior to us in wisdom, even if he is not elderly, and before anyone over 70 years old, even if he is not a sage (as long as he is not known to rebel against the Torah's commandments).<sup>180</sup>

179. *Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah* 6:3; see on Exodus 7:3-5. 180. *Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah* 244:1. 158

## Respect for the Wise and Elderly

**32 You must rise before a wise, elderly person, and, in addition, you must respect one who is wise and elderly** by not sitting in his place or explicitly contradicting him. Do not pretend not to notice him and thus avoid troubling yourself to stand up in his presence. Even though you may be able to deceive other people in this regard, you cannot deceive Me; **you must therefore fear your God. I am God**, who may be relied upon to punish you if you ignore this instruction. However, you are not required to show honor to an elderly person who has not acquired wisdom.

### Social Behavior

◆ *Fourth Reading (Sixth when combined)* **33 As you have been taught,<sup>173</sup> when a convert dwells with you in your land, you must not taunt him** by reminding him how he was originally an idolater or living an otherwise inferior type of life and has only recently accepted Judaism.

**34 Rather, the convert who dwells with you must be treated the same as a native from among you, and you must love him as you love yourself, for you were strangers in Egypt**, and therefore he can easily taunt you back. **I am God, the God of both of you.**

### Business Ethics

**35 In your business dealings, you must not commit a perversion of justice with regard to measures of length and area, weight, or liquid or dry volume.**

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#### CHASIDIC INSIGHTS

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**32 You must rise before a wise, elderly person:** Literally, this phrase reads “Before old age you must rise.” Thus, as stated in the *Zohar*,<sup>174</sup> this verse may be interpreted homiletically: “*Before old age*—even before you reach an advanced age and are forced to begin contemplating the Day of Judgment, *arise*—get an early start on repentance, so you can serve God with vigor.”

Alternatively, “old age” may be taken as a reference to the evil inclination. The evil inclination is called “an old and foolish king,”<sup>175</sup> since it is manifest from birth, whereas the good inclination becomes fully manifest only later, from the age of *bar* or *bat mitzvoah*. Within each of us, then, our evil inclination is “older” than our good inclination.

Nonetheless, the evil inclination does not attain its full strength until later in life, after we have indulged it by submitting to our material desires. It is therefore necessary to “arise,” i.e., enhance our orientation toward Divinity by reining in our evil inclination early in life, “starving” it before it assumes unwieldy proportions.<sup>176</sup>

**35-36 A perversion of justice with regard to measures:** Besides the two reasons Rashi offers to explain why the commandment to possess only accurate measures is linked to the Exodus from Egypt (as given in the interpolated translation), the Midrash<sup>177</sup> offers another: whoever denies that God commanded us to possess only accurate measures is considered as having denied the Exodus from Egypt.

The reason why specifically this sin is equated with denying the Exodus is related to its unique nature. Elsewhere in the Torah, we are cautioned merely against taking money that is not ours (whether through stealing, robbery, cheating, etc.); here, we are commanded to not even possess false measures, regardless of whether we ever use them.<sup>178</sup> Although we could explain this prohibition as a precautionary measure (i.e., if we do not possess such measures, we will not be tempted to use them), it appears that the Torah is also concerned with the detrimental effect that simply possessing such measures can have on us.

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173. Exodus 22:20. 174. *Zohar* 3:87b. 175. Ecclesiastes 4:13; see *Zohar*, *loc. cit.* 176. *Hitva'aduyot* 5714, vol. 3, p. 248. 177. *Sifra* on this verse. *Mishneh Torah*, *Geneivah* 7:12. 178. Deuteronomy 25:13-16.

— ONKELOS —

36 מאזנן דקשוט מתקלין דקשוט  
 מכילן דקשוט והינין דקשוט יהון  
 לכוון אָנאָ יי אלהכון די אפקית  
 יתכוון מארעא דמצרים: 37 ותטרון  
 ית כל קמי וית כל דיני ותעבדון  
 יתהון אָנאָ יי: 20:1 ומליל יי עם  
 משה למימר: 2 ועם בני ישראל  
 תימר גבר גבר מבני ישראל ומן  
 גיורא דיתגורון בישראל די יתן  
 מזרעה למלך אתקטלא יתקטל  
 עמא בית ישראל ירגמנה באבנא:  
 3 ואנא אָתן ית רגזי בגברא ההוא  
 ואשיצי יתה מגו עמה ארי מזרעה  
 יתב למלך בדיל לסאבא ית  
 מקדשי ולאחלא ית שמא דקדשי:  
 4 ואם מכבש יבשון עמא בית  
 ישראל ית עיניהון מן גברא ההוא  
 בדיהב מזרעה למלך בדיל דלא  
 לקטלא יתה:

36 מאזני צדק אבני צדק אִיפת צדק והין צדק יהיה  
 לכם אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ  
 מצרים: 37 ושמרתם את כל חקתי ואת כל משפטי  
 ועשיתם אתם אני יהוה: פ

◆ חמישי 20:1 וידבר יהוה אל משה לאמר: 2 ואל-  
 בני ישראל תאמר איש איש מבני ישראל ומן הגר  
 הגר בישראל אשר יתן מזרעו למלך מות יומת עם  
 הארץ ירגמנהו באבן: 3 ואני אתן את פני באיש ההוא  
 והכרתיו אתו מקרב עמו כי מזרעו נתן למלך למען  
 טמא את מקדשי ולחלל את שם קדשי: 4 ואם העלם  
 יעלימו עם הארץ את עיניהם מן האיש ההוא בתתו  
 מזרעו למלך לבלתי המית אתו:

— RASHI —

את פני. פנאי שלי, פונה אני מכל עסקי ועוסק בו:  
 באיש. ולא בצבור, שאין כל הצבור נכרתין: כי מזרעו  
 נתן למלך. לפי שנאמר: "מעביר בנו ובתו באש",  
 בן בנו וכן בתו מניין? תלמוד לומר: "כי מזרעו נתן  
 למלך". ורע פסול מניין? תלמוד לומר: "בתתו מזרעו  
 למלך". למען טמא את מקדשי. את כנסת ישראל,  
 שהיא מקדשת לי, כלשון "ולא יחלל את מקדשי":  
 4 ואם העלם יעלימו. אם העלימו בדבר אחר — סוף  
 שיעלימו בדברים הרבה, אם העלימו סנהדרין קטנה  
 — סוף שיעלימו סנהדרין גדולה:

36 אבני צדק. הם המשקולות ששוקלין כנגדן: איפת.  
 היא מדת היבש: הין. זו היא מדת הלח: אשר הוצאתי  
 אתכם. על מנת כן. דבר אחר: אני הבחנתי במצרים  
 בין טפה של בכור לטפה שאינה של בכור, ואני  
 הנאמן לפרע ממי שטומן משקולותיו במלח להונות  
 את הבריות שאין מכירים בהם: 2 ואל בני ישראל  
 תאמר. ענשין על האזהרות: מות יומת. בבית דין,  
 ואם אין כח לבית דין — "עם הארץ" מטיעין אותן:  
 עם הארץ. עם שבגיגו נבראת הארץ. דבר אחר: עם  
 שעתידין לירש את הארץ על ידי מצות הללו: 3 אתן

47. דברים יח, י. 48. ויקרא כא, כג.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

king he could not possibly have avoided wronging the Jews. Since he did not oppress them in order to fulfill God's prophecy but for his own purposes, he was rightfully punished for his evil intentions.

Similarly, it is the inner evil intent evinced by making or owning false measures (rather than any act of misappropriation) that makes it a sin. Asserting that God does not prohibit the mere possession of inaccurate measures therefore implies a denial of the culpability of someone who merely harbors evil intentions, and as such is a denial of the justice of the punishment the Egyptians received that led to

the Exodus from Egypt. Furthermore, just as the Exodus from Egypt was the prelude and prerequisite to the giving of the entire Torah, so is the evil duplicity implicit in the possession of false measures the prelude and prerequisite to the more actively heinous crimes of theft, robbery, and so forth, as we have noted. Conversely, then, scrupulousness in maintaining accurate measures, as well as in all business dealings, is the prelude and prerequisite to fulfilling the entire Torah. In the words of Hillel,<sup>193</sup> "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow—this is the entire Torah, and the rest is commentary. Go and learn it!"<sup>194</sup>

193. Shabbat 31a. 194. Likutei Sichot, vol. 27, pp. 149-157.

36 Rather, **you must have accurate scales, accurate weights, an accurate** container holding an *ephah* [24.768 liter or 6.54 gallon] for measuring dry volume, **and an accurate** container holding a *hin* [4.128 liter or 1.09 gallon] for measuring liquid volume. **I am God, your God, who brought you out of Egypt** for this very purpose: that as a people you be a paragon of honesty in your business dealings. Furthermore, just as I discerned in Egypt who was really a firstborn and who was not,<sup>181</sup> so can I discern if someone falsifies his weights in order to cheat in business.<sup>182</sup>

I refer to such dishonest business dealings as a “perversion of justice” since anyone who deliberately cheats in business is perverting justice no less than a judge who renders an unjust verdict; I therefore consider him, too, unjust, hateful, loathsome, condemned to destruction, and an abomination. Also like an unjust judge, he defiles the Holy Land, desecrates My Name, causes the Divine Presence to depart from the Jewish people, causes the people to die by the sword, and causes them to be exiled from their land.<sup>183</sup>

37 **You must safeguard all My rules and all My ordinances** by learning their laws thoroughly, **and then fulfill them. I am God**, who may be relied upon to reward you for doing so and to punish you for failing to do so.”

### **Punishment for Serving Molech and for Divination**

◆ *Fifth Reading 20:1* **God spoke to Moses, saying,**

2 “After having conveyed the prohibitions just mentioned, **you must now tell the Israelites** what the punishments are for transgressing them:

‘You have been taught that you must not serve the cult of Molech.<sup>184</sup> **Any individual of the Israelites or of the converts who dwell among the nation of Israel who hands over any of his offspring to Molech**—whether first- or further-generation offspring, and whether legitimate or not<sup>185</sup>—**must be put to death** by the court by stoning. As has been mentioned,<sup>186</sup> and as will be described fully later,<sup>187</sup> if the court’s agents do not succeed in killing him, **the people of the land must pelt him with stones** until he dies. I refer to the people here as “the people of the land” firstly because I created the earth<sup>188</sup> for the sake of the Jewish people,<sup>189</sup> and secondly because in the merit of following My laws—particularly those by which they rid the land of idolatry<sup>190</sup>—they will possess the land.

3 If he is not put to death, **I will instead set My own attention upon that man**,<sup>191</sup> **and I will cut him off from amid his people**—i.e., he will die prematurely and childless—**because he gave of his offspring to Molech, thereby spiritually defiling the Israelites, My holy people, and profaning My holy Name.**

4 Specifically, **if the people of the land ignore that man when he gives of his offspring to Molech** and do not deliver him to the court in order **to put him to death**, even though he was warned and witnessed,<sup>192</sup>

181. See Exodus 12:30. 182. See also Deuteronomy 25:13-16. 183. Above, v. 15. 184. Above, 18:21. 185. Rashi on v. 3, below. 186. Exodus 19:13. 187. Deuteronomy 17:7. 188. In Hebrew, the word for “land” (ארץ) is the same for that for “earth.” 189. See before Genesis 1:1. 190. *Korban Aharon on Sifra*. 191. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 17, p. 323, note 16. 192. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, p. 142.

— ONKELOS —

5 ואשוי אָנא ית רגזי בגברא  
ההוא ובסעדוהי ואשיצי יתה  
יית כל דטען בתרוהי למטעי  
בתר מלך מגו עמהון: 6 ואנש די  
יתפני בתר בדין ודכורו למטעי  
בתריהון ואתן ית רגזי באנשא  
ההוא ואשיצי יתה מגו עמה:  
7 ותתקדשון ותהון קדישין ארי  
אנא יי אלהכון: 8 ותטרון ית קימי  
ותעבדון יתהון אנא יי מקדשכון:  
9 ארי גבר גבר די ולוט ית אבוהי  
יית אמה אתקטלא יתקטל אבוהי  
ואמה לט קטלא חייב: 10 וגבר די  
יגוף ית אתת גבר די יגוף ית אתת  
חברה אתקטלא יתקטל גיפא  
יגיפתא:

5 ושמתי אני את־פני באיש ההוא ובמשפחתו והכרתי  
אתו ואת כל־הזנים אחרייו לזנות אחרי המלך מקרב  
עמם: 6 והנפש אשר תפנה אלהאבת ואל־הידענים  
לזנת אחריהם ונתתי את־פני בנפש ההוא והכרתי  
אתו מקרב עמו: 7 והתקדשתם והייתם קדשים כי אני  
יהוה אלהיכם:

◆ ששי (שביעי במחוברין) 8 ושמרתם את־חקתי ועשיתם  
אתם אני יהוה מקדשכם: 9 בִּי־אִישׁ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקְלַל  
אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ קָלַל דָּמִיו בּוֹ:  
10 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנְאֵף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנְאֵף אֶת־  
אִשְׁתּוֹ רַעְיוֹ מוֹת־יוּמָת הַנְּאֵף וְהַנְּאֵפָת:

— RASHI —

שנאמר: "דמיו בו", "דמיהם בם", ולמדנו מאוב  
וידעוני, שנאמר בהם: "באבן ירגמו אתם דמיהם  
בם". ופשוטו של מקרא, כמו: "דמו בראשו", אין  
נענש על מיתתו אלא הוא, שהוא גרם לעצמו  
שיהרג: 10 ואיש. פרט לקטן: אשר ינאף את אשת  
איש. פרט לאשת קטן, למדנו שאין לקטן קדושין.  
ועל איזו אשת איש חייבתי לה: אשר ינאף את אשת  
רעהו. פרט לאשת גוי, למדנו שאין קדושין לגוי:  
מות יומת הנאף והנאפת. כל מיתה האמורה בתורה  
סתם, אינה אלא חנק:

5 ובמשפחתו. אמר רבי שמעון: וכי משפחה מה  
חטאה? אלא ללמדך, שאין לה משפחה שיש בה  
מוכס שאין כלם מוכסין, שכלם מחפין עליו: והכרתי  
אתו. למה נאמר? לפי שנאמר "ובמשפחתו", יכול  
יהיו כל המשפחה בהכרת? תלמוד לומר: "אתו",  
אותו בהכרת ולא כל המשפחה בהכרת, אלא  
ביסורין: לזנות אחרי המלך. לרבות שאר עבודה זרה  
שעבדה בכף, ואפלו אין זו עבודה זרה: 7 והתקדשתם.  
זו פרישות עבודה זרה: 9 אביו ואמו קלל. לרבות  
לאחר מיתה: דמיו בו. זו סקילה, וכן כל מקום

49. פסוק כז. 50. יהושע ב, יט.

10 As you have been taught,<sup>202</sup> adultery is forbidden. The punishment for this crime is as follows: In the case of a Jewish man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, provided that he commits adultery with the wife of his fellow Jew, both the adulterer and the adulteress must be put to death by strangulation.<sup>203</sup> Non-Jews and Jewish male minors, in contrast, cannot legally betroth or marry Jewish women, so someone who fornicates with the Jewish “wives” of either of these is not subject to the death penalty but only to the punishment of lashes.

— CHASIDIC INSIGHTS —

7 You must sanctify yourselves and be holy: When a person sanctifies himself in some small way below, he is sanctified in great measure from on high.<sup>204</sup> When a person resists the urge to indulge in material pleasure, he produces an increase of holiness and spiritual light, which then descends and rests

upon him. This verse, then, can be read as follows: “Sanctify yourself, i.e. act as if you are sanctified even if you are not, and you will be holy—ultimately you will become holy because of the great holiness that will descend upon you from on high.”<sup>205</sup>

202. Exodus 20:13; above, 18:20. 203. Mishneh Torah, Isurei Biah 1:4. See below, 21:9; Deuteronomy 22:22-27. 204. Cf. Yoma 39a. 205. Tanya, end of chapter 27.

5 **I will**, as I said, **set My attention upon that man, and upon his family** as well, since by harboring him rather than handing him over to the court, his family is implicated in his sin. Nonetheless, **I will only cut him off**, whereas his family I will only punish with suffering.

This punishment (excision) is only given to individuals, never to the community acting collectively.

You must be vigilant in prosecuting such criminals, for if you ignore one crime, you will accustom yourself to ignoring crime in general. The same applies to the courts: If the lower courts neglect to prosecute and punish criminals, this lackadaisical attitude will eventually pervade the high court, as well.

You have been taught<sup>195</sup> that if someone worships an idol in one of the four ways in which you are to worship Me—i.e., by sacrificing to it, offering up incense to it, pouring a libation to it, or prostrating himself before it—it is a capital offense, even if this is not the way in which that particular idol is usually worshipped. To these four I now add a fifth way, the rite particular to Molech-worship: passing a child through twin fires. Thus, I will cut off **from amid their people all who stray after the Molech-worshipper by themselves straying after the cult of Molech**, even if they perform its rites as a means of worshipping other deities who are not normally worshipped this way. The punishment of excision applies only if they were not properly warned and witnessed; if they were, they are liable to death by stoning.

6 You have been taught not to divine.<sup>196</sup> Regarding **the person who turns to divination** by propping up a corpse under his armpit and thereby speaking from it, **or to divination** by placing the bone of an animal called a *yido'a* in his mouth and thereby speaking from it, **thus straying after them, I will set My attention upon that person, and I will cut him off from amid his people**—he will die prematurely and childless—if he was not properly warned and witnessed.<sup>197</sup>

7 **You must** similarly **sanctify yourselves and be holy** by refraining from engaging in all other forms of idolatry, **for I am God, your God**, who may be relied upon to punish you for transgressing these prohibitions.

## Punishments for Forbidden Relations

- ◆ *Sixth Reading (Seventh when combined)* 8 **You must safeguard My rules** by studying their laws diligently, **and then fulfill them. I am God, who sanctifies you** by prohibiting you from engaging in forbidden relations, as stated previously.<sup>198</sup>

9 The prohibitions against forbidden relations<sup>199</sup> were followed by the duty to honor your parents;<sup>200</sup> conversely here, the punishment for not honoring your parents will be given as an introduction to the punishments for engaging in forbidden relations. **For** you have been taught<sup>201</sup> that **any adult man or woman who curses his or her father or mother must be put to death** by stoning; the same is true if **he cursed his father or his mother** after their death. The spilling of **his blood is his own fault**; none of those who execute him will be held culpable for his death.

195. Exodus 22:19. 196. Above, 19:31. 197. See below, v. 27. 198. Above, 19:2. 199. Above, 18:1-30. 200. Above, 19:1-3. 201. Exodus 21:17.

— ONKELOS —

11 וגבר די ישכוב עם אתת אבוהי עריתא דאבוהי גלי אתקטלא יתקטלון תרויהון קטלא חיבין: 12 וגבר די ישכוב ית בלתי אתקטלא יתקטלון תרויהון תבלא עברו קטלא חיבין: 13 וגבר די ישכוב ית דכורא משכבי אתתא תועבתא עברו תרויהון אתקטלא יתקטלון קטלא חיבין: 14 וגבר די יסב ית אתתא וית אמה עצת חסאין היא בנורא יקדון יתה ויתחן ולא תהי עצת חסאין ביניכון: 15 וגבר די יתן שכבתה בבעירא אתקטלא יתקטל וית בעירא תקטלון: 16 ואתתא די תקרב לכל בעירא למשלט בה ותקטול ית אתתא וית בעירא אתקטלא יתקטלון קטלא חיבין: 17 וגבר די יסב ית אחתה בת אבוהי או בת אמה ויחזי ית עריתה והיא תחזי ית עריתה קלנא הוא וישתיצון לעיני בני עמהון ערית אחתה גלי חובה יקבל: 18 וגבר די ישכוב ית אתתא סואבתא ויגלי ית עריתה ית קלנא גלי והיא תגלי ית סואבת דמהא וישתיצון תרויהון מגו עמהון:

11 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אִשְׁתׁ אָבִיו עֲרוֹת אָבִיו גְּלָה מוֹת־יוֹמָתוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם: 12 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־כַּלְתּוֹ מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם תָּבֵל עֲשׂוֹ דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם: 13 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־זָכֹר מִשְׁכְּבֵי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה עֲשׂוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם: 14 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקַּח אֶת־אִשָּׁה וְאֶת־אִמּוֹהּ זָמָה הִוא בְּאִשׁ יִשְׁרְפוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶתְהוֹן וְלֹא־תִהְיֶה זָמָה בְּתוֹכְכֶם: 15 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן שְׁכָבְתוֹ בְּבִהְמָה מוֹת יוֹמָת וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה תִּהְרַגוּ: 16 וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרַב אֶל־כָּל־בְּהֵמָה לְרַבְעָה אֹתָהּ וְהִרְגָתָ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה וְאֶת־הַבְּהֵמָה מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ דְּמִיָּהֶם בָּם: 17 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִקַּח אֶת־אֶחָתוֹ בֶּת־אָבִיו אוֹ בֶּת־אִמּוֹ וְרָאָה אֶת־עֲרוֹתָהּ וְהִיא־תִרְאָה אֶת־עֲרוֹתוֹ חֶסֶד הִוא וְנִכְרְתוּ לְעֵינֵי בְנֵי עַמֶּם עֲרוֹת אֶחָתוֹ גְּלָה עוֹנֵו יִשָּׂא: 18 וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אִשָּׁה דָּוָה וְגָלָה אֶת־עֲרוֹתָהּ אֶת־מִקְרָהּ הַעֲרָה וְהִוא גְּלָתָה אֶת־מִקְוֹר דְּמִיָּה וְנִכְרְתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם מִקְרַב עַמֶּם:

— RASHI —

הרי דברים קל וחומר: מה אילנות, שאינן רואין ואינן שומעין, על שבאת תקלה על ידם, אמרה תורה: השחת, שרף וכלה, המטה את חברו מדרך חיים לדרך מיתה, על אחת כמה וכמה: 17 חסד הוא. לשון ארמי: "חרפה" — "חסודא". ומדרש<sup>51</sup>: אם תאמר: קנן נשא אחותו, חסד עשה המקום לבנות עולמו ממנו, שנאמר: "עולם חסד יבנה": 18 הערה. גלה, וכן כל לשון "ערה" גלוי הוא. והוא יורדת בתבה לשם דבר, כמו: "ועה", מגורת<sup>52</sup>: "ולא קם ולא זע". וכן "אחרה" מגורת את. והערה זו נחלקו בה רבותינו<sup>53</sup>, יש אומרים: זו נשיקת שמש, ויש אומרים: זו הכנסת עטרה:

12 תבל עשו. גנאי. לשון אחר: מבבלין זרע האב בורע הבן: 13 משכבי אשה. מכניס כמכחול בשפופרת: 14 ישרפו אותו ואתהו. אי אתה יכול לומר אשתו הראשונה ושרפו, שהרי נשאה בהתר ולא נאסרה עליו, אלא אשה ואמה הכתובין כאן שתייהן לאסור, שנשא את חמותו ואמה. ויש מרבותינו<sup>54</sup> שאומרים: אין כאן אלא חמותו, ומהו "אתהו"? את אחת מהן, ולשון יוני הוא: "הו", אחת: 15 ואת הבהמה תהרגו. אם אדם חטא, בהמה מה חטאה? אלא מפני שבאה לאדם תקלה על ידה, לפיכך אמר הכתוב: תסקל, קל וחומר לאדם שיודע להבחין בין טוב לרע וגורם רעה לחברו לעבר עברה. פיוצא בדבר אתה אומר<sup>55</sup>: "אבד תאבדון את כל המקומות",

51. סהדרין ע, ב. 52. דברים יב, ב. 53. בראשית לד, יד. 54. סהדרין נח, ב. 55. תהלים פט, ג. 56. אסתר ה, ט. 57. יבמות נה, ב.

properly warned and witnessed, they are liable to punishment by lashes; if they were not warned and witnessed, **both of them will be cut off from amid their people**: they will die prematurely and childless.

11 A man who “lies with” his father’s wife has thereby “uncovered his father’s nakedness”:<sup>206</sup> Both of them must be put to death by stoning. The shedding of their blood is their own fault; none of those who execute them will be held culpable for their death.

12 As for a man who “lies with” his daughter-in-law,<sup>207</sup> both of them must be put to death by stoning. They have committed a despicable act by intermingling the father’s and son’s seed in the same woman.<sup>208</sup> The spilling of their blood is their own fault; none of those who execute them will be held culpable for their death.

13 As for a man who “lies with” a male in the same way as one would with a woman,<sup>209</sup> both of them have committed an abomination. They must be put to death. The spilling of their blood is their own fault; none of those who execute them will be held culpable for their death. If they do not engage in this specific act, however, they are not liable to the death penalty.

14 As for a man who takes a woman as a wife and then fornicates with her mother,<sup>210</sup> such a union is the counsel of their evil inclination. They—the court—must burn him and the mother in fire. If, after marrying a woman, a man then fornicates with both her mother and her mother’s mother, all three must be burned. This is in order that there be no lasting repercussions of such evil counsel in your midst.

15 A man who “lies with” an animal<sup>211</sup> must be put to death by stoning, and you must kill the animal by stoning, as well. The animal is technically innocent, but because by Divine providence it occasioned this sin, it must be killed, too. From this law you may conclude a fortiori that a human being who causes another person to sin will surely be punished.

16 Similarly, in the case of a woman who approaches any animal in order to fornicate with it,<sup>212</sup> you must kill both the woman and the animal. They must be put to death by stoning. The spilling of their blood is their own fault (the animal’s only figuratively, due to Divine providence); none of those who execute them will be held culpable for their death.

17 As for a man who takes his sister and fornicates with her, whether she be his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, and thus he “sees her nakedness” and she “sees his nakedness,”<sup>213</sup> it is a disgraceful act. If properly warned and witnessed, the court must punish them with lashes; if they were not warned and witnessed, they will be cut off from life for all the members of their people to see: they will die prematurely and childless. Since the man “uncovered his sister’s nakedness,” he must bear the consequence of his sin. True, I allowed Adam’s children to marry each other, but this was only a temporary expedient—which has remained in force until now—because they had no one else to marry.

18 As for a man who “lies with” a woman who is undergoing a menstrual flow,<sup>214</sup> thereby becoming ritually defiled: Unless (a) the flow has ceased and (b) she has since purified herself of this defilement through immersion in a *mikveh*,<sup>215</sup> he has thereby “uncovered her nakedness.” Since he has “uncovered” her “fountain of blood” and she has “uncovered” the “fountain of her blood,” then, if they were

206. Above, 18:7. 207. Above, 18:15. 208. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 5, p. 189, note 34. 209. Above, 18:22. 210. Above, 18:17. 211. Above, 18:23. 212. Above, 18:23. 213. Above, 18:9. 214. Above, 18:19. 215. Above, 15:19-24.

— ONKELOS —

19 וערות אחות אמך ואחות אביך לא תגלה פי את-שארן הערה עונם ישאו: 20 ואיש אשר ישכב את-דדתו ערות דדו גלה חטאם ישאו ערירים ימתו: 21 ואיש אשר יקח את-אשת אחיו נדה הוא ערות אחיו גלה ערירים יהיו: 22 ושמתם את-כל-חקתי ואת-כל-משפטי ועשיתם אתם ולא-תקיא אתכם הארץ אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה לשבת בה: שביעי 23 ולא תלכו בחקת הגוי אשר-אני משלח מפניכם פי את-כל-אלה עשו ואקין בם: 24 ואמר לכם אתם תירשו את-אדמתם ואני אתנגה לכם לרשת אתה ארץ זבת חלב ודבש אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר-הבדלתי אתכם מן-העמים: מפטיר 25 והבדלתם בין-הבהמה הטהרה לטמאה ובין-העוף הטמא לטהור ולא-תשקצו את-נפשתיכם בבהמה ובעוף ובכל אשר תרמש האדמה אשר-הבדלתי לכם לטמא:

— RASHI —

לפי שקוברן בחייו. "ערירים יהיו" — שאם אין לו בשעת עברה, והיה כל ימיו כמו שהוא עכשו: 21 נדה הוא. השכיבה הזאת מנדה היא ומאוסה. ורבותינו<sup>60</sup> דרשו: לאסור הערצה בה כנדה שהערצה מפרשת בה<sup>61</sup>: "את מקרה הערה": 23 ואקין. לשון מאוס, כמו<sup>62</sup>: "קצתי בחיי", כאדם שהוא קץ במוזנו: 25 והבדלתם בין הבהמה הטהרה לטמאה. אין צריך לומר בין פרה לחמור, שהרי מבידין ונפרין הם, אלא בין טהורה לה לטמאה לה, בין שגשחט רבו של סימן לנשחט חציו. וכמה בין רבו לחציו, מלא שעה: אשר הבדלתי לכם לטמא. לאסור:

58. עיין לעיל פרק יח פסוקים יב-ג. 59. בראשית טו, ב. 60. יבמות נד, א. 61. פסוק יח. 62. בראשית כו, מו.

19 וערות אחות אמך ואחות אביך לא תגלה פי את-שארן הערה עונם ישאו: 20 ואיש אשר ישכב את-דדתו ערות דדו גלה חטאם ישאו ערירים ימתו: 21 ואיש אשר יקח את-אשת אחיו נדה הוא ערות אחיו גלה ערירים יהיו: 22 ושמתם את-כל-חקתי ואת-כל-משפטי ועשיתם אתם ולא-תקיא אתכם הארץ אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה לשבת בה:

◆ שביעי 23 ולא תלכו בחקת הגוי אשר-אני משלח מפניכם פי את-כל-אלה עשו ואקין בם: 24 ואמר לכם אתם תירשו את-אדמתם ואני אתנגה לכם לרשת אתה ארץ זבת חלב ודבש אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר-הבדלתי אתכם מן-העמים:

◆ מפטיר 25 והבדלתם בין-הבהמה הטהרה לטמאה ובין-העוף הטמא לטהור ולא-תשקצו את-נפשתיכם בבהמה ובעוף ובכל אשר תרמש האדמה אשר-הבדלתי לכם לטמא:

very slight, so you must learn how to distinguish between them.

**Thus, you will not make yourselves disgusting by consuming any spiritually defiled animal or fowl, besides by consuming any creature that crawls on the earth that I have distinguished from other such creatures by prohibiting it to you, since consuming it renders you spiritually defiled.**

19 As you have been taught, **you must not “uncover the nakedness” of your mother’s sister<sup>216</sup> or your father’s sister,<sup>217</sup> for one who does so would be “uncovering the nakedness” of his close relative.** If the two parties do so, **they must bear the consequences of their sin.** They are punishable by lashes if they were properly warned and witnessed and by excision if they were not.

20 As you have been taught,<sup>218</sup> **a man who “lies with” his aunt-by-marriage, i.e., his father’s brother’s wife has “uncovered his uncle’s nakedness,” so they must bear the consequences of their transgression.** They are punishable by lashes if they were properly warned and witnessed, and if they were not, by excision: **they will die prematurely and childless.**

21 As for **a man who takes his brother’s wife,<sup>219</sup> it is a repulsive act; he has “uncovered his brother’s nakedness.”** If warned and witnessed, they are punished with lashes. If not, they are punished by excision: they will die prematurely; if they have no children, **they will remain childless** until they die; if they have children, their children will die in their lifetimes.

22 **You must safeguard all My rules and all My ordinances** by studying their laws thoroughly, **and then fulfill them.** If you do so, then, as you have been taught,<sup>220</sup> **the land to which I am bringing you to dwell therein will not vomit you out.**

- ◆ *Seventh Reading* 23 **You must not follow the practices of the nations that I am sending out of Canaan from before you, for they committed all these sins, and I was disgusted with them.**

24 **So I said to you, “You will take possession of their land in their stead, for I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey.” I am God, your God, who has distinguished you from other peoples** by giving you My laws.

### Spiritual Defilement

- ◆ *Maftir* 25 As mentioned above,<sup>221</sup> you must be proficient and practiced in the laws of ritual slaughter and the signs of fatal defects for which you must inspect permitted animals after slaughtering them, in order to know which animals convey *ritual* defilement if touched. This proficiency is necessary also because consuming improperly slaughtered animals renders you *spiritually* defiled.<sup>222</sup> **You must** therefore be easily able to **distinguish between** proper ritual slaughter, which leaves the animal a spiritually **undefiled animal**, which does not defile you spiritually when you eat it, **and** improper ritual slaughter, which leaves the animal a spiritually **defiled** animal, which does defile you spiritually if you eat it. Similarly, you must be proficient in differentiating **between** ritual slaughter that renders a **fowl defiled and** ritual slaughter that renders a fowl **undefiled**. For example, if the trachea was cut only halfway, the slaughter is invalid and eating the animal’s carcass will render you spiritually defiled, whereas if its trachea was cut even slightly more than halfway, the slaughter is valid and eating the meat of the dead animal does not render you spiritually defiled. The difference between these two cases is

216. Above, 18:13. 217. Above, 18:12. 218. Above, 18:14. 219. Above, 18:16. 220. Above, 18:24-28. 221. 11:47. 222. 11:2-8.

— ONKELOS —

26 ותהוון קדמי קדישין ארי קדיש  
 אָנא יי ואפרשית יתכון מן עממיא  
 למחוי פלחין קדמי: 27 וגבר או  
 אתתא ארי יהי בהון בדין או  
 דבורו אתקטלא יתקטלון באבנא  
 ירנמון יתהוון קטלא חיבין:

26 וְהִיְתֶם לִי קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה וְאַבְדַּלְתֶּם  
 מִן־הָעַמִּים לְהִיּוֹת לִי: 27 וְאִישׁ אִו־אִשָּׁה כִּי־יִהְיֶה בָהֶם  
 אוֹב אוֹ יִדְעֹנֵי מוֹת יוֹמְתוּ בְּאַבֶּן יִרְנְמוּ אֹתָם דְּמֵיהֶם בָּם:

ס"ד פסוקים. ונגי'ה סימן. מ"י זה"ב סימן.

— RASHI —

הבדלתכם מהם לשמי, פורש מן העברה ומקבל  
 עליו על מלכות שמים: 27 כי יהיה בהם אוֹב וגו'.  
 כאן נאמר בהם מיתה ולמעלה כרת, עדים והתראָה  
 — בסקילה, מויד בלא התראָה — בהכרת, ושגגתם  
 — חטאת. וכן בכל חיבי מיתות שנאמר בהם כרת:  
 חסלת פרשת קדשים

26 וְאַבְדַּל אֲתֶכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים לְהִיּוֹת לִי. אִם אֲתֶם  
 מְבַדְּלִים מֵהֶם — הָרִי אֲתֶם שְׁלִי, וְאִם לֹא — הָרִי  
 אֲתֶם שֶׁל נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר וְחֻבְרִיו. רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה  
 אוֹמֵר: מִיָּן שְׁלֹא יֹאמֵר אָדָם: נִפְשִׁי קִצָּה בְּבָשָׂר  
 חֲזִיר, אִי אֶפְשִׁי לְלָבֵשׁ כְּלָאִים, אָבֵל יֹאמֵר: אֶפְשִׁי,  
 וְמָה אֶעֱשֶׂה וְאָבִי שֶׁבְּשָׂמַיִם גָּזַר עָלַי תִּלְמוּד לֹמֵר:  
 "וְאַבְדַּל אֲתֶכֶם מִן הָעַמִּים לְהִיּוֹת לִי", שֶׁתִּהְיֶה

26 As stated above, **you must be holy to Me, for I, God, am holy.**<sup>223</sup> I have distinguished you from all peoples by giving you all these laws in order that you be Mine. If you spurn these laws, you will forfeit both the privilege of being “Mine” and My attendant Divine protection; instead, you will “belong” to the blind forces of nature, including being subject to the might of conquering nations.

Furthermore, you should not avoid all that I forbid you out of any personal feeling that these things are intrinsically disgusting. Rather, you should acknowledge that were it not for My decrees, you could readily indulge in them, but you refrain from doing so simply and solely because I forbid them to you.

### **Punishment for Divining, continued**

27 You were taught<sup>224</sup> that a diviner who speaks from his armpit by propping up a corpse under it or who speaks from his mouth by placing the bone of an animal called a *yido'a* in it will be punished by excision if he was not properly warned and witnessed. If, however, it is clear to the court (because the offenders *were* properly warned and witnessed) that **a man or a woman is a diviner** who speaks from his or her armpit by propping up a corpse under it, **or is a diviner** who speaks from his or her mouth by placing the bone of an animal called a *yido'a* in it, the offenders **must be put to death** by the court by stoning,<sup>225</sup> and if the agents of the court do not succeed in killing them, the people **must pelt them with stones** until they die. The spilling of **their blood is their own fault**; none of those who execute them will be held culpable for their death. If they commit this sin inadvertently, they must bring a regular sin-offering, as do all those who inadvertently commit a sin punishable by excision if committed intentionally without proper warning or witnesses.’”<sup>226</sup>

The *Haftarah* for *parashat Kedoshim* is on p. 251.

When *parashat Acharei* and *parashat Kedoshim* are combined, the *Haftarah* for *parashat Acharei* (p. 249) is read.

If it is *Rosh Chodesh Iyar*, the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *Rosh Chodesh* (p. 266) are read instead of the *Maftir* and *Haftarah* for *parashat Kedoshim*.



223. 19:2. 224. Above, 20:6. 225. Exodus 19:13; Deuteronomy 17:7. 226. *Likutei Sichot*, vol. 7, pp. 139-144.

*Dedicated in honor of our children*

**Nathan, Yitzchok,  
Moshe Lev,  
and Gilana**

*May you continue to grow in the ways  
of our holy Torah*

**Yuri and Deana Pikover**

