

# SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

AHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM  
Haftarah: Yehezkel 20:2-20  
APRIL 27-28, 2018 13 IYAR 5778

**DEDICATION: Happy Birthday Moses**

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## EDITORS NOTES

We read this week one of the most famous verses in the Torah, the positive command of “VeAhavta LeReyacha KaMocha” -- you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Rashi comments on the verse quoting Torat Kohanim, “Rabbi Akiva said, “This is a fundamental principle the Torah.”

Rabbi Akiva’s well-known statement takes on added significance during the period of “sefirat ha’omer.” During this historic period, we mourn the deaths of Rabbi Akiva’s twenty-four thousand students. According to the Talmud; They perished during the days of the “sefirah” for not showing one another proper respect.

Considering those 24,000 students, we see this number repeated a number of times. The Midrash tells us that when Shechem ben Chamor the prince of the City of Shechem took Dinah and then wanted to marry her, he convinced his people to become circumcised and to in essence join or perhaps in his mind swallow the children of Yaakov. Three days later, Shimon and Levi go into the city and kill 24,000 men. And later on in the portions of Balak and Pinchas we learn that following Bilaam’s failed attempt at cursing the people, he suggests they entice the people into immoral behavior. A bazaar is set up and the men are invited into the tents under the guise of seeing merchandise and eventually seduced to both sleep with the women of Moab and Midian and worship Ba’al Peor. As punishment 24,000 from the tribe of Shimon die.

I recalled in my notes reviewing the subject with Rabbi Abittan based on the Rama MiPano and other sources that Rabbi Akiva was a gilgul of Zimri, the prince of the tribe of Shimon who was killed by Pinchas after contributing to the death of 24,000 of his people as noted above. Zimri was in turn a gilgul of Shechem who perished with 24,000 of his own

people at the hands of Levi and Shimon. Apparently the 24,000 students were in some way a tikkun for these other 24,000. The problem was I did not understand how.

My simplistic thinking was as follows. I imagined the 24,000 citizens of Shechem arriving in heaven with their prince and complaining before the Kiseh HaKavod. “Hashem this is not fair. We converted! We circumcised ourselves and then we were killed. Why weren’t we given a chance to live as Jews”? So Hashem asks them if when they circumcised themselves, were they really willing to be shomer berit, watching over their covenant and controlling themselves sexually? They are sent back as part of the great generation of the midbar, the desert. They are among those who ate manna, drank from the well of Miriam, lived within the clouds of Glory and learned Torah from Moses himself. And then they were tested with the women at Shittim and it seems they failed. So Shechem failed in taking Dinah before he married her against her will, and they failed in taking these women, why would they return again as the students of Rabbi Akiva, and what does not respecting one another have to do with a test with women?

My notes also indicated two other questions. Did Rabbi Akiva make his statement, VeAhavta LeReyacha KaMocha about loving a friend as one’s self, before or after the death of his students? We felt certain that it was afterwards. The great Rabbi realizes his students died because they lacked respect and makes this the foundation for his new students Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehudah, Rabbi Yossi, Rabbi Shimon and Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua, of who it is said, “it was these disciples who upheld Torah-study at that time”.

And finally, is it truly possible to love another as one loves one’s self? The Rabbi immediately responded quoting the Rambam in Mishneh Torah, “And so, it is necessary for the husband to honor his wife more than he honors his body, and love her like he loves his body”. In other words, in the same way that a person loves himself and prioritizes his own physical needs, he must be attentive to the physical and emotional needs of his wife. However, regarding matters that relate to her dignity, such as being sensitive to her feelings, providing for her the means to purchase respectable clothing and accessories, complimenting her, and speaking to her in a

respectful way that does not offend or belittle her, with regard to such matters, he must take care of her more than he takes care of himself.

Finally I noted that it is during the Omer period, the 49 days between Pesach and Shavuot that Keneeset Yisrael prepares itself for the day of Shavuot and the Chupah or wedding canopy under Sinai.

In reading over my notes, I wondered how this explanation the Rabbi quoted from the Rambam who clearly states that we must and can love another as much as and even more than we love ourselves answers the question relating to the return of the 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva. But I obviously could no longer ask the rabbi what he meant.

And then I came across the answer. An answer I simply didn't understand at the time.

Before I explain, let us review. We have Dinah the daughter of Jacob who is raped by Shechem, then Cozbi the daughter of Tzur or Balak who is taken by Zimri the prince of Shimon and finally the tikun for both are the wife of Tonosrufus and Rabbi Akiva, We learn that the wicked Tonosrufus hated Rabbi Akiva and when his beautiful wife asked him one day what is bothering him, he answered, "Rabbi Akiva!" She told him she'll take care of it because HaShem hates lust and her plan was to seduce him, exactly what Kozbi bat Tzur did to Zimri. She got dressed in seductive clothing and went to Rabbi Akiva. When Rabbi Akiva saw her, he spit, laughed and cried. She asked him why he did that and he told her that he spit because she is from a foul-smelling sperm drop. He cried because such beauty will be underground (when buried) and would not tell her why he laughed. It was because he saw in prophecy that she'll convert and he'll marry her. She was so impressed by his respect from women, his self-control and his demeanor that she decided to delve into Judaism, eventually converting and becoming a widow. And she marries Rabbi Akiva discovering why he was laughing. Where Shechem failed is self-control and came back as Zimri who fails in a similar test, it is Rabbi Akiva who passes and fixes all. There is much more to this gilgul, but we will leave it at this.

And now to the 24,000 students. The answer was there, but I didn't see it.

A few years back, my brother Victor mentioned at a sheva berachot that we bless the couple using the words, Ahava – Love, Achvah – brotherhood, Shalom – Completion and Reut – a form of friendship where we are bound to one another. He suggested that we begin with the lowest level Ahava and rise to the

highest level – Reut. Thus the highest level man and wife can achieve is reut. Thus perhaps Rabbi Akiva is suggesting in the words that it's a foundation for a spouse to love one's spouse as one's self.

Let us recall the famous story of Rabbi Akiva's own rise. While still unlearned in Torah, Akiva became chief shepherd to one of the wealthiest men in Israel, Kalba Savuah (so named because anyone who entered his house hungry like a dog, kalba, went out satiated, savua). Once, he chanced to meet Kalba Savua's daughter, Rachel, who was so impressed with his character that she consented to marry him — on the condition that he would devote himself to Torah study.

When the wealthy father-in-law learned of their marriage he disinherited them, and the couple lived in dire poverty. However, Rachel continued to believe in him and encouraged him to leave home to study Torah, as was the custom. He left for 12 years and then returned. Before greeting his wife, he overheard her say to a neighbor, "If he wants to go back for another twelve years I would gladly agree to it." He then returned to his studies for another 12 years.

After 24 years, he returned home with 24,000 students, head of the largest yeshiva in the land of Israel.

Now students learn from the rabbis. We have many stories in the Talmud and Jewish sources where students study the behavior of their rabbis in order to emulate that behavior. Let's keep in mind that these students saw their rabbi leave his wife for 24 years. They never witnessed how a rabbi must behave towards his wife and the respect and honor due her and perhaps never witnessing this they never learned it. Perhaps their sin noted as loh nahagu zeh el zeh – not behaving properly with each other, was not among students but between student and wife. Perhaps in lacking this foundation, they could not be the link to the next generation and thus they died and Rabbi Akiva was forced to find five new students to bring the Torah to the world on a foundation of VeAhavta LeReyachah Kamocho.

Perhaps this was what the rabbi was explaining in the advice of the Rambam and the illusion to the wedding. In preparing ourselves during these 49 days we must recall where the students of rabbi Akiva failed and be extra vigilant between husband and wife to be worthy to participate in the wedding under the chupah of Sinai on Shavuot.

Something to think about. Shabbat Shalom,  
David Bibi

PS: My class this week covered the same three questions, with a completely different answer based on Rabbi Pinchas Freidman, The GRA and the Megaleh Amukot. Another proof that Elu VeElu Divrei Elokim CHayim

### Summary of the Perasha Nathan Dweck

#### Acharey Mot - The Yom Kippur Service, Forbidden Relations

- 1- The order of the Kohen in the Yom Kippur service (clothes, washing, lottery, incense, sprinkling blood, viduy, slaughtering)
- 2- The service of the Kohen on Yom Kippur in regards to the seir le'azazel
- 3- The commandment to observe Yom Kippur (resting from work and afflicting ourselves)
- 4- The issur of bringing a korban outside the azara
- 5- Laws regarding blood (the issur of eating blood, the mitsvah of covering the blood)
- 6- Laws of Arayot - Who is assur to us
- 7- Laws of Arayot - Severity of the sin and what the punishment is

#### Kedoshim - Holiness regarding the Jewish people (51 Mitsvot)

- 1- Kedoshim tihiu, fearing parents, idol worship, pigool, lechet, shichecha, pe'ah, stealing, lying, false witness, withholding wages, cursing, placing a stumbling block...
- 2- Perverting judgement, rechiloot, hating your brother in your heart, admonishing your fellow, taking revenge or having a grudge, love your fellow as yourself, kilayim, ...
- 3- Orlah, lo tochloo al ha'dam, destroying the hair of your beard, tatoos, harlotry, fearing the sanctuary, sorcery, standing for a seyba and zaken, being honest in weights and measures...
- 4- Don't harass the convert, don't distort justice in regards to weights and measures
- 5- The punishment for one who worships the avoda zara of molech and raising souls through ovot or yid'onim
- 6- The punishment for the forbidden relationships mentioned in Acharey Mot
- 7- The promise from Hashem that if we go in his ways and separate from unkosher food and illicit relations he will bless us with a land of milk and honey

#### FROM THE RABBIS OF THE JERSEY SHORE

#### **"A worker's wage shall not remain with you overnight until morning." (Vayikra 19:13)**

The Torah describes the prohibition of withholding the wages of a worker for even a brief

period. If he is a day laborer and completes his work at dusk, the employer has until the next morning to pay him. If he is a night worker and finishes his job at dawn, he must be paid by the next nightfall. If he works only a short time, he must be paid that day.

Rav Avraham Pam zt"l says the agreement to pay a worker within the short time frame is not limited to an adult worker. It applies even when the "worker" is a child who does a menial task, and is promised something for his efforts. For example, in a summer camp setting, a counselor sends one of his campers to buy him a drink from the soda machine, and promises him a quarter for doing so. The child does so and expects to get his tip. However, the counselor shrugs it off, saying, "I'll give it to you another time. I'm busy now." He may not realize that if he waits longer than a certain period of time of day or night as described earlier, he has violated this Torah prohibition of bal talin, withholding a worker's wages.

In fact, in some ways, failing to pay a minor is more serious than failing to pay an adult worker. This is because of the rule "minors cannot forgive a debt owed to them" (Baba Mesiah 22). Whereas an adult may willingly forgo the promised payment of wages due him, a minor cannot. Therefore, one must be especially careful in this respect in dealing with a minor.

Obviously this applies to our own children as well. As much as we love them, we must try not to disappoint them. Rabbi Reuven Semah

#### **"A worker's wage shall not remain with you overnight until morning." (Vayikra 19:13)**

This pasuk teaches the important halachah that we are obligated to pay our workers on time, on the day that the job is completed. The Ben Ish Hai, based on this pasuk, asks an intriguing question. He says that it is reasonable to assume that whenever it is feasible, Hashem Himself would also follow the laws of the Torah. However, there is a principle taught by our Sages that reward for the fulfillment of misvot is not received in this world, but rather, it is reserved for the next world. But why should that be so? It would seem that this halachah would, so to speak, require that Hashem would give us the reward for our misvot as soon as we fulfill them!

He explains that this halachah applies only if the employer personally hired the worker, but if he was hired through a third party, the law does not apply. Since Hashem gave us the Torah through Moshe Rabenu, it is considered like He "hired" us through a messenger and is therefore exempt.

However, our Sages teach us that the first two of the Ten Commandments were given directly by Hashem, not through Moshe. That means that the reward for these two misvot should be collectible even in this world. And what are these two misvot?

Belief in Hashem and the repudiation of all other powers. Based on this, the Ben Ish Hai teaches that the reward for emunah and bitahon in Hashem is in fact received not only in the next world, but in this world as well!

We don't know what exactly is the reward for any misvah, but it is clear that anyone who has sincere trust in Hashem is certainly blessed with tranquility and peace of mind. Even if something doesn't seem to go his way, he has no doubt that it is from Hashem, and he does not get sidetracked. Let's always try to view everything in the proper perspective, to see Hashem's Hand in every aspect of our lives, and through that, we will elevate ourselves and merit tremendous blessing from the Big Boss, both in this world and in the next world. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

**“Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of G-d; it is even a greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in the image of G-d.” (Abot 3:14)**

How does the fact that he was made known to man that he was created in the image of Hashem show a greater expression of love?

When Eress Yisrael was under English rule, a group of people decided to name a town after the King of England. They discussed it with the English ambassador, and after a period of time he turned down the gesture. His explanation was that in the future, disreputable people might reside in the town, and their behavior and reputation would be a disgrace to the King's name.

Hashem loves the Jewish people and therefore He created them in His image. If this fact would not have been revealed, it would be no disgrace to Him personally if they lived a lifestyle which is contrary to His glory. The fact that He revealed it to them and gave them the Torah to know how He wishes them to live shows the great love and faith that he has in the Jewish people that they will always be faithful to Him and not cause a hilul Hashem - desecration of His name. (Vedibarta Bam)

### **Make or Break**

“Without the contribution of man, this earth would be a jungle of plants and animals fighting each other for survival. There wouldn't be any roads, houses, or cities, or any of the artifacts that mankind has introduced, and which man now depends on. We take all of these developments for granted and assume the infrastructure of our civilization developed by itself.”

As humans, we have the gift of free choice to make or break the infrastructure of our lives. Living a Torah based life, ensures the survival of our families

and nation. (Norman D. Levy, based on Rabbi Miller's Duties of the Mind)

### **RABBI ELI MANSOUR**

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[MishnaBerura.com](http://MishnaBerura.com), [LearnTorah.com](http://LearnTorah.com)  
Paying Workers on Time**

One of the many laws presented in Parashat Kedoshim is “Lo Ta'ashok Et Re'acha,” which forbids withholding wages. If somebody owes money to a worker for services that the worker provided, he is obligated by the Torah to pay the worker when the wages are due.

Although this obligation might appear straightforward and intuitive, there are, unfortunately, many people who transgress this Torah law by failing to pay the money due to their employees in a timely fashion. A woman in the community once owed her housekeeper wages just before Pesah, but she decided she would delay payment until after the holiday. She wanted to make sure the housekeeper would continue working through Pesah, and she thus figured she would withhold payment as a guarantee that her housekeeper wouldn't leave her. When the woman mentioned to her Rabbi that she had done this, her Rabbi, insightfully, remarked, “You are so worried about your housekeeper leaving – aren't you worried about G-d leaving you? Withholding wages is a Torah violation, and thus results in driving G-d away. Who would you rather risk losing – your housekeeper, or your Creator?”

The story is told of a certain Sadik in Bneh Brak who passed away, and during the first night of Abelut (mourning) he appeared to his granddaughter in a dream and said, “The belts! What about the belts?” The granddaughter did not know what this was all about, and so she told the family about the dream. Nobody knew why this man would be asking about belts, until they mentioned the dream to the Sadik's widow. After hearing about the dream, she remembered that shortly before her husband's passing, he was not well and lost some weight. She gave his belts to a tailor and asked him to make new holes in the belts so they would fit the ailing man, whose waistline was now narrower. When he returned the belts, the Sadik wanted to pay him, but he refused, saying it was an honor to do a favor for such a distinguished individual. The Sadik, however, was uneasy about the situation. He was not sure whether this tailor refused to accept money because he would not

generally charge for this kind of simple job, or if he normally did charge but was embarrassed to take money from this distinguished person. The Sadik passed away before the issue was resolved, and so he returned to his granddaughter in a dream to ensure that this tailor received his wages.

Remarkably, even though the tailor explicitly waived his right to payment, the Sadik's soul still knew no rest until the wages were paid in full, due to the severity of the sin of withholding wages.

This requirement applies as well to pledges and our other financial responsibilities. Too often, people make handsome pledges to synagogues, for example, over the phone or at an auction, but fail to meet their pledges. It also happens, unfortunately, that people fail to meet their obligations to schools or their other financial responsibilities while spending money on personal luxury items. The Torah strictly warns us in Parashat Kedoshim, "Lo Ta'ashok Et Re'acha"— if we made a commitment, we are bound by Torah law to fulfill it. The Torah's code of honesty and ethics requires that we meet our financial responsibilities and not try to avoid them out of convenience or indifference

**VICTOR BIBI  
SOD HAPARASHA**

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**Rabbi Wein  
HERE AND THERE**

A very dear friend of mine travels extensively several times a year between his family in Europe and his permanent home in Israel. He often tells me that when he is there he wishes to be here and when he was here he often wishes to be there. I am somewhat in the same situation, so I readily can identify with that sort of emotion. But I check myself by the realization that this is a true reflection of the human condition.

We are an eternally dissatisfied species always wanting to be where we are not and to have whatever we wish. The grass is always greener elsewhere. We are inevitably frustrated by our inability to be at two places at the same time. I reiterate, when we are here we wish to be there and when we are finally there we again wish to be here. I deem this to be one of the most frustrating of human emotions and the

source of a great deal of depression and constant angst.

This type of emotional syndrome is reflected in various ways in our current Jewish and general society. I am convinced that the key to understanding much of what is currently happening in today's Jewish and general society is due to realizing the influence of being here and there at one and the same time. And of the sadness and depression that pervades our world.

One of the great shocking and surprising occurrences, after the establishment of the State of Israel seventy years ago, is the continuing paucity of Jewish immigration to our ancient homeland from Western countries. Imagine, if after so many centuries of prayer and longing, the thing that they prayed for and dreamt of finally became reality and no one really took advantage of the situation. Most Jews simply were unable to imagine themselves as being there after so many centuries of being here.

We may long to be there, but it is difficult in the extreme to leave here. Chaim Weitzman, who would serve as the first president of the nascent state plaintively complained in the 1920s: "Where are the Jews?" Well, they were mostly here in the Diaspora and not there where their prayers and hopes had resided for ages.

There are many legitimate explanations as to why this happened and continues to happen seventy years later. Inertia overcomes inspiration and the accustomed triumphs over the unknown. And yet the wish of many in the Jewish world is that they were there and not here in the West. This is part of the continuing dysfunction of the Jewish world relative to the continuing existence and success of the State of Israel.

It was so much easier to deal with it when it was but a dream than now when it has become reality. The here was tangible and the there was ephemeral. But now that the there has become real as well, we wish to be in both the here and there at one and the same time.

As the contraction of the Jewish diaspora continues to unfold before our eyes, difficult national and personal choices will have to be made. In a world of limited resources, the question arises as to where these resources should be directed and expended. Do the demands of there automatically outweigh the apparent needs of here? And if so, to what extent? These are hard questions to have to deal with. But after seventy years of the existence of the State of

Israel, it is obvious that this issue looms larger than it did ever before in Jewish life.

The Jewish world is constantly in a state of triage. And this is true on a personal level as well. Where will my grandchildren have a better chance of being truly Jewish - here or there? Where will it be safer for Jews in the future? That question was not sufficiently explored in the early part of the previous century, with very dire results.

Apparently, many thought that the choice between here and there was unimportant - it was neither here or there. But unfortunately history has shown otherwise. For most of our history we were presented with very few choices of where we were and where we would like to be. We therefore have little experience in choosing wisely. But choosing wisely now we must.

### **Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks Love Is Not Enough**

The opening chapter of Kedoshim contains two of the most powerful of all commands: to love your neighbour and to love the stranger. "Love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord" goes the first. "When a stranger comes to live in your land, do not mistreat him," goes the second, and continues, "Treat the stranger the way you treat your native-born. Love him as yourself, for you were strangers in Egypt. I am the Lord your God (Lev. 19:33-34).[1]

The first is often called the "golden rule" and held to be universal to all cultures. This is a mistake. The golden rule is different. In its positive formulation it states, "Act toward others as you would wish them to act toward you," or in its negative formulation, given by Hillel, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour." These rules are not about love. They are about justice, or more precisely, what evolutionary psychologists call reciprocal altruism. The Torah does not say, "Be nice or kind to your neighbour, because you would wish him to be nice or kind to you." It says, "Love your neighbour." That is something different and far stronger.

The second command is more radical still. Most people in most societies in most ages have feared, hated and often harmed the stranger. There is a word for this: xenophobia. How often have you heard the opposite word: xenophilia? My guess is, never. People don't usually love strangers. That is why, almost always when the Torah states this command – which it does, according to the sages, 36 times – it adds an explanation: "because you were strangers in Egypt." I know of no other nation that was born as a

nation in slavery and exile. We know what it feels like to be a vulnerable minority. That is why love of the stranger is so central to Judaism and so marginal to most other systems of ethics.[2] But here too, the Torah does not use the word "justice." There is a command of justice toward strangers, but that is a different law: "You shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him" (Ex. 22:20). Here the Torah speaks not of justice but of love.

These two commands define Judaism as a religion of love – not just of God ("with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might"), but of humanity also. That was and is a world-changing idea.

But what calls for deep reflection is where these commands appear. They do so in Parshat Kedoshim in what, to contemporary eyes, must seem one of the strangest passages in the Torah.

Leviticus 19 brings side-by-side laws of seemingly quite different kinds. Some belong to the moral life: don't gossip, don't hate, don't take revenge, don't bear a grudge. Some are about social justice: leave parts of the harvest for the poor; don't pervert justice; don't withhold wages; don't use false weights and measures. Others have a different feel altogether: don't crossbreed livestock; don't plant a field with mixed seeds; don't wear a garment of mixed wool and linen; don't eat fruit of the first three years; don't eat blood; don't practice divination; don't lacerate yourself.

At first glance these laws have nothing to do with one another: some are about conscience, some about politics and economics, and others about purity and taboo. Clearly, though, the Torah is telling us otherwise. They do have something in common. They are all about order, limits, boundaries. They are telling us that reality has a certain underlying structure whose integrity must be honoured. If you hate or take revenge you destroy relationships. If you commit injustice, you undermine the trust on which society depends. If you fail to respect the integrity of nature (different seeds, species, and so on), you take the first step down a path that ends in environmental disaster.

There is an order to the universe, part moral, part political, part ecological. When that order is violated, eventually there is chaos. When that order is observed and preserved, we become co-creators of the sacred harmony and integrated diversity that the Torah calls "holy."

Why then is it specifically in this chapter that the two great commands – love of the neighbour and the

stranger – appear? The answer is profound and very far from obvious. Because this is where love belongs – in an ordered universe.

Jordan Peterson, the Canadian psychologist, has recently become one of the most prominent public intellectuals of our time. His recent book *Twelve Rules for Life*, has been a massive best-seller in Britain and America.[3] He has had the courage to be a contrarian, challenging the fashionable fallacies of the contemporary West. Particularly striking in the book is Rule 5: “Do not let your children do anything that makes you dislike them.”

His point is more subtle than it sounds. A significant number of parents today, he says, fail to socialise their children. They indulge them. They do not teach them rules. There are, he argues, complex reasons for this. Some of it has to do with lack of attention. Parents are busy and don't have time for the demanding task of teaching discipline. Some of it has to do with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's influential but misleading idea that children are naturally good, and are made bad by society and its rules. So the best way to raise happy, creative children is to let them choose for themselves.

Partly, though, he says it is because “modern parents are simply paralysed by the fear that they will no longer be liked, or even loved by their children if they chastise them for any reason.” They are afraid to damage their relationship by saying ‘No’. They fear the loss of their children's love.

The result is that they leave their children dangerously unprepared for a world that will not indulge their wishes or desire for attention; a world that can be tough, demanding and sometimes cruel. Without rules, social skills, self-restraints and a capacity to defer gratification, children grow up without an apprenticeship in reality. His conclusion is powerful:

Clear rules make for secure children and calm, rational parents. Clear principles of discipline and punishment balance mercy and justice so that social development and psychological maturity can be optimally promoted. Clear rules and proper discipline help the child, and the family, and society, establish, maintain and expand order. That is all that protects us from chaos.[4]

That is what the opening chapter of *Kedoshim* is about: clear rules that create and sustain a social order. That is where real love – not the sentimental, self-deceiving substitute – belongs. Without order, love merely adds to the chaos. Misplaced love can

lead to parental neglect, producing spoiled children with a sense of entitlement who are destined for an unhappy, unsuccessful, unfulfilled adult life.

Peterson's book, whose subtitle is “An Antidote to Chaos,” is not just about children. It is about the mess the West has made since the Beatles sang (in 1967), “All you need is love.” As a clinical psychologist, Peterson has seen the emotional cost of a society without a shared moral code. People, he writes, need ordering principles, without which there is chaos. We require “rules, standards, values – alone and together. We require routine and tradition. That's order.” Too much order can be bad, but too little can be worse. Life is best lived, he says, on the dividing line between them. It's there, he says, that “we find the meaning that justifies life and its inevitable suffering.” Perhaps if we lived properly, he adds, “we could withstand the knowledge of our own fragility and mortality, without the sense of aggrieved victimhood that produces, first, resentment, then envy, and then the desire for vengeance and destruction.”[5]

That is as acute an explanation as I have ever heard for the unique structure of *Leviticus 19*. Its combination of moral, political, economic and environmental laws is a supreme statement of a universe of (Divinely created) order of which we are the custodians. But the chapter is not just about order. It is about humanising that order through love – the love of neighbour and stranger. And when the Torah says, don't hate, don't take revenge and don't bear a grudge, it is an uncanny anticipation of Peterson's remarks about resentment, envy and the desire for vengeance and destruction.

Hence the life-changing idea that we have forgotten for far too long: Love is not enough. Relationships need rules.

[1] Note that some read these two verses as referring specifically to a *ger tzedek*, that is, a convert to Judaism. That, however, is to miss the point of the command, which is: do not allow ethnic differences (that is, between a born Jew and a convert) to influence your emotions. Judaism must be race- and colour-blind.

[2] Had it existed in Europe, there would not have been a thousand years of persecution of the Jews, followed by the birth of racial antisemitism, followed by the Holocaust.

[3] Jordan Peterson, *12 Rules for Life: an antidote to chaos*, Allen Lane, 2018.

[4] *Ibid.*, 113-44.

[5] *Ibid.*, xxxiv.

### Rav Kook on the Perasha Attaining Ahavat Yisrael

Rav Kook stressed the importance of loving the Jewish people. In his magnum opus *Orot HaKodesh*, Rav Kook gave practical advice on how to achieve this love.

Love for the Jewish people does not start from the heart, but from the head. To truly love and understand the Jewish people – each individual Jew and the nation as a whole – requires a wisdom that is both insightful and multifaceted. This intellectual inquiry is an important discipline of Torah study.

Loving others does not mean indifference to baseness and moral decline. Our goal is to awaken knowledge and morality, integrity, and refinement; to clearly mark the purpose of life, its purity and holiness. Even our acts of loving-kindness should be based on a hidden *Gevurah*, an inner outrage at the world's — and thus our own — spiritual failures.

If we take note of others' positive traits, we will come to love them with an inner affection. This is not a form of insincere flattery, nor does it mean white-washing their faults and foibles. But by concentrating on their positive characteristics — and every person has a good side — the negative aspects become less significant.

This method provides an additional benefit. The Sages cautioned against joining with the wicked and exposing oneself to their negative influence. But if we connect to their positive traits, then this contact will not endanger our own moral and spiritual purity.

We can attain a high level of love for Israel by deepening our awareness of the inner ties that bind together all the souls of the Jewish people, throughout all the generations. In the following revealing passage, Rav Kook expressed his own profound sense of connection with and love for every Jewish soul:

“Listen to me, my people! I speak to you from my soul, from within my innermost soul. I call out to you from the living connection by which I am bound to all of you, and by which all of you are bound to me. I feel this more deeply than any other feeling: that only you — all of you, all of your souls, throughout all of your generations — you alone are the meaning of my life. In you I live. In the aggregation of all of you, my life has that content that is called ‘life.’ Without you, I have nothing. All hopes, all aspirations, all purpose in life, all that I find inside myself — these are only when

I am with you. I need to connect with all of your souls. I must love you with a boundless love....

Each one of you, each individual soul from the aggregation of all of you, is a great spark from the torch of infinite light, which enlightens my existence. You give meaning to life and work, to Torah and prayer, to song and hope. It is through the conduit of your being that I sense everything and love everything.” (*Shemonah Kevatzim*, vol. I, sec. 163)

Love for Every Jew: For Rav Kook, *Ahavat Yisrael* was not just theoretical. Stories abound of his extraordinary love for other Jews, even those who were intensely antagonistic to his ways and beliefs. Below is one such story, from the period that Rav Kook served as chief rabbi of pre-state Israel.

A vocal group of ultra-Orthodox Jerusalemites vociferously opposed Rav Kook due to his positive attitude towards secular Zionists. They would frequently post in the streets of Jerusalem broadsheets that denounced the Chief Rabbi and discrediting his authority.

One day Rav Kook returned from a brit milah ceremony in Jerusalem's Old City, accompanied by dozens of students. Suddenly a small group of hotheaded extremists attacked the rabbi, showering him with waste water. The chief rabbi was completely drenched by the filthy water. Emotions soared and tempers flared.

By the time Rav Kook had arrived home, news of the attack had spread throughout the city. Prominent citizens arrived to express their repugnance at the shameful incident. One of the visitors was the legal counsel of British Mandate. The attorney advised Rav Kook to press charges against the hooligans, and he promised that they would be promptly deported from the country.

The legal counsel was astounded by Rav Kook's response. “I have no interest in court cases,” replied the rabbi. “Despite what they did to me, I love them. I am ready to kiss them, so great is my love! I burn with love for every Jew.” These were Rav Kook's thoughts, shortly after this deeply humiliating act.

Rav Kook would say: “There is no such thing as *Ahavat Chinam* — groundless love. Why groundless? He is a Jew, and I am obligated to love and respect him. There is only *Sinat Chinam* — hate without reason. But *Ahavat Chinam*? Never!” (Adapted from *Orot HaKodesh* vol. III, pp. 324–334; *Malachim K'vnei Adam*, pp. 262, 483–485.)



**AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL  
"And you should love your fellowman as  
yourself" (19:18)**

If such is the obligation toward one fellow Israelite, then how vastly must we love the entire people of Hashem! This intense love for our people, and even for a single one of our nation, actually is included in the command of "You shall love Hashem your G-d with all your heart" (Devarim 6:5), "for Hashem your G-d loves you" (ibid. 23:6), and "I love you, said Hashem" (Malachi 1:2). "Yes, I loved you with an everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3).

The commandment "I am Hashem your G-d" (Shemot 20:2) means also "Think as I think!" If you love Me, you must love my people, and each individual of My people. This is included in the words "Holy shall you be, for I Hashem your G-d am holy", which means that you should emulate Me. "And you should walk in His ways" (Devarim 28:9). The Holy Scriptures express the thoughts of Hashem (as He wishes to reveal to men); And these Scriptures speak solely about Hashem's people and nothing else. Therefore this verse: "And you should love your fellowman as yourself" "is a great principle of the Torah" (Yerushalmi Nedarim 9:4) and is an essential corollary of "You shall love Hashem your G-d."

When Hillel was approached by the perspective Ger who wished to learn the entire Torah in the same time that he would be able to stand on one foot, Hillel replied: "Do not do to your fellow that which you do not wish to be done to you, this is the entire Torah, and all else is commentary which you should learn" (Shabbat 31A). Hillel did not quote the first and most fundamental commandment "I am Hashem your G-d" (Shemot 20:2) which is certainly the most obligatory. But the most difficult to achieve, and in the area in which most of the tests in life occur, is the function of successful living with others. Thus when a family of Cohanim enters to serve in the Sanctuary, the group that is leaving say to the newcomers: "He that put His name upon this edifice should cause that among you should be love and brotherhood and peace and friendship" (Berachot 12A). It is most noteworthy that instead of blessing them that their service be performed with the utmost perfection, and the purest devotion of heart, they considered as most necessary to pray that Hashem assist them to maintain love toward their family members during the week that ensued. Because of the urgency of this commandment, the same words are said at the marriage rite: "Love and brotherhood and peace and friendship" (Ketubot 8A). Between a man and his wife, between neighbors and all of Israel, this is the most difficult and all inclusive

commandment and is indeed an extremely "great principle of the Torah" (Yerushalmi ibid.).

The Sacred Scriptures state clearly that the seed of Israel, meaning the loyal Jews of today and of all generations, are G-d's beloved people (Devarim 7:8, 23:6, 1 Kings 10:9, Yeshaya 43:4, Yirmiya 31:2, II Chronicles 2:10, Malachi 1:2,,,) Those who choose to identify themselves with the loyal Jewish people are here intended. And when we endeavor to love them more, Hashem in like measure loves Us more. "And I shall bless those that bless you" (Bereshet 12:3). Quoted from "A Kingdom of Cohanim" by Rabbi Avigdor Miller ZT"L

**Israel's Druze honor the prophet Jethro in annual pilgrimage to ancient tomb**

While the Hebrews were hanging out in the desert after fleeing from slavery in Egypt, they brought all of their problems to their leader Moses. But when his father-in-law Jethro came to visit with Moses' wife and children, he saw that his son-in-law was ready to collapse under the onus of so much work. That's when Jethro, a Midianite priest who honored the Lord, decided to put in his two cents' worth.

Although he agreed that Moses should continue to explain God's laws and teachings to the people, he had great advice for lightening his load – suggestions so fundamental, in fact, that his ideas are still being put into effect today. For he instructed Moses to choose capable judges and leaders who would respect God and could never be bribed, and to have them act as officials over "thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. . ." Always willing to learn, Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything that he said." (Exodus 18:21-24).

Known in Arabic as Shu'eib, Jethro is highly revered by the Druze as a prophet. Tradition holds that he lies at rest in the Galilee at the Tomb of Nebi Shu'eib, located near Tiberias and Mount Arbel.

Druze pilgrimages to the tomb have been common for centuries, but there was never an official date for paying homage to the prophet. However, after the State of Israel was established in 1948, the days between April 24 and April 28 were declared an official Druze holiday. During this period Nebi Shu'eib overflows with visitors, from worshipers to celebrants roasting sheep at barbecues, and shoppers roaming the complex bazaars in search of bargains.

There are about 130,000 Druze in Israel, with about a fifth residing in the Golan Heights and most of the rest on Mount Carmel and in the Galilee. A unique

ethnic minority, their religion is an offshoot of Islam that differs markedly from Islam in its beliefs. It was established in 1017 by Egyptian ruler Caliph El Hakem bi-amer Allah (El-Hakem by the command of Allah).

For the next 26 years people were welcomed into the ranks. After that time, however, the religion was closed to outsiders. Converts are not accepted, and the Druze are forbidden to intermarry. Druze are either religious or nonreligious and only the religious group is allowed to read the holy books and learn its doctrines.

If they had their druthers, Druze would rather be called "al-muwahdoon" (Believers in the One God). In fact, they loathe the name bestowed upon them by a Christian historian in the 11th century. He called them Druze after one of the missionaries, Nashtakin Darzi. But although Darzi later turned his back on his Druze brothers and is considered a traitor, the name has persisted.

One belief held by the Druze concerns the mystery of Caliph El-Hakem bi-amer Allah's disappearance four years after founding the new religion. It was the caliph's daily custom to mount a donkey and ride to the mountains outside of Cairo to meditate and pray. One day in 1021 he didn't return. Although his clothes were found, all buttoned up and standing tall, there was no one inside! Some say he was murdered, but many Druze believe he is only hiding, watching his faithful and waiting to return on the Day of Judgment.

Unable to accept the fact that followers of Islam would willingly accept another faith, Muslims in the Middle East have been persecuting the Druze since the very beginning. As a result, thousands left their homes in Egypt and elsewhere and today live mainly in Lebanon, Syria, Israel and Jordan.

Until the 13th or 14th century, Druze families in this country lived in scattered, makeshift colonies near sources of water and in strategically protective hills. One day, however, two hunters looking for rabbits stumbled upon a cave that led to an ancient cistern filled with water. That seemed like a good site for a permanent settlement, and area Druze flocked to what would become Beit Jann, a major Druze village in Israel located on the ridges of Mount Meron.

Indeed, all the Druze villages to follow were built high in the hills, for reasons of security. In earlier times, when danger approached, the Druze would light torches and send a message from mountaintop to mountaintop – exactly like the ancient Israelites who

used this method to announce the beginning of the new month to their brothers and sisters in the Diaspora.

Visitors of all faiths are welcome at the Tomb of Nebe Shu'eib, where one of the main attractions is a large footprint that many believe was made by Jethro. Above the prophet's tomb hang pretty necklaces and decorative rugs, embroidered or woven by Druze women fulfilling a vow.

Second in importance to Nebi Shu'eib is the tomb of the prophet Sabalan, also open to visitors and located above the Druze village of Hurfeish. Tradition holds that while fleeing from Muslim persecutors Sabalan crossed the wadi below the site. A dam immediately descended from the heavens, filling the wadi with water.

Sabalan's life was saved when he hid in a cave above the wadi – a cave that is the center of the complex today. Here, according to tradition, Sabalan died and was buried. An ancient mulberry tree adds a dash of color to the complex, which offers a stunning look at the village below.

Druze men and women dress in two vastly different styles. Those clothed in headdresses or scarves, baggy pants or long skirts have been initiated into the mysteries of religious doctrine. Bareheaded people in pants or jeans and shirts are the secular Druze. Comprising the vast majority of the Druze population, they are not permitted to read Druze holy books or to learn religious secrets. Yet they tenaciously follow Druze tradition and customs.

Never having had a country (or a language) of their own, the Druze are steadfastly loyal to their adopted nations. Thus with the exception of the Druze living in the Golan Heights, Israel's Druze have been citizens of the modern state of Israel since its inception, and the men are required to serve in the Israeli army.

Indeed Druze are high-ranking officers in the Israel Defense Forces, while others are members of parliament and government ministers. Sadly, nearly 500 Druze soldiers have lost their lives in Israel's wars and in terrorist attacks over the years.

Israel's Druze men and women are highly educated and can be found in all walks of life, from medicine, law and agriculture to high-tech and industry. Representatives of the Druze community are often asked to light a torch "for the Glory of the State of Israel" at the official Independence Day ceremonies on Mount Herzl. [To]