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**Shabbat Achari Mot / Kedoshim.** **שבת פ' אחרי מות / פ' קדושים - פרקי אבות - פרק ג'**

**Sat. 1 - 2 May 2020 - 8th of Iyyar, 5780** - **ח' באייר תש"פ** **Issue Number 950**

Parasha - <i>Yom Shabbat Kodesh</i>	Achari Mot / Kedoshim.	(Page-620).
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**Birkat Halevana.**

**ברכת הלבנה.**

**THE SYNAGOGUE IS CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

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**Shahrit Sunday to Friday on ZOOM at 07:30**

**Please call Ghassan to join the sevice, tachanun from Sunday**

**Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag on ZOOM**

**Sunday to Thursday at 18:00, Friday at 17:00**

**Please call Ghassan or David to join the Shiur**

Shabbat Candles.	20:09
Latest Shema GRA.	09:14
Sunset.	20:26
Arbit Motzei Shabbat.	21:25
Next Friday: Candles. Shabbat. Emor	20:21

## A Freudian Slip Up

### **Acharei Mot** 5778 (Leviticus 16-18)

Apr 27, 2020 | by [Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig](#)

**GOOD MORNING!** There's a parable told of an eminent psychiatrist who is walking down the street when he comes across a man lying on the ground. The man, having just been attacked, beaten, and robbed, was semiconscious and bleeding profusely. After carefully examining him the psychiatrist exclaims, "My God! Whoever did this really needs help!"

**Sometimes we look** at situations and completely miss the point. Often we are so

caught up in our own lives that we become tone deaf to the world around us. In other words, we are so blinded by the reality that is our lives, that we often fail to see anything from anyone else's perspective. Of course, the Torah addresses this issue.

**In this week's** Torah reading we find what is perhaps one of the most famous verses in all of the Torah: "You should love your fellow as yourself; I am Hashem" (*Leviticus 19:18*).

**Commenting on this verse**, the great sage Rabbi Akiva – who lived in the latter part of the first century – remarked, "This is

a towering principle of the Torah” (See *Toras Kohanim* 4:12). The implication of Rabbi Akiva’s statement is that this verse, somehow, encapsulates the very essence of the message of the Torah. This is incredibly significant as the sages didn’t generally go around handing out ratings for different parts of the Torah; therefore, this needs to be carefully examined and understood.

**Furthermore**, Rabbi Shimon Ben Azzai, one of Rabbi Akiva’s students, poses a stunning question to Rabbi Akiva’s teaching: *What if one does not like himself?* Meaning, if one allows himself to be embarrassed and treated poorly by others, is he now permitted to treat others in the same manner? Consequently, Ben Azzai disagreed and used another verse in the Torah (that of God creating man) as his “towering principle of the Torah” (See *Bereishis Rabba* 24:7).

**Before** we enter into a discussion of these two philosophic principles of Torah, let us digress for a moment and marvel at the breathtaking analysis of human psychology of our great Torah scholars from two thousand years ago. While many continents were filled with depraved and downright disgusting cultures of human behavior (cannibalism, for example, springs to mind), our ancestors were carefully considering the effects of low self-esteem on societal behavior. It is truly remarkable.

**Sigmund Freud**, a secular Jew (and self-proclaimed atheist) who is commonly credited as the father of modern psychoanalysis, had much to say on the statement “love thy neighbor as thyself.” In what is perhaps his most influential work, *Civilization and its Discontents*, he basically concludes that it is an impossible ideal because: 1) What has he done to deserve my love? (in essence, what benefit do I get out of loving him?) 2) Seeing as I

am entitled to love myself to a very high degree, how can I possibly apply the very same love standard to others?

**Anyone** who has examined the life of Freud can clearly see that while he was clearly a brilliant clinician who made significant contributions to understanding behavioral psychology, he was also a deeply disturbed individual who built his foundation of understanding the human psyche from a selfish and self-absorbed perspective. His preoccupation with sexualizing just about everything and insisting that almost everything important in the development of one’s life stems from one’s sexual desires and frustrations – even from a young age – is quite telling. His misogynistic belief that women were basically inferior and just an appendage to serve men, in general, further demonstrates his perspective of a self-centered universe.

**As strange** as it seems, one of the fathers of modern psychology seems to be unfamiliar with the very meaning of the word psychology. The word psyche originates from the Latin meaning “soul” or “breath.” Those who are familiar with Hebrew will quickly make the connection; in Hebrew the word for soul is *neshama* and it is also the word for breath – *nishima*. This is based on the verse in the Torah “God formed man out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils a breath of life” (*Genesis* 2). Freud, being an atheist, was incapable of considering a soul’s impact on behavior.

**Judaism**, by contrast, believes that much of who we are in our subconscious mind is based on our soul and the spirit contained within, gifted to us by a benevolent God. Interestingly enough, the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s other two most influential personas in the field of psychology and psychotherapy, Carl Jung and Viktor Frankl, explored the role of the soul/spirit

connection in influencing one's behavior and happiness.

**Resuming** our original discussion, in order to begin to approach a suitable answer to Ben Azzai's question on Rabbi Akiva (what if a person doesn't love himself?), we must first examine an enigmatic statement of Hillel:

**The Talmud** (*Shabbos* 31a) relates the well-known story of the gentile who came to Hillel and asked that he be converted to Judaism with the sole caveat that Hillel teach him the entire Torah while he stands on one foot. Hillel taught him the now famous statement, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your friend" and then converted him.

**On the surface**, Hillel's statement is quite perplexing; clearly, Hillel is basing his teaching on the verse in this week's Torah reading, "You should love your fellow as yourself." Based on the acceptance of this principle he was willing to accept a convert. Why does Hillel use this as the very definition of what it means to accept the Torah and the responsibilities of being a Jew?

**Furthermore**, (and quite incredibly) Hillel chose to make it a negative mandate! In other words, Hillel reinterpreted this obligation of how to treat others in terms of what one **may not** do to his fellow man ("That which is hateful to you, do not do to your friend"). This seems to be extremely limiting. What compelled Hillel to make this modification on "a towering principle of the Torah"?

**In fact**, Hillel's interpretation is actually quite brilliant. This is what bothered Hillel: Anytime we do something for someone else, for example, an act of kindness or compassion, we have an innate feeling of satisfaction. Thus, doing

something for someone else also benefits us in that it makes us feel good.

**On the other hand**, if we have a juicy piece of gossip about someone that we want to share or if we wish to insult someone who has hurt us, exercising self-restraint doesn't give us any pleasure – quite the opposite, in these cases holding our tongue makes us feel like we want to explode.

**Hillel** is telling us that the true barometer for loving your friend isn't what we are willing to do for him, because usually doing something for him is also doing something for ourselves. The true barometer of "loving your fellow" is treating him as we would want to be treated ourselves (e.g. just as we don't want people repeating gossip about us, we shouldn't gossip about others). That is a **much** harder standard to achieve.

**This insight** also answers Ben Azzai's question on Rabbi Akiva – "what if a person has low self-esteem?" The essence of low self-esteem is a person's perception of themselves vis-a-vis others. This verses' obligation of doing for others is based on the principle of being God-like. This is why the end of the verse states, "*I am Hashem.*"

**Hashem's purpose** in the creation of the world was the very definition of anti-Freudian. God created this world as a totally selfless act – for God has no need for anything. Therefore, the motivation in creation was solely as a kindness; giving mankind existence and creating a world in which we can thrive.

**Thus**, the key to resolving one's own issues of low self-esteem is in becoming God-like and doing for others – solely for their sake. Recognizing that one has the ability to give a sense of reality to others by helping them, innately gives oneself a sense of fulfillment and establishes self-worth. This is why this verse, according to Rabbi



Akiva, is the towering principle of the Torah. The verse is precisely the secret to becoming God-like, the antidote to low self-esteem, and ultimately the key to achieving real happiness.



## TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

**Acharei Mot - Kedoshim, Leviticus 16:1 - 20:27**

**Acharei Mot** includes the Yom Kippur service where the Cohen Gadol casts lots to designate two goats – one to be sacrificed, the other to be driven to a place called Azazel after the Cohen Gadol – the High Priest – confesses the sins of the people upon its head. Today it is a very popular epithet in Israel to instruct another person in the heat of an argument to "go to Azazel." (I don't believe the intent, however, is to look for the goat...)

**The goat** sent to Azazel symbolically carried away the sins of the Jewish people. This, I surmise, is the source of the concept of using a scapegoat. One thing you can truly give credit to the Jewish people –

when we use a scapegoat, at least we use a real goat!

**The Torah** then proceeds to set forth the sexual laws – who you are not allowed to marry or have relations with. If one appreciates that the goal of life is to be holy, to perfect oneself and to be as much as possible like God, then he/she can appreciate that it is impossible to orgy at night and be spiritual by day.

**The Torah** portion of Kedoshim invokes the Jewish people to be holy! It then proceeds with the spiritual directions on how to achieve holiness, closeness to the Almighty. Within it lie the secrets and the prescription for Jewish continuity. If any group of people is to survive as an entity, it must have common values and goals – a direction and a meaning. By analyzing this portion we can learn much about our personal and national destiny.



In loving memory of  
Rabbi Kalman Packouz  
Kalman Moshe ben  
Reuven Avigdor  
1950-2019  
*Shabbat Shalom,*  
Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים "LONG LIFE"  
TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE YAHRZEIT

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 01 Iyar Miss Florence David | 12 Iyar Mr Jack Fattal         |
| 01 Iyar Mrs Bekhor          | 12 Iyar Mr Meir Fattal         |
| 04 Iyar Mrs Annie Benjamin  | 15 Iyar Mrs Esther Silas       |
| 06 Iyar Mr Abraham S. Cohen | 18 Iyar Mr Saul Ceasar Hannuna |
| 08 Iyar Mr Joseph Laniado   | 19 Iyar Mr Abraham S. Cohen    |
| 12 Iyar Mr Harry Fattal     | 26 Iyar Mrs Tiba David         |

Quote of the Week

**When we are no longer able to change a situation,  
we are challenged to change ourselves**