



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

OD YOSEF HAI
50 FINCHLEY LANE, NW41DJ
TEL: 020 8203 5701

Thoughts on ACHARE MOT / KEDOSHIM

Year 25

by Dayan Abraham David

In both these parshiot the Torah warns us about 'arayot' forbidden sexual relationships with the most severe consequences and punishments, 'Karet' and even the death penalty for some. The reason for such severe punishments for these transgressions says the Ramban is because they are abominations in the eyes of G-d they cause a person to be despised and distanced by Him. The soul is affected badly by these transgressions as depicted by 'Karet'. The Rambam explains the severity of the punishment because a person has an ingrained lust in himself for these pleasures and easily falls into their trap hence he needs great warnings and punishment to desist from them. Even in the Ten Commandments we are warned about adultery which is not only the abomination of 'arayot' but combines it with stealing for taking another man's wife is tantamount to stealing his home and property as well. In our corrupt world today steadily our values of the Torah and the traditions of our

forefathers are being eroded by the low life media and so called celebrities especially in this subject. At the end of Parashat Achrei Moth the Torah gives a special command 'Veshmartem et Mishmarti'. Make protections for what I have asked you to keep away from, especially on the subject of these abominations. In fact the Parasha of Kedoshim which follows immediately according to Rashi equates 'Kedushah', holiness, with keeping away from forbidden sexual relationships and putting further restrictions so as not to approach or come near them. Even a single man is not allowed to be secluded with a single woman in a home not open to the public domain. It is on this subject that the Torah commands us specially to take care and set up rules of precaution. For our make up as humans, with our strong urges can carry us away easily if we do not make rules and fences so as not to fall into situations of temptation when it becomes almost impossible to resist. In the 3rd Parasha of the Shema we read twice a day 'veLo taturu acharei lebabchem veAcharei enechem', do not follow the urges of your heart and of your eyes. Our Rabbis explain 'Halev chomed' the heart desires and the eyes seek out,

referring to this subject since we have urges in our hearts if we allow our eyes to seek them out that is a recipe for disaster. In the past people dressed more modestly and did not attract the eye so much, men and women did not socialise together outside the family, our homes were protected from sights and thoughts of lewdity and sexual perversions it was easier because the fences were up we had some protection. But today all that has changed. Even our children, our most endeared and loving of possessions, are now put at risk. We have given them all the tools they need to be corrupted. Right in our homes they are allowed to receive into their innocent minds all the garbage the low life of the media can throw at them. Their future standard of morality is not being decided by our Torah traditions and those of their parents but by what they are bombarded with on the screen. And if they might have missed it their friends will make up for it, it becomes so natural: 'all my friends are doing it'. Here the Torah warns us to make a stand, take care to put down the rules, make the fences before it is too late. We must positively work to bring holiness into our home. Books of the Torah, pictures of our Chachamim, the longing for a Temple should dominate the front room. Encourage our family to events of Torah and charity, fill our thoughts with learning and the beauty of Torah so that we should come close to G-d, our Father, who is awaiting our return. *'Kedoshim Tehehu Ki Kadosh Ani'*,

be Holy as I am Holy, so we can be close and My promise is if you try *'Ani Hashem Mekadeshchem'*. I will help and make you holy.

GEMS

At many junctions in life we are confronted with crucial decisions, for example, whether or not to accept a certain job, or which school to send one's children. It seems to us that each alternative has some advantages and disadvantages and we all resolve upon one course or another after due deliberation of having consulted with one's husband or wife and friends.

The two choices are symbolised by the two he-goats of Yom Kippur. Both look alike, being identical in appearance, height and weight and yet one ends up being offered on the *'Mizbayach'* for Hashem and the other thrown off a cliff to *'Azazel'*.

Although the two options may seem to the person more or less the same, do we consider that one might lead to Hashem and the other to *'Azazel?'* It could be that one of the jobs though promising will leave less time for Torah or that a school may be detrimental to one's children's spiritual welfare. How is one to know which is the correct road to take?

The Avoda of Yom Kippur teaches that as much as everyone believes that he alone is perfectly capable of analysing a situation, he is nevertheless likely to make a mistake. The situation as pictured to him by his own mind is not objective for he is deeply involved. His desires and wishes remove the issue from the realm of a purely intellectual problem to a highly prejudiced one. Although he may assume that 'both goats are identical', in fact one is to Hashem and one is to *'Azazel'*

The Torah explains that the Kohen Gadol was not permitted to choose himself between the two goats, rather he had to rely upon the Divine lot, the decision from Above.

Similarly, a person must consider which of the two options would meet approval from Above. In order to arrive at the true solution one should ask the opinion of a Talmid Chacham, the earthly representative of the 'Voice from Above'.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

This story was said over personally by the person. Many ask how come the tefillot of Rabbi Eliyahu were answered. I have a story which we could also take example from. He said "My wife has a cancerous growth in her nostrils. We sought out the Doctor with the best expertise on this subject who was Dr Kattan. She went through all the tests needed, the doctor said she needed 9 bouts of chemotherapy and radiotherapy to save her. After the first my wife came back in great pain and completely broken, I did not realise what she must have gone through but she said "I cannot go through all these bouts of treatments." We went to Rabbi Eliyahu, he heard our problem and felt her suffering and listened carefully. After that he said she cannot stand 9 treatments like this. I looked at my wife and it seemed that she had some relief from the words of the Rabbi who understood her suffering.

The Rabbi looked through her file and said Dr Kattan is the best. I know him, I will have a word with

him. He called the Doctor and spoke about the case. The doctor told him 9 bouts of treatment were absolutely necessary, he had discussed it with other world experts and that was the minimum. The Rabbi insisted she would not be able to live through so many and 6 would be enough. The doctor told the Rabbi, with respect, sorry but this is my field.

My wife felt better on hearing how the Rabbi was taking up for her suffering, she felt stronger to carry on with the treatment. I too felt that the Rabbi was feeling her suffering. What happened after the sixth bout of treatment, they had to stop the therapy, my wife's white blood cells were too low, they had to stop. They were not sure if it would help to stop the cancer. But thank G-d the Rabbi's blessings and prayers and predictions helped the cancer to be cured. We had a son born after that and the Rabbi was sandak and even though we did not expect she would see the birth of another son she has even thank G-d even seen his bar mitzvah and we look forward to his wedding.

I believe the Rabbi has a special ability to feel the suffering of others and be part of it, this gives him the merit that his tefillot are heard. We too should learn from this and feel the suffering of the person we want to pray for so our tefillot should be heard.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

Some laws and customs during the Omer

1. The minhag according to the Shulchan aruch is not to have weddings at all between Pesach and L'ag BaOmer because of the 24 thousand students of Rabbi Akiva who died in a plague during this period. We are permitted to have weddings only after Lag BaOmer i.e. on the day of the 34th of the Omer.
2. We do not have a haircut or shave until the morning of the 34th. There is a minhag of the Ari z"l not to have a haircut or shave until erev Shavuout i.e. 7 weeks. But even according to this minhag we can have weddings after Lag BaOmer. There are no restrictions for the cutting of nails.
3. We do not refrain from saying Birchat Shehechyanu on new fruit or clothes etc during this period even though the minhag during the 3 weeks leading to Tisha B'Ab is to refrain, because mourning for the destruction of the Temple is stricter.
4. The minhag is not to have parties, dancing and music during this period.
5. We may have an engagement party or vort but without music and dancing during this period.
6. On Lag BaOmer we celebrate the Hillulah of Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai, the day he passed away for on that day a great revelation of Torah was made (like Simchat Torah). Another reason for this is because Rabi Akiva gave semicha (ordination as Rabbis)

to his five great Talmidim including Rabi Shimon Bar Yochai on this day after the demise of his 24 thousand students. Some say because the plague stopped on this day.

7. We do not say Tachanun (Ana) on Lag BaOmer, Tuesday 12th May and not on Pesach Sheni, Friday 8th May and not on mincha of the day before.

Do not forget to count sefirat ha'omer after nightfall every day

We have started last week to say Pirkei Avot every Shabbat. We are now in the third perek.

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	8:09 pm
Shabbat terminates	9:26 pm
Shabbat :Latest Shema	
Magen Avraham	8:08 am
Shabbat :Latest Shema Gra	9:13 am

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS CONCERNING COVID-19 PANDEMIC
VUSHMARTEM MEOD
LE'NAFSHOTECHM

VEAHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA