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*Acharei Mot-Kedoshim*

*April 24, 2010*

*10 Iyar 5770*

## News

### INDEPENDENCE DAY IN ISRAEL

The main event of this week is certainly the celebration of Independence day in Israel. Israel was declared independent on May 14, 1948 by the first Prime Minister, David Ben Gourion. Then it was decided that this day will be celebrated every year as Independence day. For some people it could be strange that the independence was declared on May 14 and this year we celebrate it on April 20. We have to remember that each Jewish celebration is not done according to the Christian calendar but the Jewish calendar. May 14, 1948 was in fact for the Jewish people the 5 Iyar 5708. Then every year the Independence day is celebrated on the 5 Iyar. It is a day of joy for the people of Israel all over the world and many synagogues have decided to have a religious celebration on that day to thank God for his blessings and for allowing this miracle of the survival of Israel during the last 4,000 years in spite of all the persecutions, pogroms, expulsions and the Shoa (Hebrew word for the Holocaust).

Maybe it is useful here to give an explanation about the Jewish calendar and why from one year to another there is a difference on Jewish dates. Why on one year the 5 Iyar occurred on May 14, and on another year it occurs on April 20. Let's remember that the Jewish calendar is not a solar calendar (365 days a year) but a lunar calendar (354 days a year). To make it more complicated it is in fact a mixture between the solar and the lunar calendar. Israel decided to make it that way, because there is a difference of 11 days between a solar and a lunar calendar. If this difference of 11 days were not getting back, the feasts would never be celebrated on the right season. We remember that in the Bible Passover is a Spring feast (Deut. 16:1) and cannot be

celebrated in the Summer or Winter time. In the biblical time, there were some sentinels who were in charge of observing every month the new moon. When the new moon was seen in Jerusalem, the new month (Rosh Chodesh) was declared by the Sanhedrin. However, when it was theoretically the month of Nissan, the month of Passover, the Sanhedrin looked at the fields and if they did not see any signs of Spring they decided to add a thirteen month after Adar and before Nissan. The original month of Adar was called Adar I, the added month was called Adar II or in Hebrew Ve-Adar. For almost 2,000 years this addition of a month was based on observation (of the new moon). However, after the destruction of Jerusalem, Yohanan Ben Zakhai moved the Sanhedrin to Yavne and it was more difficult to establish the new moon and the dates of the feast.

In the fourth century, Rabbi Hillel II (330-365), son of Judah III and his successor as the Nasi of the Sanhedrin, proposed a new system of fixing the feast through some astronomical considerations and calculations. Since then the Jewish people don't fix the new moon based on observations but on scientific calculations.

From that time the Jewish people adds few days to some months every year and a thirteen month every second or third year, the next leap years will be 2011 and 2014.

### NEXT CELEBRATION

The next celebration for the Jewish people will be on May 12, it will be Yom Yerushalaïm, the day of Jerusalem, a special day which celebrates the reunification of the city of Jerusalem on June 1967.

# OVERVIEW



## ACHAREI MOT LEVITICUS 16:1 - 18:30

**G**-d instructs the *kohanim* (priests) to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan* (sanctuary). On *Yom Kippur* (day of Atonement), the *kohen gadol* (high priest) is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and wearing special clothing.

He brings offerings unique to *Yom Kippur*, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is “for G-d” and is offered in the Temple, while the other is “for Azazel” in the desert. The *Torah* states the individual’s obligations on *Yom Kippur*: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and marital relations.

Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered.

The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt.

Incest is defined and prohibited.

Marital relations are forbidden during a woman’s monthly cycle.

Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.

## KEDOSHIM LEVITICUS 19:1 - 20:27

**T**he nation is enjoined to be holy. Many prohibitions and positive commandments are taught:

### Prohibitions:

- Idolatry
- Eating offerings after their time-limit
- Theft and robbery; denial of theft
- False oaths
- Retention of someone’s property
- Delaying payment to an employee
- Hating or cursing your brother
- Gossip
- Placing physical and spiritual stumbling blocks.

- Perversion of justice
- Inaction when others are in danger
- Embarrassing
- Revenge
- Bearing a grudge
- Cross-breeding
- Wearing a garment of wool and linen
- Harvesting a tree during its first three years
- Gluttony and intoxication
- Witchcraft
- Shaving the beard and sideburns
- Tattooing

### Positive:

- Awe for parents and respect for the elderly.
- Leaving part of the harvest for the poor
- Loving others (especially a convert)
- Eating in Jerusalem the first fruits from a tree
- Awe for the Temple
- Respect for Torah scholars
- Respect for the blind and the deaf.

## THE CROSSROADS OF LIFE

**T**wo identical goats awaited the High Priest in the Temple courtyard on *Yom Kippur*. The multitudinous spectators watched with bated breath as the High Priest was presented with a box that contained two slips of paper, the lots that would determine the respective fates of the two goats. He reached into the box, drew the lots and placed them on the heads of the goats. One goat was now designated “for God,” the other for Azazel.

The High Priest proceeded to ritually slaughter the goat that was “for God.” He collected its blood, sprinkled it on the holy altar and offered up the goat as a sanctified sacrifice to God. The other goat was led out of the courtyard into the open country to a distant mountainside covered with jagged rocks. The goat was pushed over the precipice, and as it tumbled down the mountainside it was torn to pieces by the sharp rocky protrusions.

What was the significance of this ritual? Why was it considered one of the highlights of the *Yom Kippur* service, the holiest day of the year? The commentators explain that the two goats symbolize the two divergent roads along which a person can travel through his lifetime on this

earth—the road of spirituality and the road of materialism.

In the plan of Salvation God has designed for us the two goats symbolize two power in conflict: the first symbolizes the Mashiach who live “for God” and is ready to give his life on the altar for the forgiveness of God’s people, and the second one, live for devil, Azazel is perceived in the Jewish thought as the devil. In modern Hebrew when you want to insult someone you can say “Lech laAzazel” which mean “Go to the Devil”.

At the end of Yom Kippur, the goat was pushed over the precipice and died which symbolize the final destiny of the devil, who will die.

Which road do we want to follow? The road of spirituality which will lead us to the Messiah and ultimately to eternal life or the road of materialism which lead us to Azazel and his destiny which is eternal death?

think about this parable, “Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!

“Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day’s deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the “tomorrow.” You must live in the present on today’s deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today!”

## LOVE YOUR FELLOW...

**T**he Torah says, “You shall love your fellow as yourself.” Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev explains it as follows: No person is perfect. Every person knows that they have faults and sometimes many faults. Yet, with all the faults that one has, they still love themselves and want the best for themselves. Says the Torah, “Love you fellow like yourself,” don’t let the other person’s faults get

in the way of loving them, just as you don’t let your own faults stop you from loving yourself!”

Rabbi Packouz says, ‘The commandment to love your fellow human being can be fulfilled at all times, every single second of the day. Any favor or kindness that you do for someone is a fulfillment of this commandment. However, the commandment can also be fulfilled through thought.

When you are happy about the good fortune of someone else, it constitutes an act of love. For instance, if you hear that someone just gave birth to a child and you feel happy, you fulfill this commandment.

The same applies when someone suffers misfortune. If you feel sad because of his suffering, you fulfill this commandment.

The difficulty of fulfilling this commandment lies in the fact that most people are inclined to be jealous of others. When they hear about someone’s good fortune, their jealousy is aroused and prevents them from being sincerely happy.

Therefore, it is extremely important for a person to work on rectifying his trait of jealousy. Another important factor that will enable a person to love his fellow is judging them favorably. For if even once you do not judge someone favorably, you will no longer be able to feel a complete love for him.

## DON'T TAKE REVENGE...

**T**he Torah says, “You shall not take revenge, nor bear a grudge against the members of your people.” If a person hurts himself (did you ever close a door on your finger? I did), he wouldn’t think of hating and punishing his own hand which caused him the pain. It would only be adding more pain!

So too, says the Torah, “You shall not take revenge, nor bear a grudge against the members of your people. You shall love your fellow as yourself. I am G-d.” One should view his fellow as part of himself, thus, even if they cause him or her pain or a loss, he should not seek revenge, for in the end you are only hurting yourself.

Rabbi Shaul says, “For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members don’t have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Mashach, and individually members one of another.” (Rom. 12:4-5).

## LOVE YOUR FELLOW...

**W**hy, after commanding us, “**You shall love your fellow as yourself,**” does the Torah add, “**I am G-d.**” Rabbi Yisrael of Ruzin explains it with the following episode: A man was once sentenced to be put to death. As they were leading him to the gallows his friend came running, screaming on top of his lungs, “Don’t hang him. He is not guilty! I am the guilty one!” At the same time the one being led to the gallows said, “Don’t believe him. He is lying, I am guilty!”

The case was brought back to the king who told the judges to re-hear the case. The case was re-opened and in the end both were found not guilty.

The king then asked them, “Both of you knew that you were innocent why did each of you claim that you committed the crime?” Each one replied, “I love my friend with all my heart and I knew that he was innocent. I was ready to do anything, even give my life, so that he would live!” The king then exclaimed, “With such two great friends, please accept me as a friend too!”

G-d says, “Love your fellow as yourself, I am G-d.” Between friends who love each other as themselves, I too want to be there, as your friend!

## OUR DESIRES

**A** young student sought his permission to attend a relative’s wedding. Rabbi Lopian inquired if the women would be dressed modestly. The student replied that there would be non-religious people there, but, thank God, he had reached a level where immodest dress no longer made an impression.

Rabbi Lopian gave him permission to attend the wedding, but only after he agreed to contact one of Rabbi Lopian’s friends. The young man took the phone number and returned a few hours later to tell Rabbi Lopian that he must have made a mistake because the number was a doctor’s office.

“No,” Rabbi Lopian told him, “there was no mistake. I am a man in my late 80’s, blind in one eye, and these things still affect me. But if they don’t affect you, then I fear something is

physically wrong with you and I would like you to go see a doctor.”

God created us with extremely strong and potent physical desires, all of them intended to be used for important and holy purposes. But if not channeled properly, these desires can lead to the greatest impurity and defilement.

## THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

**O**ne Shabbat morning, following the synagogue service, a man accosted the rabbi and said, “Tom, this congregation has been insulting me for years, and I did not know it until this week.” The stunned rabbi replied, “What on earth do you mean?” “Well,” said the man, every Shabbat morning the call to worship in this congregation ends with the words, ‘We are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.’ And I have heard ministers over the years call the congregation, God’s flock.’ Then this past week I visited the Chicago stockyards. There I discovered that sheep are just about the dumbest animals G-d ever created. Why, they are so stupid that they even follow one another docilely into the slaughterhouse. Even pigs are smarter than sheep, and I would certainly be angry if my synagogue called me a pig’ every Shabbat morning. So I’m not at all sure I want to come to Synagogue and be called a sheep’ any longer... even G-d’s sheep.’”The man had a point. But whether we like it or not, that is the language of the Bible, we are called “G-d’s sheep.” The favorite psalm of many people is the 23rd, and it begins by saying, “The L-rd is my shepherd...” And if “the L-rd is my shepherd,” then I am one of the L-rd’s sheep.

Then the right question is: do we want to be shepherded by the L-rd?

## EDITOR

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## HAFTARA

### Ezekiel 22:1 - 22:19

**PARASHA:** Our text of the parasha is about Yom Kippur, the day of the Judgment. **The LORD said to Moses: Tell your brother Aaron not to come just at any time into the sanctuary inside the curtain before the mercy seat that is upon the ark, or he will die; for I appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. (Leviticus 16:2).**

**HAFTARA:** In the text of the haftara, we have a story of Judgement. The prophet is called by G-d to Judge the “bloody city”. **The word of the LORD came to me: You, mortal, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then declare to it all its abominable deeds. You shall say, Thus says the Lord GOD: A city! Shedding blood within itself; its time has come; making its idols, defiling itself. You have become guilty by the blood that you have shed, and defiled by the idols that you have made; you have brought your day near, the appointed time of your years has come. Therefore I have made you a disgrace before the nations, and a mockery to all the countries.” (Ezekiel 22:1-4).**

G-d is going to scatter His people among the nations. **I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will purge your filthiness out of you. (Ezekiel 22:15)**

This judgement of Israel is recorded also to illustrate in what situation we could be as G-d’s people today. How do we act every day, What is our relation with the Word of G-d, which relationship do we have with G-d. Are we the people of the Bible and a people of prayer.

Yom Kippur is every day for us, we are waiting for the coming of the Mashiach from the heavenly sanctuary, in the same way that the High Priest, at the end of the Yom Kippur came out from the tabernacle, to assure G-d’s people that they have received forgiveness.

Our G-d is a G-d of love, he is always ready to forgive us if we come back to Him in true and sincere repentance.

But for true repentance it is necessary to ask G-d to forgive our sins and also to ask our neighbor to forgive what we have done wrong to them.

## BESORAT YESHUA

### Mark 2:1-17

**PARASHA:** In the text of the Parasha we have many commandments, which invite us to have a holy life. God’s people are Holy and must demonstrate this holiness in their life.

**BESORAH:** We have the perfect example of holiness in the life of Yeshua. That’s why the people of Israel who were in contact with him discovered who was Yeshua, they loved him, loved his teaching and loved his deeds. In our Besorah we see Yeshua arriving in Capernaum, in the house of Shim’on and many people came to the house to see him, to listen to his teaching.

**When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. (Mark 2:1-2).**

People from Capernaum were sure that Yeshua can heal every sickness, that’s why a group of friends came to Jesus with a paralytic. **Then some people came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them (Mark 2:3).** They were people of faith, a great example for us.

What Yeshua said to the paralytic is in connection with forgiveness (theme of Yom Kippur), he said to the man **When Yeshua saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” (Mark 2:5)** We see in these word of Yeshua all his affection for human being. He knows that if this man is in this situation, it is because he transgressed some laws of G-d, but Yeshua don’t try to make this man guilty, he just oriented his eyes to the heaven, to G-d. The leaders of Israel, did not see the glory of G-d through this miracle, they just thought that Yeshua was blaspheming, but in fact as the Mashiach he had the power to forgive sins. It was a great moment for the leaders to recognize the Messiah, but they did not, they were afraid to lose their position.

