

INSPIRE

ACHREI MOS KEDOSHIM -
8 IYAR - 2ND MAY 2020

Who is holy?

Is it the mystic in the mountains, the monk in the monastery, or the guru in the garage? Perhaps it is the lady with the crystal ball or the meditating yogi? People today have fallen in love with Spirituality, Mysticism and Kabbalah. Great. I've even given a whole series of Kabbalah classes myself. Judaism is certainly rich in spirituality and the mystical perspective helps us to a deeper understanding of our faith and its practice. But how would Judaism define "holy"? Must one be a mystic to be holy? The Parshah of Kedoshim (Leviticus 19-20), begins with the injunction you shall be holy. Then it launches into a litany of biblical laws from religious to ethical—respecting parents, elders, charity to the poor, honesty in business, observing the Shabbat, not to dabble in the occult, the famous "Love Thy Neighbor," not to take revenge, the forbidden relationships—all kinds of things that would not necessarily be associated with becoming spiritual. So it seems clear from our Parshah that while we do most definitely believe in the spiritual component of Judaism, the road to holiness is not so much ethereal or otherworldly but practical and pragmatic. Holiness is to be found more in the ordinary everyday things we do or don't do than in mantras and metaphysics. Self-restraint, discipline, honesty, decency, doing the right thing—these are the things that can lead us to holiness. You don't need a guru with a guitar, séances, incense or even long, flowing robes. You need to be a mensch, control your passions and behave correctly. And that, as opposed to all the spooky stuff, is what constitutes holiness. At the end of the day, the Torah is telling us to be different from those around us. Whether it was the Egyptians and Canaanites of old or the hedonists and sensualists of today, the message is the same. Holiness means distinctiveness. A Jew must march to a different beat. It doesn't matter what the rest of the world is doing. We are a people apart. Our differentness is expressed in many ways. The same Parshah that reminds us to keep Shabbat also cautions us to keep honest weights and measures in our shop, not to lie, to pay our employees on time and not to gossip. The same Parshah that declares boldly "Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself," also warns us not to get too lovey-dovey with everyone—not with your daughter-in-law, sister-in-law, father's wife, anyone else's wife, nor a member of the same sex. Yes, I do think there is something pretty holy about a young couple exercising self-discipline and waiting patiently until their chuppah in order to express their love for one another. It shows character, nobility, and I have no doubt they will confirm that it was worth waiting for. Yes, I think married couples who work hard to keep their marriages and family life intact, even though it may sometimes be difficult, are acting in a G-dly manner. That, too, is holy. Far be it from me to make light of holy men and miracle workers. I am a great believer. But before we run to faith healers or buy red strings and holy water, perhaps we ought to consult the Torah and try the bread and butter stuff of Judaism first. Let us live with honesty, integrity, respect, honor, dignity and discipline. Then we will be holy.



LOUGHTON SHUL
MORE THAN A SHUL

Shabbos Times

FRIDAY NIGHT
CANDLE LIGHTING 8:05
SHABBAT ENDS 9:19

JOIN THE ZOOM 7:00 FOR
FRIDAY NIGHT SERVICE

Looking forward, how do you
imagine the world we will enter
into post corona virus?
will it be better, more kind
, compassionate, healthy world or
the opposite.

As humans the one thing which is
extremely hard is change, we are
creatures of habit and much of
what we do is because we are
comfortable, my question is has
the virus changed you in a
positive way (or negative) that
will change the way you lived
until this virus began. if you could
share please let me know via
email.

WHY IS TORAH LAW SO RESTRICTIVE OF CONTACT BETWEEN THE GENDERS?

By Manis Friedman

Question: I understand that Torah law forbids all physical contact between a man and a woman—or even for them to be alone in a room together—unless they are first-degree relatives or married to each other. This applies to any man and any woman, regardless of their ages or whether or not they are sexually attracted to each other. And then there are all those rules about “modest” dress. Isn’t that carrying it a bit far? Are we really such animals? Answer: When a man and woman are together in a room, and the door closes, that is a sexual event. Not because of what is going to happen, but what has already happened. It may not be something to make novels of, but it is a sexual occurrence, because male and female is what sexuality used to be all about. It is true that in our world today, in the “free world” certainly, people have, on the whole, stopped thinking in these terms. What happened was that we started putting up all these defenses, getting steeled, inured, against the constant exposure and stimulation of men and women sharing all sorts of activities—coeducational school, camps, gyms—is that we started blocking out groups of people. We can’t be as naturally sexual as G-d created us to be. When a man says, “I have a woman friend, but we’re just friends, nothing more, I’m not attracted to her in any sexual way, she’s not my type,” you’ve got to ask yourself what is really going on here. Is this a disciplined person? Or is this a person who has died a little bit? What does he mean, “She’s not my type?” When did all this “typing” come into existence? It’s all artificial. It’s not true to human sexuality. And it really isn’t even true in this particular context, because given a slight change of circumstance, you could very easily be attracted. After all, you are a male, she’s a female. How many times does a relationship begin that is casual, neighborly, and then suddenly becomes intimate? The great awakening of this boy and girl who are running around, doing all sorts of things, sharing all sorts of activities, and lo and behold, they realize—what drama, what drama—that they are attracted to each other. These are grownups, intelligent human beings, and it caught them by surprise. It’s kind of silly. So, closing a door should be recognized as a sexual event. And you need to ask yourself: Are you prepared for this? Is it permissible? Is it proper? If not, leave the door open. Should men and women shake hands? Should it be seen as an intimate gesture? Should any physical contact that is friendly be considered intimate? Hopefully, it should. These laws are not guarantees against sin. They have never completely prevented it. There are people who dress very modestly. They cover everything. They sin. It’s a little more cumbersome, but they manage. All these laws are not just there to lessen the possibility of someone doing something wrong. They also preserve sexuality—because human sexuality is what G-d wants. He gave us these laws to preserve it, to enhance it—and make sure it’s focused to the right places and circumstances—not to stifle it. We have become callous about our sexuality. Even in marriage, a kiss on the run cheapens it, makes it callous—then we run to the therapist for advice. And do you know what the therapist who charges \$200 an hour for his advice says? He tells the couple not to touch each other for two weeks. Judaism tells you that, free of charge. Yes, there are two weeks each month during which a husband and wife don’t touch. This therapy has been around for 3000 years. And it still works. It’s a wonderful idea. When you don’t close the door on yourself and that other person, you are recognizing your own sexuality. You are acknowledging the sexuality of the other person. Being modest, recognizing our borders, knowing where intimacy begins and not waiting until it is so intimate that we’re too far gone, is a very healthy way of living. It doesn’t change your lifestyle dramatically, but enhances it dramatically, and you come away more capable of relaxing, better able to be spontaneous, because you know that you can trust yourself. You’ve defined your borders. Now you can be free. It takes a load off your mind, and it makes you a much more lovable person.

Israel

The Sun and the Moon

The Talmud states, “Moses is the face of the sun; Joshua is the face of the moon.” What is the symbolism behind this poetic statement? One explanation might be this: Moses represents Torah; Joshua embodies the Land of Israel. Moses gave us the Torah; Joshua gave us Israel. The light of the moon is beautiful, soothing, and romantic. Moonlight has inspired many an imagination and a heart. Yet the glow of the moon is merely a reflection of the sun. As long as the moon reflects the sun’s glow, it casts upon the earth its own unique poetic luminescence; if the moon is separated from its source of light – as is the case in a lunar eclipse -- it becomes a large chunk of dark and rocky matter. The relationship between Moses, the face of Torah, and Joshua, the face of Jewish statehood, is that of the sun and the moon. As long as Israel reflects Torah – its faith, its dreams and its passions -- it is hard to find something more beautiful and inspiring. When Israel, however, ceases to see itself as a reflection of Torah, but rather as a secular national homeland for Jews, a member of the United Nations, it loses much of its inner glow and beauty. Its very identity and future is put into question. I am not suggesting – as many fear -- that citizens of Israel should legally be coerced to follow Jewish law. Most religious Jews I know would oppose such an initiative, as it would create an even deeper animosity to Judaism and its laws. In the world we live in, religion and spirituality must be a personal choice coming from within. What I am saying is that every nation needs a soul. Even Israel. And the soul of the Jewish people for 4,000 years has been the Torah. We cannot afford to lose our soul now.

FOOD FOR THE SOUL

At the threshold of liberation, darkness filled the land of Egypt. Yet in the homes of those to be liberated, there was only light. Light is our true place and light is our destiny. As dawn approaches, darkness shakes heaven and earth in the final throes of its demise. But those who belong to light and cleave to it with all their hearts have nothing to fear. Even as they fall into the deepest caverns where no stone glimmers, no path yields promise, and all meaning seems unfathomable, even there that light will lead them. It will reveal to them the treasures that lie there, that they must rescue for their own liberation. All is truly light. For darkness is created to vanish, but light is forever.

Following the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, G-d warns against unauthorized entry “into the holy.” Only one person, the kohen gadol (“high priest”), may—but once a year, on Yom Kippur—enter the innermost chamber in the Sanctuary to offer the sacred ketoret to G-d. Another feature of the Day of Atonement service is the casting of lots over two goats, to determine which should be offered to G-d and which should be dispatched to carry off the sins of Israel to the wilderness. The Parshah of Acharei also warns against bringing korbanot (animal or meal offerings) anywhere but in the Holy Temple, forbids the consumption of blood, and details the laws prohibiting incest and other deviant sexual relations. The Parshah of Kedoshim begins with the statement: “You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd your G-d, am holy.” This is followed by dozens of mitzvot (divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies him- or herself and relates to the holiness of G-d. These include: the prohibition against idolatry, the mitzvah of charity, the principle of equality before the law, Shabbat, sexual morality, honesty in business, honor and awe of one’s parents, and the sacredness of life. Also in Kedoshim is the dictum which the great sage Rabbi Akiva called a cardinal principle of Torah, and of which Hillel said, “This is the entire Torah, the rest is commentary”—“Love your fellow as yourself.”

This week’s haftorah mentions G-d’s repeated enjoinders to observe the commandments, keep the Shabbat and eschew idol worship; reflective of this week’s Torah portion, which discusses many commandments, including the obligation to sanctify the Shabbat and reject idolatry. The prophet Ezekiel transmit G-d’s message, reminding the Jews how He chose them as His nation, how He took them out of Egypt and promised to take them to the Holy Land. In Egypt, G-d dispatched a prophet who exhorted the Jews to abandon their idols, yet they did not do so. He then gave them laws and statutes, including that of the observance of Shabbat as a sign between Him and His people. “But the house of Israel rebelled against Me in the wilderness; they walked not in My statutes, and they despised My ordinances, which, if a man keep, he will live through them, and My Sabbaths they desecrated exceedingly.” The prophet goes on to mention G-d’s punishment of the Jews in the desert, namely that they did not enter the Holy Land. He then admonishes the children not to follow their fathers’ ways, but to observe the laws and to sanctify the Shabbat.

WISHING ALL THOSE WITH YARTZEIT THIS WEEK - CHAYIM ARUCHIM

- Clein Trevor Father 8 Iyar**
- Fagelson Ian Father David Yaakov ben Yitzchak 8 Iyar**
- Glassar Harry Father Yisrael ben Shloima David 8 Iyar**
- Perry Stanley Mother Leah Beila bas Shabtai 8 Iyar**
- Davis Richard Brother Pinchus ben Binyamin 9 Iyar**
- Weigler Mark Father Shmuel Lurya ben Chaim Rivin 10 Iyar**
- Davis Yochevet Mother Shoshanah bat Shlomo 12 Iyar**
- Pushkin Carol Mother Faigel Rina bas Chaim 12 Iyar**

A Russian Jew wanted to immigrate to Israel.

HUMOUR???

The local commissar calls him in for questioning and asks:

The Rubin kids were back from college, all at home thanks to Coronavirus. The kids decided to call a family meeting with their parents. “Mom, Dad,” David, the eldest, began. “We’ve decided we need to turn the family dynamic upside down.” “Upside down?” said Mr. Rubin. “What do you mean?” “Well,” David continued. “Right now, the parents are sneaking out of the house at night, and the kids have decided that for your own safety you guys are grounded!”

Israel
Ben & Jerry’s Ice Cream is now available in Israel in the following flavours:

- Wailing Walnut
- Moishemellow
- Mazel Toffee
- Chazalnut
- OyGe-malt
- Mi Ka-mocha
- Bernard Malamint
- Berry Pr’i Hagafen
- Choc-Eilat Chip
- Simchas T’Oreo

It should be noted that all of these flavors come in either a cup or a Cohen

Q. Haven't we allowed you the right to worship in your Synagogue?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we let you live in peace with your fellow Jews?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we allowed you to travel freely within and beyond the village?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we allowed you to teach your children Torah?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Haven't we let you practice your profession?
A. Can't complain.

Q. Then why do you want to go to Israel?
A. "There, I can complain!"



I am rather skeptical when it comes to “miracle stories” – especially ones that emerge from war. So I did not believe the story about the female suicide bomber in Gaza who flinched upon hearing the Israeli soldier cry out “Shema Yisrael”, allowing them to apprehend her. Turns out the terrorists' mother was an Israeli Jew who married an Arab, and the would-be suicide bomber was in fact a Jew whose soul was rattled upon hearing Shema. Well, apparently the story might be true. An unnamed Israeli military source spoke to Breitbart News, revealing details about the attack that killed Lt. Goldin and two other soldiers, and he also mentioned the incident with the Jewish suicide bomber. The article reports: The officer explained how, after the suicide bombing that killed Lt. Goldin, a second kidnapping team of Hamas terrorists... ran back into the tunnel from which the terrorists emerged. The tunnel led back into a mosque. From the mosque, they escaped in a clearly marked UNRWA ambulance. The terrorists then made contact with high-ranking Hamas officials hiding in the Islamic University. Israeli intelligence intercepted a conversation between the kidnapers and the Hamas officials at the Islamic University and thus got all the particulars regarding the hiding place of the kidnapers. Within minutes, the IAF attacked both the kidnapers' location and the Islamic University. In the midst of this attack, a second force of IDF soldiers--which had gone into a mosque looking for weapons, explosives, and rockets-- encountered a female suicide bomber who was about to detonate the belt she wore, which would have resulted in the deaths of the soldiers. One of the soldiers instinctively recited the opening words of the holiest Jewish prayer “Shema Yisrael”. The female suicide bomber hesitated and began trembling, giving the soldiers a chance to grab her and disable the device. The soldiers then took her prisoner and turned her over to a counter-intelligence unit. Their investigation uncovered that the female suicide bomber’s mother was a Jew who had married a Palestinian in Israel and, after the wedding, was smuggled against her will into Gaza. There she lived a life filled with abuse and humiliation, and was basically a captive. In addition to the female suicide bomber, there were two smaller children as well. An armored force went in and rescued the two small children. The story is reminiscent of Rabbi Eliezer Silver who rescued Jewish children in Europe who had been hidden during the Holocaust in Christian orphanages and monasteries. The children themselves, raised as Christians for years, no longer knew they were Jewish. And there were times the local priest denied harboring any Jewish children. So how did Rabbi Silver discover the Jewish children? Dressed as a high ranking U.S. army officer, he would visit the children during bedtime and loudly proclaim “Shema Yisrael” – “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One!” Many children burst into tears and cried out “mommy” in the various languages they spoke. The Shema which their mothers had said to them each night was so deeply ingrained in their minds they had not forgotten it. And that is how the chaplains were able to identify the Jewish children. The Shema saved those Israeli soldiers and rescued three Jewish souls – the suicide bomber and her two children -- from the bowels of Gaza. Something she heard startled her. Her Jewish soul, buried by years of indoctrination, hate and abuse, was stirred. My teacher, Rabbi Noah Weinberg, of blessed memory, would tell the story of Rabbi Silver as a lesson that the Jewish soul always has a pulse. It is our responsibility to find the words that will penetrate. If this story is true, then through his tragic death Lt. Goldin enabled three bewildered Jewish souls to be brought back to their people. With thanks to Rabbi Stephen Baars

Riddle of the week

I can be flipped and broken but I never move. I can be closed, and opened, and sometimes removed. I am sealed by hands. What am I?

Answer to last weeks Riddle

wind