

Congregation

◆◆◆ "Beth Yosef" ◆◆◆

*** 2108 Ocean Parkway Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223 **

Rabbi Aharon Farhi

Parashat AhareMot Kedoshim

8th Iyar 5786

Maqam Bayat & Hijaz

Issue #1158

Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President

Haftarat Halidrosh

April 25th 2026

*Candle Lighting 7:26pm * Shekiah 7:44pm * Shir Hashirim 7:00pm followed by Minha Friday Night
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am * Minha Shabbat 7:10pm * Shabbat Ends 8:27pm & Rabbenu Tam 8:57pm
Time for Talit 4:43am * Seasonal Hour 80 * Alot Hashahar 4:27am * Netz Hachama 6:03am
Weekday Minha 7:00pm * Earliest Time for Arbit 6:43pm * Tzet Hacocharim 8:22pm * Chatzot 12:53
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 8:27am * Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:47am*

Friday May 1st will be Pesah Sheni

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Please do not read this bulletin during Tefillah or Keriat Hatorah

The first Parasha we read this week, *Achare Mot*, discusses services performed during the holy day of Yom Kippur. One very important service involved the bringing of two goats, and the performance of a lottery to decide each goat's destination and fate: One would be sacrificed while the other would be thrown off of a mountain named *Azazel*. What was this mountain? Our Sages teach us that this was a large, steep, rugged mountain laced with jagged sharp rocks all along its sides. Why would we throw a goat off the side of this mountain to its death on the holiest of days? Perhaps we are providing fuel for the fire of the cynics and heretics who constantly crave reason and material to mock the Torah with some of its laws and commandments that seem senseless and purposeless to the uneducated layman, i.e. prohibition of eating pig, prohibition of wearing *Shaatnez* (wool and linen), the laws of Yibum and Chalitzah, the laws of a Metzora, and so on. These types of commandments and laws provide enough doubt and misunderstanding that those who think they should be able to understand everything without studying Torah in depth would face their tests in this world and fail. What do they think is happening here? They understand that this goat is taking all the sins of our holy nation with it and leaving our midst in a haste. But how does this make any sense? Can such a small goat carry such an overwhelming burden of sins? Our Sages teach us: Yes! This does not make sense; however, it is a Chok, a law from Hashem that cannot be understood conventionally. Nonetheless, the

Sforno provides an explanation for understanding: The goat that must receive the sins of the nation is no longer fit to be sacrificed in the Bet Hamikdash because it is now so impure and contaminated that it must be sent to a desolate and fallow area, a place void of people and life, and sent to its end. These two goats represent the two brothers Yaakov and Esav, who were born twins but separated ways in life, as one sacrificed himself to Hashem while the other sacrificed his potential to be lost in this world. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

The second Parasha we read this week, *Kedoshim*, commands and warns: *You shall not be a gossipmonger among your people*. In this Pasuk the Torah is warning us not to speak Lashon Hara about others. Our sages teach us: some sins are offensive to heaven and some are offensive to people. Lashon Hara is a sin that is offensive to both those in heaven and those on earth, as it says in Tehillim: *They set their mouth against heaven, and their tongue struts on earth*. People, who are compared to a ladder that is set earthward whose top reaches heavenward, are composed of a body and a soul, as it says, *Hashem formed the man of dust from the ground, and He blew into his nostrils the soul of life*. The ladder's base which is stationed on earth symbolizes the body of a person, while the top of the ladder which reaches heavenward symbolizes the soul. The angels of Hashem were ascending and descending it. Hashem graces us with blessings and success which descends through people from the world of

the angels above. However, the connection must first be made by the person in order to receive the blessings. The truth is that the type of influence we receive from above could be good or bad, depending on our actions that establish the connection. Our sages teach us: every time we do an action, an angel is created. Once we perform an action and create an angel, we have now established the connection between heaven and earth and can receive the influence. The angels of Hashem were ascending and descending – first ascending to establish the connection, then descending to bring the influence. The Gra says: every word of Torah we learn creates the type of angel that bestows upon us many blessings. The Torah we learn ascends up to the source of our souls and descends upon us to bless our bodies as well. Yaakov Avinu did not want his name to be mentioned with Korach, as it says, *Korach, son of Yitzhar, son of Kehat, son of Levi*, and does not mention son of Yaakov. We must understand: why did Yaakov pray for this – everyone knows that Levi was Yaakov's son. What did Yaakov gain? Let's explain: we know that Korach had Ruach Hakodesh and saw that Shemuel Hanavi would descend from his offspring. Korach must've been a great person to be able to have Ruach Hakodesh. His soul must have been from a source very deep in heaven. When such a person sins with Lashon Hara, the destruction he causes in heaven is very harsh and reaches even the souls of his forefathers. Yaakov Avinu saw that the damage would reach Yitzhar, Kehat, and even Levi. He therefore prayed for mercy that the damage not reach him as well. Korach has done much damage, but received his punishment in this world. The wicked Titus, however, who destroyed the Bet Hamikdash and performed a terrible sin and Chilul Hashem in the holiest place on Earth, the Holy of Holies, was not punished on Earth. Even if the Kohen Gadol enters the Holy of Holies when it is not the time of service he immediately dies. Titus, however, walked away without a scratch. Why? Because his actions did not have an effect on the heavens, for he does not have a connection or a soul whose source is in heaven. His source is impurity and cannot have an effect in heaven. He therefore did not die. However, one who speaks Lashon Hara sins terribly and causes much destruction in heaven and on earth. Whenever one speaks against a friend, a congregation, a family, or any part or group of our nation, he creates a prosecuting angel who causes destruction above and then descends and causes more destruction on earth. Our sages teach us: although the generation of Achav served idols, they were still victorious in battle. Why?

Because nobody spoke Lashon Hara! Therefore, the Torah warns us not to speak Lashon Hara. May Hashem watch over us, Amen.

Insights on Pirkei Abot

Rabi Yochanan ben Zakai asked his students two questions. The first: *What is the proper path which a person should choose to walk upon?* Rabi Shimon answers: *One should understand the outcome of his actions.* One who does will not sin, for even though the sin may seem as sweet as honey, it will soon be bitter and as painful as a poisonous snake bite. If a person calculates his actions he will not regret them later. He will have full sight of the situation he faces and not be surprised with the results of his actions. He will learn that a moment of pleasure is just not worth it. The second question: *What is the improper path which a person should stay away from?* Rabi Shimon answers once more: *One who borrows without repaying.* This is the inverse of the first answer. One who does not think of the outcome of his actions will end up in debt. How? Every breath we take, for example, is not just a gift from Hashem; rather, we must use each breath to perform His will. The good we are given is really a type of loan in which we repay by fulfilling the Mitzvot. Therefore, one who does not think about the outcome of his actions ends up borrowing without repaying by not performing as expected.

History in Brief

200 years after the Hurban, calendar year 270. After *Rabbeinu HaKadosh* (Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi) passed away, his son Rabban Gamliel succeeded him as *Nasi*, but he did not live long in that role. When *Rabbeinu HaKadosh* passed away, Rabban Gamliel was already one hundred years old, and he died a few years later. Rabbi Yehuda *Nesi'ah* then took his place. Why was he called *Nesi'ah* (in Aramaic) rather than *HaNasi*? To distinguish him from his grandfather, Rabbi Yehuda *HaNasi*, who was *Rabbeinu HaKadosh*. Rabbi Afes, who was *Rosh Yeshiva* under *Rebbi*, passed away two and a half years into Rabbi Yehuda *Nesi'ah*'s term as *Nasi*. Rabbi Chanina bar Chama then took his place as *Rosh Yeshiva*. Rabbi Yehuda *Nesi'ah* was from the first generation of *Amoraim*. From his time onward, the *Nasi* was no longer given the title *Rabban*, but simply *Rabbi*. In his days, Rav and Shmuel — the great *Amoraim of Babel* — were active. There is a story of a *Talmid Chacham* in *Babel* whom Rav Yehuda of *Babel* had placed under a *Nidduy* (*excommunication*). When Rav Yehuda passed away, there was no sage in *Babel* great enough to release the *Nidduy*, so they sent the man to *Eretz*

Yisrael, to Rabbi Yehuda *Nesi'ah*, who released him from the *Nidduy*. Another story: The Roman Caesar minted new coins in his own honor and sent one *dinar* as a gift to Rabbi Yehuda *Nesi'ah*. Resh Lakish was sitting before him at the time. Rabbi Yehuda said, "What shall I do? If I accept it, he will go and thank his idol. If I refuse it, we will have hatred with the Caesar." Resh Lakish said, "Accept it, and then throw it into a pit in front of his messenger." Rabbi Yehuda replied, "All the more so, this will create hatred!" Resh Lakish said, "Throw it *kil'achar yad* (as if by accident), so the messenger won't realize you did it intentionally." Once the *dinar* was "lost" the Caesar would not be pleased enough to go and offer thanks to his idol.

Health and Recovery

When food consisting of sugar enters into the stomach, the sugar is rapidly absorbed into the bloodstream, and then it resembles a "bomb" that lands on the pancreas, which is the gland responsible for the production of insulin that breaks up the sugar in the body, causing it to produce large amounts of insulin. If you think consuming a teaspoon of sugar will make you feel alive, it is because your blood sugar level will quickly rise. One who is sick with Hypoglycemia, which is a deficiency of glucose in the bloodstream, can benefit from consuming one teaspoon of sugar when he is weak, and then the jargon terminology "bomb" can be understood. However, for a person who is not diabetic, the pancreas secretes insulin to process a teaspoon of sugar, but when a person is sick and cannot process this large amount of sugar, the pancreas must work hard to decompose and digest the sugar, until eventually, with the addition of other factors that overload the digestive system, the pancreas collapses, and the person reaches a diabetic condition, because the system has collapsed and simply cannot function properly. This requires a large amount of calcium from the body, beyond what the body is able to provide, and so sugar is then also responsible for causing osteoporosis. Furthermore, for the purpose of decomposition in the stomach, sugar uses a large quantity of vitamins in order to digest, which the body does not have and cannot provide in such volume. Sugar then causes obesity from eating any foods, because it provides the body with empty calories, low quality, and carbohydrates that immediately turn into fat.

Mussar: Love for Others

Everyone is obligated to love others. The way to develop this is to help others, whether physically,

spiritually, or monetarily. Everyone needs help from others, no matter their financial or spiritual standings. Give gifts to others and show that you care about them. Through these actions you will develop a sense of love for others. Be forgiving and easy going. In business, be honest and courteous to others. Do not be strict or particular with people. Speak softly and kindly. Be careful not to embarrass others, and avoid confrontations. Smile pleasantly to people, for this will enhance the love for one another. Be concerned about the welfare of another, and soften their worries. If one confides their secrets or private issues to you, do not reveal them to anyone. If one angers you, let it pass. Do not listen to talk about the faults or shortcomings spoken of another. Always strive to find the good in people. Follow these steps and you will love others, and be loved by others in turn, and by Hashem, Amen.

Rishon LeTzion -Maran Chacham Ovadia Yosef (1921–2013)

When *Maran* (Chacham Ovadia Yosef) returned to *Eretz Yisrael*, he continued his path of spreading Torah and bringing merit to the public for 65 years. In the introduction to his well-known work *Chazon Ovadia*, he wrote about the troubles that befell him in *Mitzrayim*, and how he had accepted upon himself to publish one of his books that he had written while in Egypt. He ultimately fulfilled this vow, saying, "I wrote this book as a remembrance of my own *Yetziat Mitzrayim (exodus from Egypt)*." Several years later, in 1989, the Rav was compelled to travel to Egypt a second time. The Egyptian authorities wanted to pave a road over part of the Jewish cemetery in Cairo, where several hundred Jews were buried — including great *tzaddikim*, most notably Rabbi Chaim Kapusi, the *Ba'al HaNes*. There was also a need to request that the authorities allow Israelis to renew the search for soldiers missing in the Sinai desert. So the Rav traveled to Cairo, where once again he was received with royal honor.

City of Damascus:

Damascus is a major center for commerce, industry, transportation, and culture. Bedouins travel great distances to shop there. The city has thousands of small workshops, especially in the silk industry and in the crafting of copper, gold, and silver. Damascus is also famous for its dried fruits. Roads extend from it eastward toward Iraq and Turkey, and southward toward Transjordan and Beirut. Damascus had a university founded in 1921, along with institutions of higher learning. It is considered the second most important Arab and

Muslim cultural center, after Cairo. The city is mentioned as early as the days of *Avraham Avinu*, and again in the days of the prophet *Yeshayahu Hanavi*. Around 1400 B.C.E. it was under Egyptian rule, and in 200 B.C.E. its inhabitants rebelled against Egyptian rule. *David HaMelech* conquered the city and brought it under his rule, but in the days of *Shlomo HaMelech* the people rebelled and cast off the Jewish rule. Afterward, the Assyrians came and ruled over Damascus. Later, the Romans ruled the city and handed it over to Queen Cleopatra. Eventually the Arabs and Muslims came and took control of Damascus. During the Roman period, about 10,500 Jews were killed there.

Laws

1- *Tzitzit* strings that have been cut and are no longer fit for the *mitzvah* of *tzitzit* have no inherent *Kedusha* — they are *tashmishi mitzvah* (items used for a *mitzvah*). Nevertheless, one should not treat them disrespectfully, such as by throwing them into the garbage.

2- A *tallit* that has worn out and has no *tzitzit* attached may be used for mundane purposes. However, if it still has *tzitzit* attached, it may not be used for mundane purposes, and some are stringent to require that the *tzitzit* be put away in *genizah*. For a *tallit katan*, however, it is permitted to use it as long as it's not treated disrespectfully.

3- Rice soup - If most of it is rice and the rice grains are whole, the blessing is *Mezonot*. If most of it is water or milk, the blessing is *Shehakol*.

4- Rice cakes where the rice grains are whole and not crushed — the blessing is *Borei Pri Ha'adamah*, because one eats them by chewing them whole, like a wheat kernel, over which one also recites *Ha'adamah*.

5- Pasta such as macaroni or spaghetti — the blessing before is *Mezonot*, and after is *Al HaMichyah*. Even if, before cooking, there was not a *kezayit*, and only after cooking did it expand to more than a *kezayit*, one still recites *Mezonot* before and *Al HaMichyah* after.

6- Pasta soup with lots of broth, which is eaten primarily by drinking — the water is considered primary, and one recites *Shehakol*. If one then wants to eat the noodles themselves, one recites *Mezonot* on them. The usual rule — that a food containing one of the five grains requires *Mezonot* and exempts the second item — does not apply here. Rather, one recites two separate blessings: *Shehakol* on the broth, and then *Mezonot* on the noodles because if one were to recite *Mezonot* first, it would exempt the broth (the *Shehakol*).

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