



פרשת כי תשא

שבת פרה

אדר תשע"ז

YESHIVAS MORDECHAI HATZADDIK

Now an annual tradition, over 50 boys and their fathers dedicated part of their Purim morning to Torah study at the Yeshivas Mordechai Hatzaddik.

In full costumes, the boys spent 40 minutes learning followed by a Purim shpiel puppet show produced and played by our very own Rabbi Reuven Centner.

PESACH COUNTDOWN

Kollel is running a full program of shiurim to help you get into the spirit of Yomtov.

HALOCHA FOR MEN

All men are invited to a 2-week series on Hilchos Pesach.

Tuesday Nissan 1 - March 28

Halachos of Taarvos Chometz

Rabbi Michoel Stern

Tuesday Nissan 8 - April 4

Matzah at the Seder

Rabbi Michoel Stern

8:45-9:30pm in the lunchroom

SHAALOS UTESHUVOS

The Shaalos and Teshuvos shiur will be exploring Pesach related Shaalos.

Join us this Sunday for a Teshuvah on the topic of Homeopathic medicines on Pesach and year round.

Sunday 9:30am in Kollel.

MIVTZA HALOCHA

Once again the Kollel has produced our Mivtza Halocha booklet to help you cover the Halachos of the Seder in the lead-up to Pesach.

Get your copy today!

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem

אין בית המדרש בלא
חידוש Chiddush



In this Edition

The two experiences of love **P.1**

Kohanim visiting Kivrei Tzaddikim **P.2**

The two experiences of love

One of the constant Mitzvos is to love Hashem. The source of this Mitzvah comes from Shema where we recite **ואהבת את ה' אלקיך**.

The word **ואהבת** can have two meanings. On one hand it reflects a directive or instruction - *And you shall love* - i.e. a commandment for us to love Hashem. The same word can also reflect an assurance for the future - *And you will love* Hashem.

The first interpretation suggests a love that we are able to attain and develop on our own. The second suggests that the love will come by itself, automatically, without any effort on our part.

Chassidus explains that both meanings are true because they describe two different levels and experiences of love of Hashem.

The lower form of love is a love which is created through meditation. The nature of the human psyche is that when we focus on an object in our mind in a deep and personal way, it arouses an emotional response towards that object. By meditating on the greatness of Hashem and the truth of His oneness, our hearts are inspired with a love for Hashem and a desire to draw closer to Him.

But this earthly, created love, is limited by the natural limitations of human intellect and the extent of our reflection.

A more powerful love is the experience of love which Hashem grants to a person. This love is deeper and stronger than any love which can be achieved through our understanding. It is a love which transcends rationale.

The former type of love is within our ability to create. And so each one of us is commanded to develop this type of love for Hashem through meditation.

The second type of love is bestowed from above and not everyone merits this revelation. Since it is not within our control to generate, there is no commandment for us to attain it. All we have is an assurance that eventually it will come to us.

Parshas Ki Sisa opens with the Mitzvah of the

Machatzis Hashekel, the half Shekel coin which was given by each Jewish male over the age of 20 as an offering to Hashem.

On a deeper level, the Parsha of Machatzis Hashekel encapsulates the Avodah of Ahavas Hashem and its two dimensions.

The Shekel was a silver coin. In Kabbalah, silver represents the emotion of love. The word **נכסף** is related to the terminology of **נכסוף נכספת** (Breishis 31:30) meaning "you have yearned" or "desired". Shekel, related to the word **משקל**, means "weight". Both experiences of love is "measured" according to the extent of our meditation or the allotment bestowed upon us.

Each experience of love is connected to the number 10; The lower form of love which is spawned by intellect permeates all 10 facets of the Neshama. The love bestowed from above comes via the 10 Divine Sefiros.

When we have the experience of both levels of love, this creates a total experience of Ahavah, a full Shekel of Silver. The whole Shekel weighs 20 *Geirah*, alluding to the two sets of 10 of the two loves.

But we cannot be commanded to give a full Shekel because a whole Shekel is not within our control to give. Instead we are expected to give half a Shekel, to achieve the lower form of love which is within our reach.

Who must give a half Shekel? Every person, whether rich or poor. Whether we are spiritually wealthy or impoverished, Hashem expects us to deliver our half and we are capable of giving it.

Even those who the Torah describes as **כל העובר על** **הפקודים** must give a half Shekel. Literally this phrase means "those who are being counted". However it can also mean "all those who have transgressed the commandments". Even when we have sinned, Hashem sees us as capable of loving him.

Eventually we will have the full Shekel when Hashem reciprocates our half Shekel with His half Shekel and His assurance of **ואהבת** is fulfilled.

Kohanim visiting Kivrei Tzaddikim

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Parshas Parah discusses the laws of *Tumas Meis* (impurity from contact with the dead).

Impurity can be contracted from contact with a *Meis*, carrying a *Meis*, walking over graves or being in an Ohel (under the same roof) with a *Meis*. Additionally a Kohen is required to remain at least 4 Amos (approx. 2 metres) away from a grave or dead body.

One of the Halachic questions discussed is whether *Tumas Meis* applies to the bodies and graves of Tzaddikim or not.

The relevance of this Shaalah would be whether Kohanim are able to visit sites such as Maaras Hamachpeilah, Kever Rochel, the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai in Meiron or other Kivrei Tzaddikim.

The Midrash¹ relates that when Rabbi Akiva was murdered by the Romans, Eliyahu Hanovi took care of his burial, carrying him on his shoulder. Rabbi Yehoshua Hagarsi (a Talmid or Rabbi Akiva) saw Eliyahu carrying Rabbi Akiva's body and asked how he was able to be involved in the burial if he was a Kohen? Eliyahu Hanovi replied "there is no *Tumah* with Talmidei Chachamim or their disciples".

But there are sections of the Gemora which suggest otherwise.

Pesach Sheini came about because a group of individuals who were impure from contact with the dead, would miss out on bringing the Korban Pesach. The Gemora² reveals that these individuals were those who carried the body of Yosef. We see clearly from this, that the bodies of Tzaddikim convey *Tumah*.

Elsewhere the Gemora³ teaches that Rabbi Benaah would mark the graves of the Avos. Rashbam and Tosfos⁴ explain that he did so in order that the Kohanim would know to stay away from them on account of *Tumah*.

(Rabbi Yaakov Emden - Yaavetz⁵, who rules that *Kivrei Tzaddikim* do not convey *Tumah*, explains that Rabbi Benaah marked the graves so that people would know where they are to be able to daven there in a time of need).

Usually, we do not derive Halachic rulings from Midrashim, especially when they are contradicted by the Gemara⁶. Nonetheless the Rishonim offer various explanations to resolve the contradiction with the Midrash.

Tosfos⁷ (Rabbeinu Tam) explains that the reason Eliyahu Hanovi took part in the burial of Rabbi Akiva was because it had the status of a

Meis Mitzvah. Since those executed by the government were not allowed to be buried, no one else was able to take care of the *Kevurah*. A Kohen is allowed to become impure for a *Meis Mitzvah*. His answer to Rabbi Yehoshua "there is no *Tumah* with Talmidei Chachamim" was only a *Dechiya*, a throw-away answer to push him off.

Ritva⁸ resolves the Midrash in a similar manner, that Rabbi Akiva had the status of a *Meis Mitzvah*. Unlike Tosfos, Ritva explains that this would be true even if there were relatives who could take care of the burial. This is because it is considered as the honour of a *Nosi* or other Torah giant that everyone participate in the burial, even Kohanim.

But not all of the Rishonim take this view.

Ramban⁹ indicates that we cannot say that Eliyahu's response was just a *Dechiya*. Were it not actually the Halacha, he would be issuing rulings which are not according to Torah. Further this would be a violation of *Lifnei Iver* (placing a stumbling block in front of the blind) as those who heard his ruling would believe that this is the Halacha and would act accordingly.

Rashba¹⁰ likewise attacks the position of Rabbeinu Tam that Eliyahu was merely pushing away Rabbi Yehoshua's question. This is also the position of Sefer Hachinuch¹¹.

In his commentary on Parshas Chukas (Parshas Parah) Ramban writes clearly that the bodies of Tzaddikim do not cause *Tumah*. He explains that *Tumas Meis* only applies to those who died on account of the "seduction of the snake". Those who pass away with *Neshikah* (Divine kiss) do not cause impurity¹².

The Poskim however suggest that even Ramban's lenient position may be limited only to the actual burial of Tzaddikim.

The Gemora¹³ teaches that on the day Rebbe (Rabbi Yehuda Hanosi) passed away the *Kedusha* of the Kohanim was nullified and Kohanim were allowed to become defiled. The Gemora indicates that it was only on the day of passing. This fits Ritva's explanation that a *Nosi* has the status of a *Meis Mitzvah*, an allowance which only applies to the actual burial itself. Therefore even according to this view, one would not be able to rely on it to permit visiting Kivrei Tzaddikim.

Based on this Gemora, Rabbeinu Chaim Kohen (one of the Baalei Tosfos) said that were he present when Rabbeinu Tam passed away, he would have become defiled for his burial¹⁴. Beis Yosef questions this as Rabbeinu Tam was not a *Nosi*. He writes that Rabbeinu Chaim must hold that the

allowance applies to any *Godol Hador*. Beis Yosef writes that we do not follow this.

The Raava" d¹⁵ has an interesting Shitah. Nowadays since Kohanim are all impure anyway, there is no longer any prohibition on them becoming impure. This is also the opinion of the Sefer Mitzvos Gadol¹⁶.

However the majority of Rishonim maintain that *Tumas Meis* remains inforce today.

The vast majority of Poskim¹⁷ maintain that there is an *Issur Gamur* for Kohanim to visit the gravesites of Tzaddikim. Rabbi Shlomo Kluger writes that a Kohen who does so desecrates their *Kehunah* and cannot be called a Kohen! Even on the day of the burial itself we cannot be lenient nowadays. Kitzur Shulchan Aruch¹⁸ writes that it is a mistaken practise and one must protest.

A noted voice of dissent in the Minchas Elozor¹⁹ who writes that it is permissible for Kohanim to visit Kivrei Tzaddikim of their Rebbe. However it is preferable to refrain from doing so as it may lead to Kohanim being lenient for any Rabbi or Talmid Chacham.

At the funeral of the Sfas Emes they asked the Avnei Nezer whether a Kohen was allowed to be involved with the *Kevurah*. He replied "Chas Veshalom"!

In a letter²⁰, the Rebbe refers to a letter from the Alter Rebbe's brother, the Mahari"l concerning the fence which was erected around the Alter Rebbe's Tziyun in Haditch. In another letter²¹ the Rebbe writes that he is not pleased with the practise, noting that at the Ohel in Lubavitch there were markers to restrict Kohanim from approaching. The Rebbe continues to explain that at the Ohel of the Friedrike Rebbe a wall of 10 Tefachim tall was erected and that Kohanim may enter (as long as they stay 4 Tefachim away from the grave itself).

-
1. Mishlei Parsha 9 also quoted in Yalkut Shimoni. Known as the Midrash Asarah Harugei Malchus
 2. Sukkah 25a
 3. Bava Basra 58a
 4. Ibid. Also Ritva and Nimukei Yosef and Rif (Teshuva 313)
 5. Hagahos on Bava Metziah 85b
 6. Sefer Haeshkol
 7. Bava Metziah 114b
 8. Megillah 3b
 9. Yevamos 61b
 10. Chiddushim 61a
 11. Mitzvah 263
 12. See also Kli Yakar Parshas Emor who writes likewise
 13. Kesubos 103b
 14. Tosfos Kesubos 103b
 15. Hilchos Nezirus 5:17
 16. Positive Mitzvah 231
 17. Including Avnei Nezer (YD 468), Noda Biyehuda, Chasam Sofer, Shlomo Kluger (Tuv Taam Vedaas YD 2:231), Bikurei Yaakov (20). See Shu"t Yechave Daas 4:58
 18. 202:14
 19. 3:64
 20. Shaar Halacha uMinhag 3:150
 21. ibid