



פרשת אחרי קדושים  
אייר תשפ"ג  
שנת הקהל



**HAKHEL IN THE PARSHA**

In Parshas Kedoshim we read the Mitzvah of Ahavas Yisroel, loving a fellow Jew. Hillel teaches that the essence of the entire Torah is Ahavas Yisroel and Rabbi Akiva taught that this is a Klal Gadol Batorah.

One of the major themes of Hakhel is the unity of the Jewish people. Hakhel was a re-experiencing and recommitment to Matan Torah. At Har Sinai, the Jewish people were also in a state of absolute unity. So too at Hakhel, there had to be a gathering of all of Klal Yisroel together.

During the Hakhel year, we have to strengthen our Ahavas Yisroel. For this reason, the Rebbe would hold the Esrog together with the Lulav for the entire Hallel (which is not the usual Chabad custom) as an act of personal Mesiras Nefesh for Achdus during Hakhel.

The Parsha also contains the Mitzvah of fearing (revering) the Mikdash. This refers to how one must conduct themselves in a respectful manner when entering the Beis Hamikdash. The commentators explain that Hakhel took place in the Beis Hamikdash as the holiness of the place would cast awe on the people. The fear of Hashem was one of the key objectives of the Hakhel gathering.



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**Burn it low and slow**

The pinnacle of the Avodah of Yom Kippur was when the Kohen Gadol would enter the Kodosh Hakodoshim to offer the Ketores. He would place a panful of glowing coals on the floor between the poles of the Aron and sprinkle the Ketores onto the coals. The Ketores, which included the Maaleh Ashan ingredient would produce a smoke that would rise up and fill the room.

Our Sages teach that the Kohen Gadol should not scatter the incense over the coal so that the smoke would rise quickly. Rather he should place the Ketores in one pile on top of the coals, so that the smoke will take a longer time to rise.

Chassidus teaches us that there are deeper levels and meanings to every Mitzvah and detail in the Torah. Whilst the physical aspect of the Mitzvah of the Ketores on Yom Kippur can no longer be observed, the inner, spiritual lessons in Avodas Hashem remain. Whilst the physical Mitzvah could only be observed by the Kohen Gadol, when it comes to the inner dimension of the Mitzvah, we all become the Kohen Gadol in the Kodosh Hakodoshim.

The Ketores (coming from the word קטר, which means a knot) represents the deep oneness between Hashem and the Jewish people. This union takes place in the Kodosh Hakodoshim, which is referred to in Tanach as the Chadar Hamitos, the bedroom, which is the private space where the bonds of intimacy take place.

Chassidus and Kabbalah draw on the relationship between husband and wife as a metaphor for the relationship between Hashem and Jewish people. Just as the union of husband and wife produces offspring, our union with Hashem creates spiritual offspring.

Concerning conception, our sages teach “When a woman gives seed first, she will give birth to a male. When a man gives seed first, she will give birth to a female”.

The result of our deep connection to Hashem is the ‘birth’ of emotional experience – our feelings of love and awe for Him.

Our connection with Hashem can be initiated in one of two ways. It can be initiated ‘from below to above’ through our own efforts in meaningful Avodah to draw closer to Him. It can also be aroused by a powerful G-dly revelation ‘from above to below,’ initiated by Hashem as He draws close to us.

When our union with Hashem is initiated through our own Avodah (the ‘woman’), it creates strong, deep and enduring emotions, represented by the strength of male offspring. This Avodah takes much time and effort in Hisbonenus, meditation on the greatness of Hashem.

It is ‘quicker’ and easier when the union comes from a direct revelation from Above (the ‘Man’), but the emotions that this arouses within us will be weaker, represented by the female offspring. This connection (קטר) would be like scattering the Ketores on the coals, which would cause the Ketores to burn quickly.

The Halacha is that the Kohen Gadol had to pile the Ketores on the coals so that it would burn slowly. The sages are teaching us that to be truly meaningful and lasting, the deep connection that we attain on Yom Kippur, has to come through our own, slow and focused efforts.

~ Based on the writings of the Tzemach Tzedek in Or Hatorah Vayikra 1 page 284

1. This is today’s equivalent of calling for the midwife. Ketzos Hashulchan 140 writes that it is preferable to bring a midwife to the home rather than travel to a hospital on Shabbos. However, the Poskim nowadays agree that because of the better medical care in hospital, ... possibly less Chilul Shabbos in hospital than for a home delivery.
2. Taxi verses uber
3. Rabbi Gavriel Zinner Nitei Gavriel Niddah 3, 58:9
4. See lengthy Teshuvah in Nitei Gavriel volume 3 who strongly writes that one may not call a Jewish doula or coach or for them to come to the birth in a manner of Chillul Shabbos, endorsed by Rav Neiman.
5. Shevet Halevi 3:92
6. Minchas Yitzchak 8:30
7. See Igros Moshe Orach Chaim 2:103
8. If the hospital does not provide food, one may bring food for the companion as well. If they do not have food to eat, they will not be capable of serving as a full-support for the Yoledes.
9. This refers primarily to the husband of companion. We do not bother the Yoledes to wear Bigdei Shabbos. She may wear clothing that is most comfortable for her in labour.

## Childbirth on Shabbos - part 2

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

### Contacting the hospital

If one is unsure about anything relating to labour progression, such as whether things are normal, if the waters break or any reason for concern, or to determine when to come in to the hospital, one is allowed to call the doctor, midwife or hospital<sup>1</sup>. One should dial with a Shinui if possible, such as the back of one's knuckle.

### Driving to the hospital

Technically, even a Jew may drive a woman in labour to the hospital. However, as discussed above, it is preferable to minimise Chillul Shabbos by doing things with a Shinui or through a non-Jew.

Additionally, a Jew is only allowed to perform only those actions that are necessary for the woman in labour. This would add additional complications. For example, one would need to deactivate the door-lights before Shabbos so that they do not go on when opening the door on Shabbos. Additionally, one would be unable to turn off the car on arrival. Driving around to find parking would also be questionable. Therefore, it is preferable to be driven to the hospital by a non-Jew for example by taking a taxi or uber<sup>2</sup>.

One should ask the non-Jew to open and close car doors as doing so would cause the lights to go on and off. One should ask the non-Jew to handle anything that is Muktzah and to carry the bags into and out of the car and into the hospital if there is no Eruv. If the above is not possible one should do these things with a Shinui.

### Paying for the ride

If possible, one should pre-arrange with a car service to be able to pay after Shabbos. If this is not possible, one should estimate and prepare the required amount of money in an envelope and show it to the non-Jew to take. One may also show the non-Jew where to take one's credit card from in order to process payment.

If this will not be possible, one should handle the Muktzah or make the payment via a Shinui. When booking the car through Uber as opposed to by phoning a cab, the payment will be automatically processed.

### Who can go

The husband or mother may travel with the woman in labour to accompany her. Even though they are not personally in Sakanah, they may accompany the Yoledes for the purpose of Yesuva Daata (to calm her) and also to be present in case she needs to deliver on the way to the hospital, or to be an advocate in the hospital.

As seen above, Chaza"l allow even the performance of a Melacha Deoraisa such as lighting a candle purely for the sake of a woman's calmness. Sitting as a passenger in a car has no Biblical Melacha involved and will certainly be permitted.

Some Poskim<sup>3</sup> are strict and will only allow one person to accompany the Yoledes, either the husband or mother, but not both, even if they are all travelling in the same car and even if a non-Jew is driving. This is because of Zilzul Shabbos – a cheapening of Shabbos due to the excessive and casual desecration. Since the husband and mother give support in different ways and since the basis for permitting others to accompany the Yoledes is because of Yesuva Daata, the argument for having both accompany her is strong – although it will depend on the woman involved.

This is if they are all travelling in the same car. If the husband is going with his wife, it is questionable whether the mother can go in a separate taxi from her own home (and she may certainly not drive herself). One should consult a Rav in advance.

There are Poskim who are likewise strict and write that a Jewish doula or birth-coach may not go along or take her own taxi to the hospital, if the husband or mother will already be with the Yoledes<sup>4</sup>. It was possible that this was because doulas were a novelty at the time and not seen as so important. Nowadays where women rely heavily on doulas, especially when they need an advocate in the hospital, it is presumably a matter of Yesuva Daata and we take a more lenient approach, especially if we know that the Yoledes will be very nervous.

The husband or carer is only allowed to violate Shabbos on account of the Yoledes. After the birth, they may not return by car, even with a non-Jewish driver. The only exception would be if there are young children at home and he needs

to be with them. This is based on the needs of a child. There are stronger grounds to permit a doula to return home with a non-Jewish driver, because she may be required for other births. Additionally, there is a principle in Halacha that if we do not let a person return, they may not agree to go, which would create a situation of Sakanah.

### What may be taken

In a place where there is no Eruv or one is travelling outside of the Eruv, if a Jew will be carrying the bag, one may only pack those things that are necessary for the Yoledes on Shabbos. This may include; clothing, things needed for the delivery, medical papers and toiletries. One may not pack additional items such as things needed for after Shabbos. Muktzah items that are necessary can be included in the bag.

If the bags will be transported and carried by a non-Jew, some authorities allow other things to be added into the same bag as the necessary items. This is based on the premise that "Ribui Shiurim" – where more is being done with the same permissible action, is only forbidden for a Jew, but not for a non-Jew<sup>5</sup>. Still the items being brought must have some need, not things which are not necessary at all<sup>6</sup>.

Not everyone agrees with this position. According to some authorities there is no leniency due to "Ribui Shiurim"<sup>7</sup>.

### What about packing for the husband or companion?

Based on the lenient approach, one could add extra food and items for the husband or companion into the bag that is being carried for the Yoledes. One may not use a separate bag as this would necessitate an additional action to carry. According to the stricter approach, one would not be allowed to add items for the companion into the bag, since they are not in Sakanah<sup>8</sup>.

Some Poskim write that when travelling to the hospital on Shabbos, one should wear Shabbos clothing<sup>9</sup>. Firstly, this serves as a reminder that it is still Shabbos. It also shows that one is keeping the Halachos of Shabbos by going to the hospital etc.