

**Parshah Acharei-Kedoshim in a Nutshell**  
(Leviticus 16:1–20:27)

**Anshei Lubavitch Congregation**

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

*Adult education:*

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

*Youth Outreach:*

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauer

***Shul Temporarily Closed***  
***"Shabbos Schedule"***  
**Please daven at Home**

**Erev Shabbos – May 1 / Iyar 7**

Candle Lighting ..... 7:36 pm

**Shabbos Day – May 2 / Iyar 8**

Shabbos Ends..... 8:40 pm

*\*Latest morning Shema is now 9:21 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema before that time).*

**Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):**

***Shul Temporarily Closed***  
**Please daven at home.**

**Incense Portion**

*Exodus 30:22–38*

Although we unfortunately no longer have the Temple, the Kabbalists say that by reading the portion in the Torah that discusses the incense, it is as if one actually brought it. Thus, although many have the custom to recite this portion daily, one should take extra care to learn and recite it at the time of an epidemic.

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." ❖

*Upon recommendation of the Dept of Health, local hospitals, and the Rabbinical Council, the shul will be closed until further notice.*

**Charity**

In late 1827 an epidemic broke out in the city of Orsha (near the city of Lubavitch), in which three or four people were dying daily, the in-habitants turned to his son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel, later known as the Tzemach Tzedek, for advice.

In addition to quoting a story in the Zohar about reading the portion of the ketoret during an epidemic, the Tzemach Tzedek suggested that, in light of the verse in Proverbs "And charity will save from death," they should add in charity. However, he stressed that, as is explained in Tanya, it is preferable to give charity many times throughout the day (especially before prayer) in smaller denominations than just giving one large sum, even if it equals the same amount. Ideally, the total sum of each day should be a multiple of 18.

Eruv website:

[www.fairlawneruv.com](http://www.fairlawneruv.com)

Eruv Hotline: 201-254-9190.

**Halachic Zmanim**

Shabbos, May 2

Daylight Savings Time

Earliest Tallis ..... 4:51 AM  
Latest Morning Shema ..... 9:21 AM  
Earliest Mincha (Gedola).. 1:30 PM  
Plag Hamincha ..... 6:30 PM  
Earliest Evening Shema .... 8:24 PM

## Chassidic Masters

### 24,000 Plus One

*Based on the teachings of  
the Lubavitcher Rebbe  
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

There once was a man who had twenty-four thousand disciples. He taught them to love, but their love was too absolute, too true, to be loving. They died, and their death spawned a period of mourning that darkens our calendar to this very day.

This man had one disciple who devoted his entire life—literally his every minute—to the pursuit of truth. Yet his truth was true enough to love. He, too, passed from this world, and the anniversary of his passing is celebrated as a day of joy and festivity to this very day.

This, in a word, is the story of Lag BaOmer—the story of Rabbi Akiva and his greatest disciple, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

#### **A Celebrated Death**

The 18th of Iyar is Lag BaOmer—the 33rd day of the Omer count, which spans the seven weeks from Passover to Shavuot. Two joyous occasions are associated with this day. During the Omer period we mourn the deaths of 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva who died in a plague because, as the Talmud informs us, “they did not conduct themselves with respect for each other”; Lag BaOmer is the day on which the plague ended and the dying ceased. Lag BaOmer is also the anniversary of the passing of

Rabbi Akiva’s greatest disciple, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Before his death (many years later, without connection to the plague), Rabbi Shimon referred to the day of his passing as “the day of my happiness” and instructed his disciples that it be observed each year as a day of joyous celebration.

Why is the passing of Rabbi Akiva’s other disciples mourned as a national tragedy, while the passing of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai is remembered with celebration and joy? Indeed, the very same day that celebrates the end of the dying of Rabbi Akiva’s disciples celebrates the death of his greatest disciple! To unravel the paradox of Lag BaOmer, we must first examine the root of the disrespect that caused the plague amongst Rabbi Akiva’s disciples.

Rabbi Akiva taught that “‘Love your fellow as yourself’ is a cardinal principle in the Torah”; indeed, this is the most famous of his teachings. One would therefore expect that Rabbi Akiva’s disciples would be the foremost exemplars of this principle. How was it that they, of all people, were deficient in this area?

But their very diligence in fulfilling the precept “Love your fellow as yourself” was their undoing. Our sages have said that “just as every person’s face differs from the faces of his fellows, so too every person’s mind differs from the minds of his fellows.” When the 24,000 disciples of Rabbi Akiva studied their master’s teachings, the result was 24,000 nuances of

understanding, as the same concepts were assimilated by 24,000 minds—each unique and distinct from its 23,999 fellows. Had Rabbi Akiva’s students loved each other less, this would have been a matter of minor concern; but because each disciple loved his fellows as he loved himself, he felt compelled to correct their erroneous thinking and behavior, and to enlighten them as to the true meaning of their master’s words. For the same reason, they found themselves incapable of expressing a hypocritical respect for each other’s views when they sincerely believed that the others’ understanding was lacking, even in the slightest degree.

The greater a person is, the higher are the standards by which he is judged; in the words of our sages, “With the righteous, G-d is exacting to a hairsbreadth.” Thus, what for people of our caliber would be considered a minor failing had such a devastating effect upon the disciples of Rabbi Akiva.

#### **The Thirteenth Year**

But there was one disciple of Rabbi Akiva who learned to overcome the pitfalls of uncompromising love and uncompromising truth, as exemplified by the following incident in the life of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai:

The Talmud relates that when the Roman rulers of the Holy Land placed a price on the heads of Rabbi Shimon and his son Rabbi Elazar, they hid in a cave for twelve years.

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During this time, they spent every minute of their day studying Torah. When they emerged from the cave, they were shocked to discover people plowing and sowing: how could people set aside the eternal life that is Torah, and occupy their days with the transitory life of the material? So intense was their wrath at such folly that whatever met with their burning glance went up in flames. Proclaimed a voice from heaven: "Have you come out to destroy My world? Return to your cave!" Rabbi Shimon's thirteenth year of study, while increasing his knowledge and appreciation of the truth of Torah, also taught him the value of endeavors other than his own. Now, wherever he went, his look would heal rather than destroy.

The 4,000-year history of Jewish learning has known many great and diligent students of Torah; yet none epitomized the absolute devotion to the pursuit of the divine truth to the extent exemplified by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Throughout the writings of our sages, his example is cited as the ultimate case of *torato umnato*, "one whose study of Torah is his sole vocation."

Certainly, then, Rabbi Shimon's commitment to truth was no less absolute than that of Rabbi Akiva's other disciples. Yet his truth was true enough to love. In his thirteenth year in the cave, he attained a dimension of the divine truth that tolerates, indeed embraces, the many and diverse avenues of connection to G-d which the Creator has provided to a humanity whose minds, characters and temperaments are as diverse as their number. In his thirteenth year in the cave, Rabbi Shimon attained a level of truth in which he could utterly devote himself to the eternal life that is Torah, and advocate such devotion for everyone else, and at the same time appreciate and respect the path of those who serve G-d via the temporal life of material endeavors.

So the very same day that celebrates the end of the plague amongst Rabbi Akiva's disciples also celebrates the passing of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

The chassidic masters explain that the passing of a righteous person marks the point at which "all his deeds, teachings and works" attain the pinnacle of fulfillment and realization, and the point of their most powerful influence upon our lives. And the deeds, teaching and works of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai are the ultimate rectification of Rabbi Akiva's disciples' tragic failure to achieve the proper synthesis of love and truth that would make their love true and their truth loving.

### **As Yourself**

As noted above, it is only among people of the caliber of Rabbi Akiva's disciples that such a failing could bode such devastating results. But our sages chose to record this story for posterity and fix it in our lives with a series of laws that govern our behavior in the weeks between Passover and Shavuot each year. Obviously, we, too, have something to learn from what happened to Rabbi Akiva's disciples.

The lesson is twofold: we must learn from their virtues as well as from their mistakes. We must learn to care enough for our fellowman to not indulge his errors and accommodate his failings. This might be the easiest and most socially comfortable way to behave, but rather than tolerance, it bespeaks an indifference toward his or her welfare. On the other hand, we must never allow our commitment to his betterment to lessen in the slightest our respect and esteem toward him, no matter how misguided and unresponsive he might be.

If this seems paradoxical, it is. But the ability to embrace this paradox is at the very heart of the Torah's commandment to "love your fellow as yourself." For in regard to ourselves, it is a paradox with which we are quite comfortable—every psychologically healthy person loves himself unconditionally and, at the same time, incessantly strives to improve himself.

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This paradox we must also cultivate in our relationship with others: on the one hand, we must never compromise our efforts to improve our fellowman out of respect for his views and feelings; on the other hand, we must never allow these efforts to compromise our love and respect for him.

For to succumb to either compromise is to fail to love him as we love ourselves—a principle which Rabbi Akiva considered fundamental to G-d's blueprint for life, and of which Hillel said: "This is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary." ❖

## From Our Sages

**Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: You shall be holy... (Leviticus 19:2)**

*Rabbi Chiyya taught: This section was spoken in the presence of a gathering of the whole community, because most of the essential principles of the Torah are appended to it.*

*Rabbi Levi said: Because the Ten Commandments are included therein:*

1) "I am the L-rd your G-d," and here it is written, "I am the L-rd your G-d" (Leviticus 19:3, et al).

2) "You shall have no other gods before me," and here it is written, "Nor make to yourselves molten gods" (Leviticus 19:4).

3) "You shall not take the name of the L-rd your G-d in vain," and here it is written, "And you shall not swear by My name falsely" (Leviticus 19:12).

4) "Remember the Sabbath day", and here it is written, "And keep My sabbaths" (Leviticus 19:3).

5) "Honor your father and your mother," and here it is written, "Every man shall fear his mother and his father" (Leviticus 19:3).

6) "You shall not murder," and here it is written, "You shall not stand by the blood of your fellow" (Leviticus 19:16).

7) "You shall not commit adultery," and here it is written, "Both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death" (Leviticus 19:10).

8) "You shall not steal," and here it is written, "You shall not steal, [neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another]" (Leviticus 19:11).

9) "You shall not bear false witness," and here it is written, "You shall not go about as a talebearer" (Leviticus 19:16).

10) "You shalt not covet... any thing that is your fellow's," and here it is written, "Love your fellow as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18).

"It would be desirable that you establish the custom of reciting Tehillim — at least a few kapitlach — in shul during the weekdays as well. Convey to the congregants the words that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, related: that reciting Tehillim protects [a person] from many undesirable matters and draws down abundant good for the needs of every single individual."

-- Lubavitcher Rebbe

16 Iyar, 5711

## Haftarah for Acharei-Kedoshim in a Nutshell

*Amos 9:7-15*

This week's haftarah foretells the exiles and punishments that will befall the Jews because they strayed after the ways of the heathens — behavior that this week's Torah reading proscribes.

The prophet Amos delivers G-d's message, reminding the people of G-d's kindness to them — taking them out of Egypt and singling them out as His chosen nation. Nevertheless, because of their misdeeds, G-d will destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel, but will not completely destroy the house of Jacob. The Jews will be scattered amongst the nations, but eventually they will return to their land — on the day of the redemption. G-d will then reinstall the House of David to its former glory and there shall be peace and abundance upon the land.

The haftarah ends with G-d's promise: "And I will return the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall rebuild desolate cities and inhabit [them], and they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their produce. And I will plant them on their land, and they shall no longer be uprooted from upon their land, that I have given them, said the L-rd your G-d." ❖

## Pirkei Avos – Ethics of the Fathers

Pirkei Avos contains six chapters, and there are six Shabbats between Passover and Shavuot. Every Shabbat, customarily after the afternoon Minchah prayers, we study one chapter. After the Jews left Egypt, they embarked on a period of self-refinement and character improvement. This was critical in order that they be worthy of receiving the Torah on Shavuot. While counting the Omer, we too try to perfect our character. To assist in achieving this goal, we study Avos, the tractate which is devoted to piety, humility, kindness and ethics.

*The Talmud teaches that the best vaccine against all illness is a healthy confidence in the Director of the Universe.*

**From all of us at Anshei-Lubavitch, we hope and pray for the safety and health of you and your loved ones. May the Almighty protect us all and send complete healing to those who need healing. And may our world very soon find the ultimate cure to all diseases with the coming of Moshiach, sooner than we can imagine.**

**Good Shabbos to all!**

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

