

ties is beyond question.

We may ask ourselves some personal questions, though. Can these activities be the totality of our Jewish living? Do our communal efforts fulfill our obligations as Jews? Can we expect people far far away to put Judaism into action, so we may safely forget to look to the ways of our own households? What are our own homes like?

All the activities, projects, chairmanships, committees, offices, minutes of meetings, motions and tabled motions, national and regional and local honors, districts, chapters, conventions and conclaves -- all these are no substitute for being a good Jewish father and mother. Nor do these activities absolve us in any way of personally keeping the commandments of the Torah.

We have responsibilities to ourselves, our families, our people, and all these obligations may enjoy peaceful and fruitful coexistence. This we see from the High Priest who looked (note the order) to "himself, his family, and the entire congregation."

## Live & Laugh

Moishe and Miriam, both a bit stubborn, were involved in a petty argument, both of them unwilling to admit they might be in error.

"I'll admit I'm wrong," Miriam told her husband in a conciliatory attempt, "if you'll admit I'm right." Moishe agreed and, like a gentleman, insisted she go first. "I'm wrong," Miriam said. With a twinkle in his eye, Moishe responded, "You're right!"

A police recruit was asked during the exam, "What would you do if you had to arrest your own mother?" He answered, "Call for back-up."

## What's Nu?!

### The Barmy Boy Yair Barouchi

Mazal Tov to Yisrael & Chofit Barouchi and grandparents Adi & Oded Zino.

## Calendar

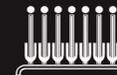
- ◆ Shacharis 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
- ◆ Shul Brocha in the Seeff Hall sponsored by the **Barouchi Family** in honour of Yair's Bar Mitzvah.
- ◆ **Smorgasbord of Shiurim**
- ◆ Mincha: 4:55 pm
- ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 3
- ◆ Shabbos ends: 6:07 pm
- ◆ Mincha from Sunday: 5:30 pm

- ◆ The **Scottish Leader Signature** whiskey at Shul is sponsored by **Distell** & available for purchase at **Norman Goodfellows**.
- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011 887 5456/082 854 5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
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- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



Published by the  
Sydenham Highlands North  
Hebrew Congregation  
Johannesburg, South Africa

# Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!



6 May 2017

Parshas Acharei-Kedoshim

10 Iyar 5777

## Eternally Grateful

by: *Rabbi Yossy Goldman*

Respecting our parents seems to become more difficult as we get older. When we were small, we didn't really have much choice. We were totally dependent on them. Then we became adolescents. Not easy then to fulfill the 5th Commandment. "Honour Thy Father and Mother" is much easier said than done for a teenager for whom autonomy is the call of the hour.

But it seems to me that it gets even more complicated as we ourselves become mature adults. What happens when a parent is aging ungracefully? What if they are becoming irritable, cantankerous and just plain difficult? Becoming old and forgetful isn't pretty. And it can make a child's responsibility quite a challenge.

Perhaps that is why this week's Parsha, Kedoshim, tells us *Ish imo v'aviv tirau* – *Every man: your mother and father shall you revere*. *Ish* means a man, or an adult. In other words, the Torah is telling us clearly; even when you are an adult you still have the moral obligation to show respect and reverence for your parents. It doesn't matter that you are the world's busiest executive or that your social calendar is filled with important events. You are still a child. That person helped bring you into this world, fed you, clothed you, changed your dirty nappies and educated you. Yours is a lifetime debt of gratitude.

The late Rabbi Yirmiyah Aloy *olov hashalom* told an interesting story of when he was visiting the United States and looked up some old

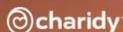
friends who were living in an old age home. He asked them whether their children visited them regularly. The old man's answer was a quote from *Tehillim*, the Book of Psalms (68,20). *Baruch Hashem Yom Yom...* Blessed is Hashem for every day... Rabbi Aloy was most impressed. "Every single day your children come to visit you? That's fantastic." "No, Rabbi, you don't understand," explained the old man. "*Yom yom*, two days a year – Mother's Day and Father's Day!" That's what we would call *ab bittere gelechter* – a sad joke.

There is no question that there are times when the best thing for older people is a caring, well-run institution. The least we can do then is to visit regularly.

And the longer people can be independent the better. But without trying to lay guilt trips on anyone, let me share an example I myself saw as a young boy growing up in Brooklyn.

My grandmother passed away and my grandfather came to live with us. I had the privilege of being his roommate, on and off, for some 12 years. At times, I would help him with the accounting for the Gemilus Chesed Fund that he operated from the house. This Community Free Loan Fund was distributing over a million dollars in interest-free loans annually. I also remember helping him cut his toenails that were difficult for him to reach.

But far more than I helped him, he helped me. He was a special role model for me. Though he wore a rabbinical hat and a long beard, he never preached. His presence and his personality were enough of a message to me as a confused adolescent searching for my way in life. I can honestly say that without



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his quiet inspiration I would probably never have become a Rabbi. He never even knew what a profound influence he had on my life.

So while it may be true that older people can be difficult - I remember Zayde being impatient and irritable at times too - the rewards far outweigh the sacrifices.

Oh, there's one more thing. At the end of the day, the way we will treat our parents is likely to be the way our children will treat us.

## Parsha Pointers

*Acharei-Kedoshim: Artscroll pg 636; Living Torah pg*

We read about the Yom Kippur service in the Holy Temple. It also features the casting of lots over two goats, one for the altar and the other the scapegoat.

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 himself or herself and relates to the holiness of G-d.

These include: the prohibition against idoltry, 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."

## Don't Be Holy!

*By Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe*

This week's Torah portion contains the directive to the Jewish people: "*Kedoshim tihiyu*," always translated as "You shall be holy."

The English word "holy" indicates G-dly,

otherworldly, a state of being that is fundamentally different from the norms of everyday life. Indeed, the OED suggests that the word's etymology is derived from the same root as "wholly"—something entirely dedicated to G-d.

When we turn, however, to that which this week's reading describes as "*kadosh*" (holy), we notice that mixed in with laws about the Temple and the like (your typical "holy" stuff) we have laws about leaving a portion of our fields to the poor and laws about not lying to each other. We have laws about the Shabbat; one of whose most important precepts is to enjoy ourselves, physically, on that day—it is mandatory. We have an absolute obligation to aid an innocent third party being attacked and laws against bearing grudges and engaging in vendettas.

These laws are not devoted to divine and spiritual matters alone. They are about managing the realities of our everyday life in a "*kodesh*" manner.

The actual meaning of the Hebrew word *kodesh* is "separated." But separated in the sense of refinement. When we refine something we separate the substance we desire from extraneous substances that are mixed in with it.

The things that are *kodesh* are the ordinary events and stuff of life; remaining so, but separated from undesirable elements that would dilute and weaken them.

So the doctrine of *kodesh* declares: "Don't abandon the world and everyday life—refine it!"

*Kodesh* tells us:

Don't eschew business and live out of dumpsters—but separate all dishonesty and fuzziness from your marketing.

Don't hesitate to appreciate a really nice wine—but separate it from the rest of your bottles and save it for Shabbat.

Don't live in as state of dreamy oblivion as to your neighbour's shortcomings—confront them as necessary. But separate the momentary experience out of your long-term "ledger" and don't bear grudges.

Don't strangle ambition, indeed strive to attain economic success, but separate out the impurities of greed and arrogance and you will be left with gratitude to G-d and generosity to those who lack.

Don't get close to G-d by leaving your everyday life, get close by bringing G-d in to your everyday life. We bring G-d into the places in our being cleared by separating out the "impurities," the negative character traits, the selfishness, and the shallowness.

So, don't be holy; make your life "*kadosh*."

## The Gift of Forgiveness

*By Dr Yisroel Suskind*

*"Resentment is an acid that damages its container."*

From my perspective as a family therapist, the greatest treasure in our Torah-inheritance is the instruction to free ourselves of anger and resentment, especially in dealing with close relationships. Literally hundreds of sources in Jewish writings over the ages warn us that sustained anger is forbidden, destructive and ultimately irrational. The Biblical injunction is found in Leviticus 19:17-19: "You shall not hate your brother in your heart...You shall not take revenge and you shall not bear a grudge."

The Talmud goes on to note that "anyone who foregoes revenge merits that G-d forgives all of his sins." It further advises that G-d loves a person "who does not get angry ... and who does not insist on his due measure." Maimonides goes further, requiring a person to "wipe the wrong from his heart entirely, without remembering it at all." A contemporary psychologist will paraphrase this as "The challenge of relinquishing anger presents an incredible opportunity for personal growth."

Does this mean that we should be passive victims in the face of abuse? Absolutely not! The very same Biblical portion cited above tells us that we must verbally confront someone who has wronged us, in order to avoid hating him in our heart. We must do so directly and emphatically, but without hatred and without destroying the relationship. Similarly, we have an obligation to protect ourselves and not put ourselves in a vulnerable position where the offense may be re-

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peated. At the same time, we need to do so without speaking hostilely or taking an action that goes beyond self-protection, without vengeance, or withdrawing into a cold, judgmental contempt, or prolonged silence.

Many counsellors report a recurring tragic family scenario: Over the years, a man has maintained an angry distance from a relative (a parent, child or sibling). Suddenly, the relative dies, and the man's love, long masked by a veneer of anger, erupts into awareness and the man is racked by regret and guilt. "How could I have wasted these years, when I could have....?"

Traditional Jewish philosophy offers us some protection from such tragedy. Torah says: 1) Do not believe that you cannot forgive...it is always your task to achieve forgiveness; 2) understand that anger and resentment are sustained by irrational thoughts...if you deeply examine your anger, you will identify and correct these cognitive distortions; 3) there is a negative force in the world that seeks to destroy closeness...that force is the source of those irrational thoughts; 4) in personal relationships, underneath anger there is hurt, fear and most importantly, a need to love and be loved.

Consider reaching out to someone in a spirit of loving forgiveness. May it be that, in the merit of your doing so, G-d chooses to reach out to us with the ultimate gift, bringing in the era of Moshiach.

## Community Dis-Service

*By Rabbi Zalman Posner*

In the description of the High Priest's service on Yom Kippur, the Torah notes that "he shall atone for himself and his family and for all the congregation of Israel."

The sense of community responsibility is, fortunately, highly developed among our people. Whether our public concerns are Israel and its infinite problems, or domestic philanthropies of the hospital and Old Folks Home type, or religious institutions like synagogues and schools -- the survival instinct, the desire to perpetuate our people and ideals is a strong motivating force. The urgency of such activi-