

Parashat Aharei Mot

The High Priest's Entrance to the Holy of Holies

LEVITICUS 16:1–34

Aaron the High Priest is not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies except to perform a particular ritual on a specific date. He is not allowed to enter empty-handed; rather, his entrance has to be accompanied by the burning of incense and the sprinkling of the blood of sin offerings to atone for any ritual impurity or sin on behalf of the entire nation. In other words, if any individual, priest or non-priest alike, would approach the sanctified areas or touch consecrated items while in a state of ritual impurity, they would achieve atonement once a year, through the High Priest's entrance into the innermost sanctum on Yom Kippur.

On this day, in addition to receiving atonement for transgressions related to ritual impurity, the nation would also receive absolution for all other sins accumulated over the course of the year. The transgressions would be banished, as it were, to an otherworldly realm.

The previous sections dealt with the sanctity of the children of Israel as expressed in the laws of forbidden foods and the laws of ritual purity and impurity. The following passage returns to the laws that apply specifically to priests.

Not only are the ritually impure mandated to keep their distance from the Sanctuary, but even the ritually pure are prohibited from entering the Sanctum as they please. Furthermore, even

- 16 1 The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they approached before the Lord and they died.** There are different allusions in the Torah as to the reason why Aaron's sons died.¹ The explanation suggested here is that Aaron's sons came too close to God's Presence without receiving His permission.²
- 2 The Lord said to Moses: Speak to Aaron, your brother, that he shall not come at all times into the Sanctum that is within, behind, the curtain, before the cover that is upon the ark, and he shall not die, for it is in the cloud that I will always be seen upon the cover,** that is, the Divine Presence is found on the cover.³ This command alludes to the deaths of Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu, who died because they had approached the Sanctuary in an unfit manner. Although Aaron was the High Priest, not even he was permitted to enter the inner sanctum whenever he pleased.
- 3 With this shall Aaron, or any High Priest of his descendants, come into the Sanctum: with a young bull as a sin offering and a ram as a burnt offering.** The verse explains that the only permissible way to enter the Holy of Holies is by bringing offerings and following the procedures described in the verses that follow. Even so, it is clear from the continuation of the passage that the High Priest may not enter the Holy of Holies whenever he wants, even to perform this procedure; rather, he can enter only one day a year, on Yom Kippur.⁴ Some commentaries, however, hold that Aaron was uniquely permitted to enter the Holy of Holies on any day of the year by following the procedure described here.⁵
- 4 When entering the Holy of Holies, the High Priest is not to wear his standard vestments, which were fashioned from sky-blue and purple wool and gold threads and contained precious gems. Rather, he shall don a sacred linen tunic, and linen trousers shall be on his flesh, and he shall gird himself with**

a linen belt,^d and he shall wear a linen mitre. These four simple garments were worn by common priests as well, and the entire outfit was made from white linen. Most Sages maintain that the only difference between the High Priest's vestments described in this verse and those of the common priest was in the mitre, which differed from the headdress worn by all other priests. Although they are simple, **they are sacred vestments; and therefore he shall bathe his flesh in water, and only then shall he don them.**

- 5 The High Priest's entry into the Holy of Holies is not a private matter; he represents all the children of Israel. Consequently, it is not sufficient for him to sacrifice the bull and ram mentioned above, as these are personal offerings. From the congregation of the children of Israel he shall take two identical goats as a sin offering⁶ and one ram as a burnt offering.** These offerings are brought on behalf of all the children of Israel.
- 6 Aaron shall present the bull of the sin offering that is for him,** which he purchased with his own private funds, **and place his hands on the bull and recite a confession,⁷ and thereby atone for himself and for his household.** The term "household" refers either to his private family or to the broader household of Aaron, all priests.⁸
- 7 After confessing his own transgressions and those of his family, the High Priest performs the rite of atonement on behalf of the nation. He shall take the two goats that were set aside for the people, and he shall set them before the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting.**
- 8 Aaron shall place lots on the two goats,⁹ as the destiny of each of these identical goats will be determined by the lots. One lot shall contain the words for the Lord, or, according to another interpretation, simply, Lord, and on the other lot shall be written the phrase for Azazel.**

אחרי מות

טז א וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן בְּקִרְבָּתָם לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמְרוּ: ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר אֶל־אֶהֱרֹן אָחִיךָ וְאֶל־יָבָא בְכָל־עֵת אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת אֶל־פְּנֵי הַפָּתָח אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָאֹרֶן וְלֹא יָמוּת בִּי בַעֲזֹן אֲדָאָה עַל־הַפָּתָח: ג בְּזֹאת יָבֹא אֶהֱרֹן אֶל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּפָר בֶּן־בָּקָר לְחִטָּאת וְאֵיל לְעֹלָה: ד כְּתַנְתָּ בְּדֹד קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ וּמִכְנָסִי בְּדֹ יִהְיוּ עַל־בָּשָׂרוֹ וּבְאַבְנֵיט בֶּד יַחְגֹּר וּבַמִּצְנֶפֶת בֶּד יַעֲנֹף בְּגָדֵי־קֹדֶשׁ הֵם וְרֹחֵץ בַּמַּיִם אֶת־בָּשָׂרוֹ וּלְבָשָׁם: ה וּמֵאֵת עֲרֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקַּח שְׁנֵי־שְׂעִירֵי עִזִּים וְלַחֲטָאת וְאֵיל אֶחָד לְעֹלָה: ו הַקָּרִיב אֶהֱרֹן אֶת־פָּר הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וּכְפַר בַּעֲדוֹ: ז וּבַעֲדֵי בֵיתוֹ: ח וְלָקַח אֶת־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים וְהָעֶמִיד אֹתָם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד: ט וְנָתַן אֶהֱרֹן עַל־שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים גִּדְּלוֹת גֹּזֶרֶל אֶחָד לַיהוָה וְגֹזֶרֶל אֶחָד לַעֲזָאזֵל:

דש"י

לָבֹן וּמִכְנָסִי לָבֹן לְבָגֵי זָהָב, וּבְכָל חֲלִיפָה טַעוֹן טְבִילָה וְשְׁנֵי קִדְוֵי יָדַיִם וְזִמְזִמָּה מִן הַכִּיּוֹר:

ו | אֵת פֶּר הַחֲטָאת אֲשֶׁר לוֹ. הַמִּנְחָה לְמַעֲלָה (פסוק ג), וְלִמְדֵנוּ כִּי אֵין שְׂמִינִי הוּא בֶּד וְלֹא מִשְׁלַח עֲבוֹד: ז | כְּפַר בַּעֲדוֹ וּבַעֲדֵי בֵיתוֹ. מִתּוֹדָה עָלָיו עֲוֹנוֹתָיו וְעֲוֹנוֹת בֵּיתוֹ:

ח | וְנָתַן אֶהֱרֹן עַל שְׁנֵי הַשְּׂעִירִים גִּדְּלוֹת. מִעֲמִיד אֶחָד לְיָמִין וְאֶחָד לְשִׁמְאֹל, וְנָתַן שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו בְּקִלְפֵי, וְנָטַל גֹּזֶרֶל בְּיָמִין וְחִבְרוֹ בְּשִׁמְאֹל וְנָתַן עָלֵיהֶם, חֵת שְׂכִינָהּ בֹּא לְשֵׁם הוּא לְשֵׁם, וְחֵת שְׂכִינָהּ בֹּא לְעֲזָאזֵל מִשְׁתַּלַּח לְעֲזָאזֵל: עֲזָאזֵל. הוּא הָרַע הַזֶּה וְהַקָּשָׁה, עֵינָהּ גְּבוּהָ, שְׂמִינִי: חֲלֹץ גִּזְרָה" (להלן פסוק כג), חֲתִיכָה:

ג | בְּזֹאת. צִמְטִיקָה שֶׁל חֲרָבָה מֵאֲחֻת וְעֵשֶׂה, קָמוּ לְבֵית רַחֲשׁוֹ. בְּזֹאת יָבֹא אֶהֱרֹן וְגו'. וְחֵף ז' לֹא בְּכָל עֵת, כִּי חֵם בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים, קָמוּ שְׂמִינִי בְּסוּף הַפָּתָח: "בְּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׂבִיעִי בַּעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ" (להלן פסוק כט):

ד | כְּתַנְתָּ בְּדֹד. מִגִּיד שֶׁאֵינוֹ מִשְׁמַשׁ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּשִׁמְנוֹת בְּגָדִים שֶׁהוּא מִשְׁמַשׁ בְּהֵן בְּחֵן, שֶׁשׁ בְּהֵן זָהָב, לְפִי שֶׁאֵינוֹ קָטָנוֹ עֲשֵׂה סִנְאוֹ, חֲלָף בְּחֹדֶשׁ כִּבְהֵן הַדִּיּוֹת, וְכָל שֶׁל בֶּן: קֹדֶשׁ יִלְבָּשׁ. שֶׁהוּא מִשְׁלַח הַקֹּדֶשׁ: יַעֲנֹף. כְּתַנְתָּמוֹ "חֵת בְּרִישִׁיָּה, יַעֲנֵה בְּרִישִׁיָּה, קָמוּ: "וְנָתַן בְּגָדוֹ" (נדרשית לט, טז), "וְחֵת בְּרִישִׁיָּה" וְרֹחֵץ בַּמַּיִם. חֲתִיכָה הוּא טַעוֹן טְבִילָה בְּכָל חֲלִיפָתוֹ, וְחֵם שְׂמִינִי הוּא מִחֲלִיף מִעֲבֹדָת פָּנִים לְעֲבֹדָת חוּץ וּמִחוּץ לְפָנֶיךָ, וּמִשְׁנֵה מִכְנָסִי זָהָב לְבָגֵי

א | וַיִּדְבֹּר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן וְגו'. מֵהַ תַּלְמוּד לומֵד? הֵיכָה רָבִי חֲלֵעָר בֶּן עֲמִרָה מוֹשְׁלֵי מִשְׁלַח לְחֹלָה שְׂנֵיכֶם חֲלָה רֹפֵא, חֲמֵר לוֹ: חֵל תִּחְבֵּל עֲוֹן וְחֵל תִּשְׁכַּב בְּטִיבָה. בֶּד אֶחָד וְחֵמֵר לוֹ: חֵל תִּחְבֵּל עֲוֹן וְחֵל תִּשְׁכַּב בְּטִיבָה, שֶׁלֹּא תִמּוֹת כְּדָךְ שְׂמִית פְּלוּגִי, זֶה זְכוּוֹ יִחְדָּר מִן הַרְשָׁאוֹ, לָכֵן נִחְמָד: "אַחֲרֵי מוֹת שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אֶהֱרֹן":

ב | וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה דַּבֵּר אֶל אֶהֱרֹן אָחִיךָ וְאֶל יָבָא. שֶׁלֹּא יָמוּת כְּדָךְ שְׂמִיתוֹ בְּעֵי: וְלֹא יָמוּת, שֶׁחֵם בֶּד, הוּא מוֹת: בִּי בַעֲזֹן אֲדָאָה. בִּי תִמּוֹד חֵן נִחָה שֶׁעִם עֲמִיד עֲנֵנִי, וְלִפִּי שְׂמִינִי שְׂכִינָתִי שֶׁ, וְזָהָב שֶׁלֹּא יִקְצֵל לְבֹא, זָהָב פְּשׁוּטוֹ. וּמִדְקָשׁוֹ, חֵל יָבֹא בִּי חֵם בַּעֲזֹן הַקֹּדֶשׁ בְּיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים:

DISCUSSION

16:4 | **And he shall gird himself with a linen belt:** There is an opinion among the *tanna'im* and *amora'im* that the belt worn by common priests was made of linen interwoven with colorful wool (*Yoma* 12a). If so, the belt worn by the High Priest on Yom Kippur, which was fashioned solely from white linen, was, in fact, simpler than the belt worn by all other priests.

16:8 | **Aaron shall place lots on the two goats:** According to the personal testimony of various Sages as to what actually took place in the Temple, these two lots were initially fashioned from wood and later from gold. They were placed in a wooden box specially constructed for this purpose. The High Priest would mix the lots, insert both hands into the box, and

then simultaneously remove both lots, one in each hand. He would place the lot that he had removed with his right hand upon the goat to his right and the lot in his left hand upon the goat to his left (see *Yoma* 39a, and Rashi ad loc.; Jerusalem Talmud, *Yoma* 4:1).

- 9** Aaron shall present the goat on which fell the lot for the Lord and render it a sin offering by consecrating it for this purpose.⁹ Alternatively, the verse means that the lot itself renders the goat a sin offering.¹⁰
- 10** The second goat, on which fell the lot for Azazel, shall be set alive before the Lord, to atone with it by placing his hands upon it and reciting a confession, and afterward, to dispatch it to Azazel to the wilderness.^D
- 11** Once the High Priest has designated the goats on behalf of the nation, he returns to his own sin offering: Aaron shall present the bull of the sin offering that is for him, and he shall atone for himself and for his household by placing his hands on the bull and confessing his own sins and those of all the priests;¹¹ and he shall slaughter the bull of the sin offering that is for him.
- 12** After the High Priest has confessed, slaughtered the bull as a sin offering, and received its blood in a vessel, but before he sprinkles its blood in the Holy of Holies, he must leave the sin offering aside. He shall take a fire-pan, a small shovel used for scooping and transporting embers, full of smoldering coals¹² taken from upon the outer altar, from before the Lord, and his hands full of finely ground fragrant incense, as much incense as he can hold in his two hands cupped together, and bring it in a vessel within the curtain, to the Holy of Holies.
- 13** He shall place the incense on the fire, on the smoldering coals in the fire-pan, before the Lord,^D and the cloud of the incense shall obscure the cover that is upon the testimony, and he shall not die. While the incense itself is considered an offering, the cloud it produces also serves as a screen to protect the High Priest from death, as though concealing the revelation of God. Aaron's sons died upon entering the Holy of Holies, because one may not enter and look upon the inner sanctum as he pleases. Even their father, Aaron the High Priest, was not permitted to be exposed to God's Presence.¹³ Moses, however, according to some opinions, was permitted to enter the Holy of Holies unprotected and speak with God there at any time.¹⁴
- 14** After the Holy of Holies is filled with smoke, the High Priest returns to the bull that has been slaughtered as a sin offering (verse 11). He shall take the vessel that contains the blood of the bull he had slaughtered previously, enter the Holy of Holies, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the cover toward the east, toward the eastern side of the cover; and after that, before the cover he shall sprinkle from the blood with his finger seven times. The Sages describe this procedure as sprinkling once upward and seven times downward.¹⁵
- 15** After sprinkling the blood of his bull, the High Priest does the same with the offering that is brought on behalf of the nation (see also 9:15). He shall go to the Tabernacle courtyard and slaughter the goat of the sin offering that is for the people, and he shall bring its blood in a vessel¹⁷ within the curtain, to the Holy of Holies, and he shall do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, and sprinkle it upon the cover and before the cover.
- 16** By entering the Holy of Holies and sprinkling the blood of the offerings there, he shall atone for the Sanctum from the impurity of the children of Israel, which marred its sanctity, and from their transgressions, for the general impurity of all their sins;¹⁸ and so shall he do for the Tent of Meeting that dwells with them in the midst of their impurity, by sprinkling the blood of the offerings again in the same manner.¹⁹
- 17** The Torah adds a general comment: No other man, including priests, who are usually permitted to enter the Tabernacle,²⁰ shall be in the Tent of Meeting from the time of his entry to atone by performing the rites of the incense and the sprinkling of the blood in the Sanctum until his emergence,²¹ and he, the High Priest, shall thereby atone for himself, for his household, and for the entire assembly of Israel.
- 18** This completes the Yom Kippur service in the Holy of Holies, but there are other rites that the High Priest must perform in the Sanctuary with the sin offerings. He shall go out of the Holy of Holies to the altar that is before the Lord, the golden, inner altar, and he shall atone for it, purify it of the people's sins, in the following manner:

DISCUSSION

16:10| **To dispatch it to Azazel to the wilderness:** The Sages and commentaries discuss the meaning of the term Azazel, as they analyze in depth the significance of this mysterious rite (see Ramban, verse 8; Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:46). Apparently, Azazel is a term for evil or the forces of impurity, which are also known as *sitra aħara*, "the other side," that which

is dark, desolate, and fierce. These forces are symbolized by the uninhabitable wilderness. The goat is not slaughtered and is not classified as an offering; rather, it is sent to Azazel, which, whether it is a place name or a state of being, is in the wilderness.

16:13| **He shall place the incense on the fire before the Lord:** The Sages emphasize that, as indicated by the order of the verses, the High Priest must place the incense on the coals only after entering the Holy of Holies, despite the fact that he enters a rather dark room. They fiercely rejected the opposing interpretation of heretics, who claimed that the incense was placed on the

ט וְהִקְרִיב אֶהָרֶן אֶת־הַשֶּׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגֹּזֶל לִיהוָה וַעֲשֶׂהוּ חַטָּאת:
י וְהַשֶּׁעִיר אֲשֶׁר עָלָה עָלָיו הַגֹּזֶל לַעֲזָאוֹל יַעֲמֶד־חַי לִפְנֵי יְהוָה לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו לְשַׁלַּח
יא אֹתוֹ לַעֲזָאוֹל הַמִּדְבָּרָה: וְהִקְרִיב אֶהָרֶן אֶת־פֶּר הַחַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ וּכְפַר בְּעֵדוֹ
יב וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ וְשַׁחַט אֶת־פֶּר הַחַטָּאת אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ: וְלָקַח מִלֹּא־הַמִּחְתָּה גִּחְלִי־אֵשׁ
יג מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וּמִלֹּא חֲפָנָיו קְטֹרֶת סַמִּים דָּקָה וְהֵבִיא מִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת:
יד וְנָתַן אֶת־הַקְטֹרֶת עַל־הָאֵשׁ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וּכְפָה ׀ עֲנַן הַקְטֹרֶת אֶת־הַפָּפֹת אֲשֶׁר
טו עַל־הָעֵדוּת וְלֹא יָמוּת: וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וְהִזָּה בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ עַל־לִפְנֵי הַפָּפֹת קֹדֶמָה
טז וּלִפְנֵי הַפָּפֹת יִזָּה שֶׁבַע־פַּעַמִּים מִן־הַדָּם בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ: וְשַׁחַט אֶת־שֶׁעִיר הַחַטָּאת
יז אֲשֶׁר לָעֵם וְהֵבִיא אֶת־דָּמּוֹ אֶל־מִבֵּית לַפָּרֹכֶת וַעֲשֶׂה אֶת־דָּמּוֹ כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָם
יח הַפָּר וְהִזָּה אֹתוֹ עַל־הַפָּפֹת וּלִפְנֵי הַפָּפֹת: וּכְפַר עַל־הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִטְמְאֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
יט וּמִפִּשְׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל־חַטָּאתָם וְכֵן יַעֲשֶׂה לְאַהֲל מוֹעֵד הַשֹּׁכֵן אֹתָם בְּתוֹךְ טְמֵאתָם:
כ וְכָל־אָדָם לֹא־יִהְיֶה ׀ בְּאַהֲל מוֹעֵד בִּבְאוֹ לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ עַד־צֵאתוֹ וּכְפַר בְּעֵדוֹ
כא וּבְעֵד בֵּיתוֹ וּבְעֵד כָּל־קֹהֶל יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיֵּצֵא אֶל־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי־יְהוָה וּכְפַר עָלָיו שְׁנֵי

דָּשׁ"י

טז | מִטְמְאֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. על הנכנסין למקדש בטמאה ולא נודע להם פסוק. שניאמר: "לכל חטאתם, ויחטאת היא שוגג: ומפשיעיהם. חף הנכנסין מזיד בטמאה: וכן יעשה לאהל מועד. כָּשֶׁם שֶׁהִזָּה מִשְׁנֵיהֶם בְּפָנֵים חֹצֵת לַמַּעֲלָה וְשָׁבַע לְמִטָּה, כִּךְ מִזָּה עַל הַפָּרֹכֶת מִבְּחוּץ מִשְׁנֵיהֶם חֹצֵת לַמַּעֲלָה וְשָׁבַע לְמִטָּה: הַשֹּׁכֵן אֹתָם בְּתוֹךְ טְמֵאתָם. חף על פי שֶׁהֵם טְמֵאִים, שְׂכִינָה בֵּינֵיהֶם:

יח | אֶל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי ה'. זֶה מִזְבֵּחַ הָהָר שֶׁהוּא לִפְנֵי ה' בְּהִיכָל. וְהִזָּה תִּלְמֹד לומר "וַיֵּצֵא" לְפִי שֶׁהִזָּה הִזְחִיזוּ עַל הַפָּרֹכֶת וְעַמֵּד מִן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלִפְנֵים וְהִזָּה, וּבְמִחְנֵית הַמִּזְבֵּחַ הִזְחִיזוּ לְצִדָּת מִן הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְלִחוּץ וַיִּתְחִיל מִקֶּרֶן מִזְבֵּחַ חֲצִית עֲבוּתָה: וְכַפֵּר עָלָיו. וְהִזָּה הִיא פְּכֻתָּה? "וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וּמִזֶּדֶם הַשֶּׁעִיר" – מְעַבְּדִין זֶה לְתוֹךְ זֶה:

יב | מֵעַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ. הִזְחִינוּ מִלִּפְנֵי ה'. מִזֶּדֶם שֶׁלִּפְנֵי הַפָּתַח, וְהוּא צֶדֶת מִעֲבָדֵי דָקָה. מִה תִּלְמֹד לומר "דָקָה"? וְהִלָּחַ קַל הַקְטֹרֶת דָקָה הִיא, שְׁנֵימָר: "וְשִׁחְתָה מִמֶּנָּה דָקָה" (שְׁמוֹת ל טז) חִלָּף שֶׁתִּהְיֶה דָקָה מִן הַדָקָה, שְׁבַעֲכָד יוֹם הַפְּסוּדִים הִיא מִחוּלָּה לְמַכְתָּשֶׁת:

יג | עַל הָאֵשׁ. שְׂכִינָתוֹ הַמִּחְתָּה: וְלֹא יָמוּת. הִיא חֹס לֹא נִשְׁחָה פְתִיחָה חִיב מִיָּתָה:

יד | וְהִזָּה בְּאֶצְבָּעוֹ. הִזָּה חֹצֵת בְּמִשְׁמַע: וְלִפְנֵי הַפָּפֹת יִזָּה שֶׁבַע. הִיא חֹצֵת לַמַּעֲלָה וְשָׁבַע לְמִטָּה:

טז | אֲשֶׁר לָעֵם. מִה שֶׁהִפָּר מִכַּפֵּר עַל הַפָּנִים, מִכַּפֵּר הַשֶּׁעִיר עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהוּא הַשֶּׁעִיר שֶׁעָלָה עָלָיו הַגֹּזֶל לָשֵׁם: כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדָם הַפָּר. חֹצֵת לַמַּעֲלָה וְשָׁבַע לְמִטָּה:

ט | וַעֲשֶׂהוּ חַטָּאת. כְּשֶׁמִּנְחָה הַגֹּזֶל עָלָיו קוֹרָא לוֹ שֵׁם אוֹמֵר: לֹא חַטָּאת:

י | יַעֲמֵד חַי. כְּמוֹ יַעֲמֵד חַי, עַל יְדֵי חֲרִים, וְתִקְוָמוֹ: "וַיִּתְקַם כָּד חַי". מִה תִּלְמֹד לומר? לְפִי שְׁנֵימָר: "לְשַׁלַּח חֵיט לְעֵזְאוֹל", וְחַי יוֹדֵעַ שְׁלֹחוֹ חֹס לְמִיתָה חֹס לְחַיִּים, לְכָךְ נִיאָמַר: "יַעֲמֵד חַי", עֲמִידָתוֹ חַי עַד שֶׁיִּשְׁתַּלַּח, מִכָּאן שֶׁשְׁלֹחוֹ לְמִיתָה: לְכַפֵּר עָלָיו. שְׂכִינָתוֹ עָלָיו, כְּדָתָה: "וְהִתְנַחֵה עָלָיו" (לֵהלֵךְ פְּסוּק כח):

יא | וְכַפֵּר בְּעֵדוֹ וְגו'. וְדוּי שֶׁנֶּעַל עָלָיו וְעַל חֲרִיו הַפָּנִים, שֶׁהֵם כָּלֵם קְרוֹיִים בֵּיתוֹ, שְׁנֵימָר: "בֵּית חֲרִיו בְּרָכּוֹ חֵת ה'" וְגו' (וְהִלָּם חֵת, יט), מִכָּאן שֶׁהַפָּנִים מִתְּפַסְּדִים בּוֹ, וְכָל פְּכֻתָּה חֵיטָה חֵלָף עַל טְמֵאִת מִקֹּדֶשׁ וְקִדְשִׁיו, כְּמוֹ שְׁנֵימָר: "וְכַפֵּר עַל הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִטְמְאֵי" וְגו' (לֵהלֵךְ פְּסוּק טז):

DISCUSSION

- coals before the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies (*Sifra*; *Yoma* 53a).
- The verses do not clearly state where the High Priest should place the fire-pan. In the First Temple period, when the ark was in the Holy of

Holies, he would put it on the ground, between the staves of the ark. Since there was no ark in the Holy of Holies in the Second Temple, the priest would place the fire-pan on the ground, on the spot that would have been between the

staves of the ark had it been present. According to tradition, the High Priest would set it on a rock known as the foundation rock, which was slightly raised from the ground of the Holy of Holies (*Yoma* 52b, 53b).

- He shall take from the blood of the bull** of his own sin offering **and from the blood of the goat^D** of the people's sin offering **and place it on the horns of the altar all around.**
- 19** After placing the blood on the corners of the golden altar, **he**, the High Priest, **shall sprinkle from the blood on it**, the golden altar, **with his finger seven times**, and **he shall purify it and sanctify it from the impurity of the children of Israel.** Although this altar is generally used only for incense, the blood of certain uncommon sin offerings is sprinkled on it as well.²²
- 20** **He shall conclude atoning^D for the Sanctum**, by means of the sacrificial rites he performs there, **and for the Tent of Meeting, and the altar, and he shall present the living goat**, which is ready to be sent to the wilderness.
- 21** **Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the living goat, and he shall confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, for all their sins; and he shall place** those transgressions and sins **upon the head of the goat, and he shall dispatch it in the hand of a designated man²³ to the wilderness.**^D Obviously, it is impossible for the High Priest to specify all the sins of the children of Israel; instead, he refers generally to the sins committed by the nation over the course of the year. The High Priest's earlier confessions are made in a similar manner.
- 22** **The goat shall bear upon it all their iniquities to a precipitous land**, mountainous, uneven terrain, such as a rocky cliff;²⁴ **and he shall dispatch the goat into the wilderness.** Alternatively, the verse can be understood as referring to a desolate land, bereft of all good qualities, and not necessarily to precipitous terrain.²⁵
- 23** After confessing and sending the goat into the wilderness, **Aaron shall come into the Tent of Meeting and remove the linen vestments that he donned with his entry into the Sanctum, and he shall leave them there.** The Sages explain that these vestments may not be used again, but must be buried.²⁶
- 24** **He shall bathe his flesh in water in a holy place**, in a ritual bath in the Temple compound, **and don his vestments**, the eight vestments generally worn by the High Priest to perform the Temple service, which are the four basic white garments and four additional special garments.²⁷ **And he shall emerge and perform his burnt offering and the burnt offering of the people, and atone for himself and for the people.**
- 25** **The fat of the aforementioned sin offering, the bull and goat, he shall burn on the altar.**^D
- 26** Because the dispatching of the goat to Azazel involves some degree of contact with impure forces, **the one who dispatches the goat to Azazel shall wash his garments and bathe his flesh in water, and only afterward shall he come into the camp.**

DISCUSSION

16:18 | He shall take from the blood of the bull and from the blood of the goat: The Sages dispute whether the blood of each of these offerings must be separately placed on the corners of the golden altar or whether the High Priest should mix the blood of the two offerings together and smear the mixture of blood on the corners (see *Yoma* 57b–58a; Rambam, *Sefer Avoda*, *Hilkhot Ma'aseh HaKorbanot* 5:12). All agree, however, that before the sprinkling of the blood that is described in the next verse, the blood of the two animals must be mixed together, as that verse states: "He shall sprinkle from the blood on it with his finger seven times." This indicates that the blood must be sprinkled only seven times rather than fourteen (Jerusalem Talmud, *Yoma* 5:4; *Tosafot*, *Yoma* 58a).

16:20 | He shall conclude atoning: The Sages learn from here that alacrity in the proper performance of the commandments leads to cleanliness (Jerusalem Talmud, *Shabbat* 1:3, and *Korban HaEda* ad loc.). This idea is derived from the fact that the High Priest does not pause to

rest between the stages of the Temple service, despite the fact that he is fasting; rather, he immediately continues the service by sending away the goat, in order to cleanse the people of sin without delay (*Aleh Yona* 306).

16:21 | And he shall dispatch it in the hand of a designated man to the wilderness: The Temple was located a significant distance from the wilderness. The Mishna describes how the goat was led through the wilderness, on foot, over a distance of approximately 12 km, or 7 mi (*Yoma* 6:4–5). At this point, the goat was not simply released into the wilderness; rather, it was pushed off a cliff and became dismembered as it rolled down the slope (Mishna, *Yoma* 6:6). The Torah does not specify that the goat must be killed, and therefore there was no problem if it escaped from the designated man. However, it usually died by falling from the cliff onto the rocks below.

The Sages state that the commandment has been performed once the goat reaches the wilderness (see *Yoma* 68b; Rashbam, verse 10).

By placing his hands on the offering and confessing on behalf of the nation, the High Priest symbolically places all the sins of the children of Israel onto the animal. Releasing this goat into the wilderness, the place that represents the source of all sin (see commentary on verse 10) symbolically returns the sins to their place of origin, where they are swallowed up and disappear (see also Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:46; Ibn Ezra; Ramban).

16:25 | The fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar: The Yom Kippur service in the Temple included stages that are not mentioned in this chapter. Regular services, such as the preparation of the altar, the daily offerings, the burning of the incense, and the kindling of the lamp were also performed on Yom Kippur. In addition, there was the sacrifice of special festive offerings, the additional offerings, as detailed in Numbers (chap. 29). These services, like most sacrificial services throughout the year, were performed by the High Priest in his eight ornamental garments, which, woven with sky-blue,

וְלָקַח מִדָּם הַפָּר וּמִדָּם הַשְּׂעִיר וְנָתַן עַל-קַרְנוֹת הַמִּזְבֵּחַ סָבִיב: וְהִזָּה עָלָיו יט
 מִן-הַדָּם בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ שֶׁבַע פְּעָמִים וְטָהְרוּ וְקִדְּשׁוּ מִטְמְאֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וְכִלָּה כ
 מִכֹּפֶר אֶת-הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְאֶת-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וְהִקְרִיב אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר הַחִי: כא
 וּסְמַךְ אֶהָרֹן אֶת-שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עַל-רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר הַחִי וְהִתְוֹדָה עָלָיו אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת-כָּל-פְּשָׁעֵיהֶם לְכָל-חַטָּאתָם וְנָתַן אֹתָם עַל-רֹאשׁ הַשְּׂעִיר כב
 וְשָׁלַח בְּיַד-אִישׁ עֹתֵי הַמִּדְבָּרָה: וְנָשָׂא הַשְּׂעִיר עָלָיו אֶת-כָּל-עֲוֹנוֹתָם אֶל-אֶרֶץ כג
 גִּזְרָה וְשָׁלַח אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר בַּמִּדְבָּר: וּבָא אֶהָרֹן אֶל-אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וּפָשַׁט אֶת- כד
 בְּגָדֵי הַבֹּד אֲשֶׁר לְבָשׁ בְּבָאוֹ אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ וְהִנִּיחָם שָׁם: וּרְחַץ אֶת-בִּשְׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם בִּמְקוֹם קָדוֹשׁ וּלְבָשׁ אֶת-בְּגָדָיו וַיֵּצֵא וַעֲשֵׂה אֶת-עֹלֹתוֹ וְאֶת-עֹלֹת הָעֵם וְכִפֹּר כה
 בַּעֲדוֹ וּבַעֲד הָעֵם: וְאֵת חֹלֶב הַחֲטָאת יִקְטִיר הַמִּזְבֵּחַ: וְהַמְשִׁלַּח אֶת-הַשְּׂעִיר כו
 לַעֲזָאוֹל יִכְבֶּס בְּגָדָיו וּרְחַץ אֶת-בִּשְׂרוֹ בַּמַּיִם וְאַחֲרֵי-כֵן יָבוֹא אֶל-הַמִּחֲנֶה:

שלישי
 /שני/

רש"י

זהב שעבר בהן עבודת תמיד של שחר ולבש בגדי לבן לעבודת היום, וכן למדנו שפשהו משה מפגדי לבן לבגדי זהב טעון טבילה: במקום קדוש. המקלש בקדשת עזרה, והיא היתה בגג בית הפקודה, וכן חקע טבילות הבאות חובה ליום, חבל הראשונה היתה פחל ולבש את בגדיו. שמונה בגדים שהיו עובד בהן כל ימות השנה: ויצא. מן ההיכל אל החצר, שמונה העולה שם: ועשה את עלתו. חיל לעולה האמור למעלה, "בואת יבא חהרן" וגו' (לעיל פסוק ג): ואת עלת העם. "ואיל אחד לעלה" האמור למעלה: "ומאת עדת בני ישראל" וגו' (לעיל פסוק ה):

כה | ואת חלב החטאת. אמורי פר ושעיר: יקטיר המזבח. על מזבח החינוך, דחלו בפעמי כתיב: "לא תעלו עליו קטרת זרה ועלה ומנחה" (שמות ל ט):

פר ושעיר הפעמיים וקטרת של מחטה בגדי לבן, ואילו ויחל העם ומקצת המוספין בגדי זהב, והוציאת פר ומחטה בגדי לבן, ואורי המוספין ותמיד של בין הערבים וקטרת ההיכל שעל מזבח הפעמי בגדי זהב. וסדר המקצות למי סדר העבודות כך הוא: "ושלח את השעיר במדבר" (לעיל פסוק כב), "וקרן את פשרו במים וגו', ויצא ועשה את עלתו וגו', ואת חלב החטאת" וגו', וכל הפרשה עד "ואחרי כן יבוא חל המנחה" (להלן פסוקים כד-כז), ואחר כך "ובא חהרן" (פסוק כג): והניחם שם. מלמד שטעונין גניזה, ולא ישתמש באותן חקעה בגדים ליום כפודים אחר:

כד | ורחץ את בשרו וגו'. למעלה למדנו מ"ורחץ" את פשרו ולבש" (לעיל פסוק ד) שפשהו משה מפגדי זהב לבגדי לבן טעון טבילה, שפחה טבילה פשט בגדי

יט | והזה עליו מן הדם. אחר שנתן מקנות באצבעו על קולותיו, מזה שבע הזאות על גו: וטהרו. ממה שעבר: וקדשו. לעתיד לבא:

כא | איש עתי. המוכן לכך מיום חתמו:

כג | ובא אהרן אל אהל מועד. אמרו רבותינו שאין זה מקומו של מקדח זה, ונתנו טעם לדבריהם במסכת יומא (דף לב ע"א) ואמרו, כל הפרשה כלה נאמרה על הסדר חוץ מביאה זו, שהיא אחר עשיית עולתו ועולת העם והקטרת אמורי פר ושעיר שנגעים בחוץ בגדי זהב, וטובל ומקדש ופושטן ולבש בגדי לבן, ובא חל חקל מועד להוציא את הכהן ואת המחטה שהקטיר זה הקטרת לקט ולקטנס: ופשט את בגדי הבד. אחר שהוציאם, ולבש בגדי זהב לתמיד של בין הערבים: והיו סדר העבודות: תמיד של שחר בגדי זהב, ועבודת

DISCUSSION

→ purple, and gold thread, represented the splendor of humanity. For the services detailed in this chapter, which involved entry into the Holy of Holies, the High Priest assumed a more humble and subdued pose, wearing white linen

garments symbolizing simplicity and self-negation and evoking the purity of the angels.

According to tradition, whenever the High Priest donned a different set of garments, he first had to immerse his entire body in water. Furthermore, each donning and disrobing of

priestly vestments required the sanctification of hands and feet, which was done by washing them in the basin that stood in the Temple courtyard. Altogether, on Yom Kippur the High Priest immersed on five occasions and washed his hands and feet a total of ten times.

27 The carcass of the bull of the sin offering of Aaron and the goat of the sin offering of the nation, the goat not sent to Azazel, whose blood was brought in to atone in the Sanctum, he shall take outside the camp; and they shall burn in fire their hides, their flesh, and their dung. This was stated in earlier chapters with regard to all inner sin offerings, the blood of which is sprinkled on the inner, golden altar rather than on the outer altar. Such offerings are not eaten but are entirely burned outside settled areas (4:1–21, 6:23).

28 The one who burns them shall wash his garments and bathe his flesh in water, and afterward he shall come into the camp. Because he has been dealing with the remnants of a consecrated item whose level of sanctity has been reduced, he must afterward be purified.

29 As stated at the beginning of this passage, the entire ceremony prescribed here had to be performed when Aaron wanted to enter the Holy of Holies. This verse adds that Aaron was not permitted to enter the Holy of Holies whenever he wished; rather, there was a set time when he was permitted to do so. **It shall be for you an eternal statute: During the seventh month, which later became known as Tishrei, on the tenth of the month, Yom Kippur, you shall afflict yourselves.** This is not a command to cause oneself unnecessary suffering; rather, “afflict yourselves” is a technical term meaning that one must refrain from eating, drinking, and other specific forms of physical pleasure.²⁸ Furthermore, **you shall not perform all labor, the native and the stranger that resides among you,** that is, converts who have joined the children of Israel.

DISCUSSION

The table below presents the full order of the Yom Kippur services. It is based on the Sages’ derivations of the verses and is in accordance with the opinion of the Rambam. Daily services not unique to Yom Kippur are marked with an asterisk (*).

Yom Kippur Service of the High Priest

Garments	Services	Offerings
Gold	Removal of the ashes at about midnight; arrangement of wood on the altar; removal of the ashes from the inner altar* Slaughter of the daily offering at the first light in the eastern sky and sprinkling of the daily offering’s blood* Burning of the sacrificial portions of the daily offering, daily meal offering, daily griddle-cake offering, and wine libation* Sacrifice of the majority of the additional offerings (Numbers 29:8)	One lamb, burnt offering* One bull and seven lambs, burnt offerings
White	High Priest’s personal confession and confession for his family, said while placing his hands on the bull (verse 6) Placing of lots on the goats (verse 8) High Priest’s second confession, for both his own sins and those of his family, while placing his hands on his bull; slaughter of the bull and receiving its blood (verse 11) Burning of the incense in the Holy of Holies (verse 13); a short prayer in the Sanctuary; sprinkling the blood of his personal bull in the Holy of Holies (verse 14) Slaughter of the goat designated by lot as “for the Lord” and the sprinkling of its blood in the Holy of Holies (verse 15) Sprinklings in the Sanctuary from the blood of the inner sin offerings, the bull and the goat (verses 18–19) Confession on behalf of the children of Israel, said while placing his hands on the goat designated by lot as “for Azazel” (verses 20–21) Sending of the goat to the wilderness (verses 21–22); handing over the flesh of the inner sin offering to be burned outside the settled area; reading from the Torah and reciting eight blessings	One bull, inner sin offering One goat, inner sin offering
Gold	Completion of the additional offerings and the other offerings of the day (verse 24; Numbers 29:11) Burning of the sacrificial portions of the inner sin offering, the bull and goat (verse 25) Sacrifice of the daily afternoon offering*	One goat, outer sin offering High Priest’s ram, burnt offering Ram of the people, burnt offering One lamb, burnt offering*
White	Removal of the fire-pan and the spoon from the Holy of Holies (verse 23; see Rashi). Some say that this removal is performed before the sacrifice of the daily afternoon offering	
Gold	Burning of the afternoon incense Kindling of the lamp*	

כז וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאַתָּה שִׁעִיר הַחַטָּאת וְאַתָּה אֶת־דָּמָם לְכַפֵּר בַּקֹּדֶשׁ
 כח וְיָצִיא אֶל־מִחוּץ לַמִּחֲנֶה וְשִׁדְפוּ בָאֵשׁ אֶת־עֹרֹתָם וְאֶת־בָּשָׂרָם וְאֶת־פְּרָשָׁם:
 כט וְהִשְׂרֹף אֹתָם יַכְבֵּם בְּגִדֵי וְדַחַן אֶת־בָּשָׂרוֹ בַּמִּים וְאַחֲרֵי־כֵן יָבֹא אֶל־הַמִּחֲנֶה:
 ל וְהִיטָה לָכֶם לַחֲקֹת עוֹלָם בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בַעֲשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ תַּעֲנֶנּוּ אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם
 לא וְכַל־מִלֵּאכָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ הָאֶזְרָח וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: כִּי־בְיוֹם הַזֶּה יִכָּפֵר עֲלֵיכֶם
 לב לְטָהֳרָתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תִּטְהָרוּ: שִׁבְתַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן הִיא לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם
 לג אֶת־נַפְשֵׁיכֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם: וְכִפֹּר הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר־יִמָּשַׁח אוֹתוֹ וְאֲשֶׁר יִמְלֵא אֶת־יָדָיו
 לְכַהֵן תַּחַת אָבִיו וּלְבָשׁ אֶת־בְּגָדֵי הַבַּיִת בְּגָדֵי הַקֹּדֶשׁ: וְכִפֹּר אֶת־מִקְדָּשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ
 וְאֶת־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְאֶת־הַמִּזְבֵּחַ יִכָּפֵר וְעַל הַכֹּהֲנִים וְעַל־כָּל־עַם הַקָּהָל יִכָּפֵר:

דש"ו

מִיֵּאֱשָׁה: וְחִילָהּ, שְׂבִימִי נִגְמָה עֲלוּחִית שֶׁל שָׂמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה:
 לְכַהֵן תַּחַת אָבִיו. לְלִמְדָה שֶׁחָסַם בְּנֵי מִמְלֵאָה חֵית מִקְוָמוֹ
 הוּא קוֹדֵם לְכָל חֵדָם:

כָּל הַפְּקָדָה בְּחֵדָה, הַזֶּכֶךְ לֹמֵר בְּכָהֵן גָּדוֹל הָיָא חֲחִקִּיו
 שִׁיחָא כְּמוֹהִי: וְאֲשֶׁר יִמְלֵא אֶת־יָדָיו. חֵין לִי חֲלָא הַמִּשְׁנָח
 בְּשָׂמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה, מִדְּבָרָה בְּגָדִים מִנֶּחֱסִין לֹמֵר: "וְאֲשֶׁר
 יִמְלֵא חֵית יָדָיו" וְגו', וְהֵם כָּל הַכֹּהֲנִים הַגְּדוֹלִים שְׂעֵמָדוֹ

כז | אֲשֶׁר הוֹבֵא אֶת־דָּמָם. לְהִיכָל וְלִמְנוּ וְלִמְנוּ:

לב | וְכִפֹּר הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יִמָּשַׁח וְגו'. כַּפָּרָה ז' שֶׁל יוֹם
 הַכַּפָּרָה חֵינָה כַּפָּרָה חֵלָא בְּכָהֵן גָּדוֹל, לְפִי שְׂנֵאֲמָרָה

30 For on this day he shall atone for you, to purify you; from all your sins before the Lord you shall be purified. On this day the children of Israel are granted atonement and are forgiven for their sins. This is achieved both through the offerings whose blood is sprinkled in the Holy of Holies and the Sanctuary and by means of the goat sent to Azazel, as well as through the inherent sanctity of the day.²⁹ The children of Israel, for their part, must prepare themselves for this atonement by abstaining from eating, drinking, and the other physical pleasures.

31 It is a sabbatical rest for you.³⁰ This is a day of rest like the Sabbath itself, when prohibited labors are completely forbidden, and, unlike on the festivals, none of the labors prohibited on the Sabbath may be performed for the sake of food preparation.³⁰ **And you shall afflict yourselves.** Yom Kippur is a day of cessation not only from prohibited labor, but also from attending to one's general physical needs. **It is an eternal statute.**

Even when there is no Temple or High Priest, atonement will always be granted on this day.³¹ The sanctity of Yom Kippur and its attendant commandments do not depend upon the High Priest's entry into the Holy of Holies or his performance of the sacrificial rites.

32 The Torah now returns to the discussion of the High Priest's service in the Temple: **The priest who shall be anointed and who shall be ordained to serve in his father's stead** as the High Priest, which is an office that is mainly inherited from father to son, **shall atone and shall don linen vestments, the sacred vestments.**

33 He shall atone for the sacred Sanctum, for the most sacred part of the Temple, the Holy of Holies, **and for the Tent of Meeting and for the altar he shall atone; and for the priests and for all the people of the assembly he shall atone.**

DISCUSSION

16:31 | **It is a sabbatical rest for you:** There are two parallel aspects to this day: On the one hand, it is a sabbatical rest, a day of purity that is absolutely holy and on which God forgives the children of Israel for all of their sins. Accordingly, the children of Israel fast and desist from prohibited labors, as the theme of the day is abstinence

and withdrawal. On the other hand, it is the only day on which the High Priest, who is himself fasting, is permitted to enter the most sacred place, the Holy of Holies, as the representative of the children of Israel. From this perspective, Israel's encounter with holiness is a central theme of the day.

It is interesting to note that in this context, the day is referred to only by its calendar date and is not identified by its name, Yom HaKippurim, which it is called when the Torah lists the festivals systematically (see Numbers 29:7–11).

34 This shall be an eternal statute for you, to atone for the children of Israel for all their sins once in the year.^d When Yom

Kippur came, **he, Aaron, did as the Lord had commanded Moses.³²**

Laws Pertaining to Eating Meat

This passage deals primarily with the slaughter of animals, as well as related commandments.

LEVITICUS 17:1–16

17 **1 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:**

*Fourth
aliya*

2 Speak to Aaron, to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, as the upcoming passage is somewhat related to the Tabernacle but most of it applies to the entire nation, **and say to them: This is the matter that the Lord has commanded, saying:**

3 Any man from the house of Israel who shall slaughter a bull or a sheep or a goat in the camp, as the Israelite camp in the wilderness was large and it is reasonable to assume that those who lived in the inner part of the camp did not wish to trouble themselves with leaving the camp to slaughter animals, **or who slaughters it,** such an animal, **outside the camp,** e.g., in a field used as pasture for the flock,

4 and to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting he did not bring it, to present an offering to the Lord^d before the Tabernacle of the Lord, it will be accounted as blood for that man; he has shed blood, and that man shall be excised from among his people. All animals must be slaughtered in the Tabernacle courtyard as offerings. One who slaughters an animal in the wilderness, outside the Tabernacle area, is punished with excision. Excision is a punishment that is administered by God rather than an earthly court. There are various opinions regarding the precise meaning of the word “excision,” including untimely death or the cutting off of the soul in the World to Come.

5 So that the children of Israel shall bring their slaughtered animals that they currently slaughter in the open field, and they shall bring them to the Lord, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to the priest, and they shall slaughter peace offerings to the Lord. They may no longer slaughter animals wherever they wish.

6 The priest shall cast the blood on the altar of the Lord that is at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and burn the fat for a pleasing aroma to the Lord. During their time in the wilderness, the children of Israel were not permitted to slaughter unconsecrated animals for their meat, as explained above. Instead, they were required to consecrate the animals whose meat they wanted to consume as a peace offering. The blood and fats of a peace offering, which may not be eaten even in the case of a non-sacred animal, are burned on the altar. The breast and thigh are given to the priest, and the rest of the animal is eaten by the individual who has brought the offering (see 7:28–36).

7 That they shall no longer slaughter their offerings to the satyrs, after whom they go astray.^d This phrase constitutes an independent commandment and provides the reason for the prohibition against slaughtering animals outside the Tabernacle.³³ **This prohibition against bringing offerings to satyrs shall be an eternal statute for them, for their generations.**

DISCUSSION

16:34 | **To atone for the children of Israel for all their sins once in the year:** In essence, Yom Kippur as a day of atonement is a gift from God. In contrast to ordinary repentance, which stems from human initiative, atonement on this holiest of days is an act of divine grace. Still, the people must prepare themselves for atonement by abstaining from eating, drinking, and other prohibited physical pleasures (see *Meshekh Hokhma*, verse 1). If atonement depended solely upon the willingness of the people to properly repent, their sins would gradually accumulate from year to year, and their great weight would soon become unbearable. Consequently, God pardons all of the year’s sins on one day and cleanses the children of Israel proactively (see *Sefer HaHinnukh* 185).

17:4 | **And to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting he did not bring it, to present an offering to the Lord:** The Sages dispute the meaning of this commandment (see *Hullin* 16b–17a). The translation here follows the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael (see Ramban; *Bekhor Shor*). According to Rabbi Akiva, however, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they were permitted to eat unconsecrated meat even without ritually slaughtering the animal. This became prohibited only when they entered the Land of Israel. The commandment here is that the act of slaughtering must be performed in the Tabernacle; some say that this commandment refers only to animals being brought as offerings, while others maintain that it applies to the slaughter of non-sacred animals as well

(see Ramban; Rambam, *Sefer Kedusha*, *Hilkhot Shehita* 4:17).

In any case, this commandment applied specifically in the wilderness, when eating meat simply to satisfy one’s physical appetite was prohibited, but this became permissible when the children of Israel entered the Land of Israel (see Deuteronomy 12:20). However, some hold that this prohibition remained in force even after the children of Israel entered the land, during periods when it was permissible to worship on a personal altar in any location and the presentation of offerings was not limited to the Temple (see Rav Yosef Kara’s commentary on I Samuel 14:32).

The effect of this prohibition was that while the children of Israel were in the wilderness all

וְהִיתָה־זֹאת לָכֶם לְחֻקַּת עוֹלָם לִכְפֹּר עַל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל־חַטָּאתָם אַחַת
בְּשָׁנָה וַיַּעַשׂ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:
וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶל־בָּנָיו וְאֶל־כָּל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל יְג רביעי
וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם זֶה הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה לֵאמֹר: אִישׁ אִישׁ מִבֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר
יִשְׁחַט שׁוֹר אוֹ־כֶשֶׂב אוֹ־עֵז בַּמַּחֲנֶה אוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה: וְאֶל־פֶּתַח
אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד לֹא הֵבִיאוּ לְהַקְרִיב קָרְבָּן לַיהוָה לִפְנֵי מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה דָּם יִחָשֵׁב לְאִישׁ
הַהוּא דָם שָׁפָךְ וְנִכְרַת הָאִישׁ הַהוּא מִקִּרְבַּ עַמּוֹ: לִמְעַן אֲשֶׁר יָבִיאוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
אֶת־זִבְחֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר הֵם זִבְחִים עַל־פְּנֵי הַשָּׁדָה וְהֵבִיאוּם לַיהוָה אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד
אֶל־הַפֶּהֶן וְזָבְחוּ זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה אוֹתָם: וְזָרַק הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַדָּם עַל־מִזְבֵּחַ
יְהוָה פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהִקְטִיר הַחֵלֶב לְרִיחַ נִיחַח לַיהוָה: וְלֹא־יִזְבְּחוּ עוֹד אֶת־
זִבְחֵיהֶם לַשְּׁעִירִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם זִמִּים אַחֲרֵיהֶם חֻקַּת עוֹלָם תִּהְיֶה־זֹאת לָהֶם לְדֹרֹתָם:

רש"י

ה' | אֲשֶׁר הֵם זִבְחִים. חָשַׁךְ הֵם קָדְשִׁים לְזִבְחֵי:
ז' | לַשְּׁעִירִים. לְשָׂדִים, כְּמוֹ: "וַאֲשֶׁר־יִרְדּוּ שָׁם" (וישעיה
יג, כז).

פרק יז
ג' | אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁחַט שׁוֹר אוֹ כֶּשֶׂב. בְּמִקְדָּשֵׁן הַכְּתוּב מְדַבֵּר.
שְׁנַיִמ: "לְהַקְרִיב קָרְבָּן": בַּמַּחֲנֶה. חוּץ לַעֲוֶה:
ד' | דָּם יִחָשֵׁב. כְּשׁוֹפֵךְ דָּם הָאֵדָם, שְׁמִתְחַיֵּב בְּנִקְשׁוֹ: דָּם
שָׁפָךְ. לְכַפֹּת חַט הַזֹּרֵק דָּמִים בְּחוּץ:

לד' | וַיַּעַשׂ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' וְגו'. כְּשֶׁהֲצִיעַ יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים
נִעְשָׂה כְּפֶסֶד הַזֶּה, וְלִהְיוֹת שֶׁכָּחוּ שֶׁל חֶהֱרָה, שֶׁלֹּא הָיָה
לִזְכֶּן לְהַדְלִיק, חֶהֱרָה בְּמִקְדָּשׁ הַזֶּה:

DISCUSSION

→ consumption of meat was limited to the context of a sacrificial offering. Instead of slaughtering animals merely to satisfy their physical desire to eat meat, an action that this verse compares to murder, the children of Israel would slaughter animals as offerings, turning the slaughter into a holy act.

There are various limitations to the consumption of sacrificial meat: One must be ritually pure, and the meat may be consumed only in certain times and places. These restrictions further advance the sanctity and purity of the Jewish people. Even after the people had settled throughout the Land of Israel and it had become permissible to slaughter unconsecrated animals in order to eat the meat, the Sages

recommended numerous spiritual and moral practices in this regard. For example, they said that an ignoramus should not eat meat (*Pesachim* 49b) and that one should not eat meat regularly or consume it to one's full satiation (see *Hullin* 84a; see also *Sifra*).

17:7 | **That they shall no longer slaughter their offerings to the satyrs, after whom they go astray:** This mention of the practice of sacrificing offerings to satyrs indicates that it was a well-known phenomenon. The verse refers to demons that supposedly traverse the world, including areas of human habitation (see Rashi; Ramban; Onkelos; *Vayikra Rabba* 22; Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:46). In those times,

and for many generations afterward, it was a common practice among various peoples, and sometimes even Jews, for animal slaughter to be accompanied by the dedication of part of the slaughtered animal to demonic or other supernatural beings. The aim of this rite was to pacify supernatural forces so that they would not harm the person who had slaughtered the animal or to request their assistance. Occasionally, people would dig a hole in the ground, and the blood that had been consecrated to the supernatural beings would be poured into it. Even when the slaughter was not originally performed as a religious ritual, part of a slaughtered animal, typically its blood, was sometimes consecrated to satyrs. This is considered a type of idolatrous rite.

- 8** Following the commandment that in the wilderness animals may be slaughtered only for the purpose of bringing offerings, the verse adds a detail that applies for all generations: **And to them**, the children of Israel, **you shall also say** the following: **Any man from the house of Israel, or from the strangers who reside among them, who offers up a burnt offering**, which is entirely consumed on the altar, **or a feast offering**,^d much of which is eaten by people,
- 9** **and to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting does not bring it to present it to the Lord, that man shall be excised from his people.** Presenting an offering outside the Tabernacle or the Temple is a serious transgression that renders one liable to the severe punishment of excision.
- 10** This verse provides an additional prohibition concerning the slaughter of animals for food. **Any man from the house of Israel, or from the stranger who resides among them, who eats any blood, I will direct My attention to the person who eats the blood**, in the form of retribution, **and I will excise him from the midst of his people.**
- 11** **For the life**, the life force, **of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you** only to sacrifice **on the altar to atone for your souls, as it is the blood that shall atone for the life.** The blood, upon which life depends, may be used only to atone for the soul of the individual who slaughters the animal as an offering to God. One is permitted to eat meat, the dead flesh of the animal; however, blood, which represents the life force of that creature, is for God only and may not be consumed.³⁴
- 12** **Therefore I said to the children of Israel: Every person among you shall not eat blood, and the stranger who resides among you shall not eat blood.** This broad prohibition applies to all the children of Israel, including gentiles who join them. The Sages interpret the phrase “every person among you” as including even minors, thereby indicating that adults are required to ensure that children do not eat blood.³⁵
- 13** A related commandment: **Any man from the children of Israel, or from the strangers that reside among them, who shall hunt game of a beast or a bird that may be eaten**, according to the criteria specified elsewhere,³⁶ **he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dirt.**^d Not only is blood prohibited from being eaten, but it may not be left exposed. Beasts, meaning undomesticated animals, and most birds may not be brought as offerings. This commandment to cover the blood

applies to undomesticated animals and birds, which are generally hunted; it does not apply to domesticated animals.³⁷

- 14** **For the life of all flesh, its blood is with its life; therefore I said to the children of Israel: The blood of all flesh you shall not eat, because the life of all flesh is its blood.** To symbolize the limits of human power over life, **anyone who eats it shall be excised.**
- 15** Up to this point, the verses have introduced various commandments pertaining to the killing of animals. These include the prohibition against eating meat from an animal that was not brought as an offering, which applied only while the children of Israel were in the wilderness; the prohibition against bringing offerings outside the Tabernacle or Temple; the prohibition against eating blood; and the obligation to cover the blood of an undomesticated animal or bird that has been slaughtered. The next commandment refers to animals that were not necessarily killed by human beings: **Any person who shall eat an unslaughtered carcass or a mauled animal** that has suffered a fatal injury,³⁸ **whether he is native or stranger, he shall wash his garments and bathe in water, and he is impure until the evening, and he shall be purified.** Not only is it prohibited to eat such animals, but having direct physical contact with their carcasses, or even moving their carcasses indirectly, renders a person impure (see 11:27–28, 39–40). However, since this verse specifically refers to eating the carcass, the Sages explain that it refers to a unique type of impurity, contracted specifically from the carcass of a kosher bird, and not through contact or by being moved, but only when it is swallowed.³⁹
- 16** **But if he does not wash and he does not bathe his flesh, he shall bear his iniquity.** An impure person is not required to purify himself immediately, as there is no prohibition against being ritually impure. He violates a prohibition only if he touches consecrated food items or enters the Temple. Priests generally did not own land and could not grow their own produce, and so this prohibition was undoubtedly an important concern of theirs, since consecrated food items comprised a significant portion of their diet. The same prohibition also applied to the entire nation while they were in the wilderness, during which time they were permitted to eat meat only if the animal had been brought as an offering; however, even after it became permissible to eat unconsecrated meat, one who was impure could still come into contact with consecrated food. Because this is a severe prohibition, the verse emphasizes the importance of maintaining ritual purity.⁴⁰

ח ואלהם תאמר איש איש מבית ישראל ומן הגר אשר יגור בתוכם אשר יעלה
ט עלה אוזבב: ואלפתח אהל מועד לא יביאנו לעשות אתו ליהוה ונכרת
י האיש ההוא מעמיו: ואיש איש מבית ישראל ומן הגר הגר בתוכם אשר
יא יאכל כל דם ונתתני פני בנפש האכלת את הדם והכרתני אתה מקרב עמה:
יב כי נפש הבשר בדם הוא ואני נתתיו לכם על המזבח לכפר על נפשתיכם כי
יג הדם הוא בנפש יכפר: על כן אמרת לי לבני ישראל כל נפש מכם לא תאכל
יד דם והגר הגר בתוכם לא יאכל דם: ואיש איש מבני ישראל ומן הגר הגר
טו בתוכם אשר יצוד ציד חיה או עוף אשר יאכל ושפך את דמו וכסהו בעפר:
טז כי נפש כל בשר דמו בנפשו הוא ואמר לבני ישראל דם כל בשר לא תאכלו
טז כי נפש כל בשר דמו הוא כל אכליו יכרת: וכל נפש אשר תאכל נבלה וטרפה
באזרח ובגר וכבש בגדיו ורחץ במים וטמא עד הערב וטהר: ואם לא יכבש
ובשרו לא ירחץ ונשא עונו:

רש"י

טו | אשר תאכל נבלה וטרפה. נגבלת עוף טהור דבר
הפנימי, שאין לה טמאה חלץ בשעה שנגבלת בבית
הבליעה, ולמדך כחן שטמאה בחילתה. וטרפה
האמונה כחן לא יכתב חלץ לדגש, וכן שטני: יכול
תהא נבלת עוף טמא מוטמאה בבית הבליעה? תלמוד
לומר: "טרפה", מי שיש במינו טרפה, יצא עוף טמא
שאין במינו טרפה:

טז | ונשא עונו. אם יאכל קדש חוץ יכנס למקדש, חייב על
טמאה זו ככל שאר טמאות: ובשרו לא ירחץ ונשא עונו.
על רחיצת גופו ענגש קדש, ועל כבוס בגדים במלקות:

יב | כל נפש מכם. להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים:
יג | אשר יצוד. חיון לי חלץ צד, חיון ומקנולין מעור?
תלמוד לומר "צד" – מכל מקום. אם כן למה נאמר
"אשר יצוד"? שלא יאכל בשר חלץ בהזמנה הזאת: אשר
יאכל. פקט לטמאים:
יד | דמו בנפשו הוא. דמו הוא לו במקום הנפש, שהנפש
תלויה בו: כי נפש כל בשר דמו הוא. הנפש היא הדם.
דס' ויבשר' – לשון זכר, נפש' – לשון נקבה:

ח | אשר יעלה עלה. לחייב על המקטיר חיבקים בחון
קשוחט בחון, שאם שחט אחד והעלה חבדו שניהו חגיגו:
ט | ונכרת. יקעו נכרת וימיו נכרתו:
י | כל דם. לפי שנהמר: "נפש ונפש" (פסוק יח), יכול
לא יהא חייב חלץ על דם המקדשים? תלמוד לומר:
"כל דם": ונתתני פני. פניו שלי, פונה חט מכל עסקי
ועוסקי בו:
יא | כי נפש הבשר. של כל בריוה "בדם היא" תלויה,
ולפיכך נתתני על המזבח לכפר על נפש האדם, תבוא
נפש ותכפר על הנפש:

DISCUSSION

17:8 | **Who offers up a burnt offering or a feast offering:** This refers to the prohibition against presenting offerings outside of the Temple courtyard (see *Nedarim* 78a). For a thousand years after the giving of the Torah, the slaughter of offerings outside the Temple was an ongoing problem for the children of Israel. There were certain periods when, under specific conditions, it was permissible to bring some

offerings to God on personal altars. At other times, when there was a central, operational Temple, it was prohibited to bring offerings in other locations, even for the sake of Heaven (see *Zevahim*, chap. 14).

17:13 | **He shall pour out its blood and cover it with dirt:** Puddles or holes filled with blood were common features in idolatrous rituals. Some commentaries suggest that the covering

of the blood is a kind of apology to God or a way of downplaying the fact that human beings consume other living creatures (see *Ba'al HaTurim*). Alternatively, this commandment, which remains in effect today, alludes to burial. Just as the burial of a human corpse is an expression of honor for the deceased, so too covering the blood of a beast or bird grants a measure of dignity to these creatures (see *Kohelet Rabba* 3:19).

The Prohibitions against Sexual Immorality and Other Abominations

LEVITICUS 18:1–30

Thus far, the book of Leviticus has focused primarily on matters that concern the Temple and the priests, either directly or indirectly. These include a discussion of sacrificial offerings and the laws of ritual purity and impurity, which limit one's ability to touch or handle sanctified items. Here, however, is a section that is not related to the Temple, sacred items, or ritual purity and impurity. Instead, it provides a separate set of commandments.

Like the previous passage, this one focuses on one narrow topic, in this case, forbidden sexual relations. The verses mainly deal with the various prohibited sexual relations, not the punishments for which offenders are liable or other ramifications of violating the prohibitions. These are addressed separately, in a different section. The topic is bookended by long, unique introductory and concluding sections.

- 18** **1** The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:
- 2** Speak to the children of Israel and say to them: I am the Lord your God.^D
- 3** You shall not follow the practices of the land of Egypt in which you lived, and you shall not follow the practices of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you,^D and you shall not follow their statutes, their ways. You shall not follow their mores or their prescribed laws.⁴¹
- 4** Rather, My ordinances you shall perform, and My statutes you shall observe,^D to follow them; I am the Lord your God.
- 5** You shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, which a man shall perform and live by them. The commandments concerning the standards of sexual morality, which mandate the distinctiveness and sanctity of the children of Israel, shape the proper way to lead one's life. I am the Lord, I live forever.
- 6** Any man of you shall not approach his kin to uncover nakedness, to engage in sexual relations; I am the Lord. This general declaration serves to underline the basic principle of this passage that sexual relations with all close blood relatives are prohibited.
- 7** The nakedness of your father and the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover. She is your mother; you shall not uncover her nakedness. In practically all societies, sexual relations between a mother and son are proscribed. Although this prohibition applies directly to a mother, in any normal family the shame and embarrassment caused by such an act would impact both parents. Consequently, the verse first mentions both the father and mother.⁴²
- 8** The nakedness of your father's wife, even if she is not your mother, you shall not uncover; it is your father's nakedness

Sixth
aliya

[*erva*]. The narrow meaning of the word *erva* is nakedness, as it has been explained here, or it can specifically refer to the sexual organs. However, it can also be used in the sense of shame or embarrassment.⁴³ Consequently, one possible interpretation of this verse is that sexual relations with one's father's wife would cause the father shame and embarrassment.

- 9** The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother, and all the more so if she is the daughter of both your father and your mother, although this case is not explicitly mentioned in the verse,⁴⁴ whether she is born into the household or born outside of wedlock,⁴⁵ you shall not uncover their nakedness, as they are your relatives.
- 10** The nakedness of the daughter of your son, or of the daughter of your daughter, and certainly of your daughter herself, although she is not mentioned in the verse,⁴⁶ you shall not uncover their nakedness, for it is your nakedness. One's relationship with one's own children is even closer than one's relationship with other relatives; sexual relations with one's child would constitute the parent's own personal nakedness or shame.
- 11** The nakedness of the daughter of your father's wife, who was born to your father and not necessarily to your mother, she is your sister; therefore, you shall not uncover her nakedness. There is overlap between this verse and the prohibition of verse 9. Consequently, sexual relations with the daughter of one's father who is also the daughter of the father's wife is prohibited by two commandments.⁴⁷ However, if one does not share either parent with the daughter of his father's wife, he is not considered her relative at all, and she is not forbidden to

DISCUSSION

18:2 | **I am the Lord your God:** This phrase indicates that the prohibitions listed in the upcoming passage are a direct result of the chosen status of the children of Israel. The expression "I am the Lord your God" appears both at the beginning of this passage and at its conclusion (verse

30). It does not mean merely I am the Ruler, the Master, and the Judge, but also, since you belong to Me, there are rules and limitations that apply to you that are not relevant to all other peoples (see *Sifra*).

18:3 | **You shall not follow the practices of the land of Egypt in which you lived, and you shall not follow the practices of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you:** The pagan cultures of Egypt and Canaan differed from each other; however, regarding the topic of this



יח וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: דִּבֹּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה יד
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: כִּמְעַשֶׂה אֶרֶץ־מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁבַּתְם־בָּהּ לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְכִמְעַשֶׂה אֶרֶץ־ג
כְּנָעַן אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי מְבִיא אֲתֶכֶם שָׁמָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וּבַחֲקֵיתֶיהֶם לֹא תִלְכוּ: אֶת־מִשְׁפָּטֵי ה
תַּעֲשׂוּ וְאֶת־חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ לִלְכַת בָּהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי ו
וּאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אִתְּכֶם הָאָדָם וְחֵי בָהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה: אִישׁ ש
אִישׁ אֶל־כָּל־שָׂאֵר בְּשָׂרוֹ לֹא תִקְרְבוּ לַגְלוֹת עֲרוּהָ אֲנִי יְהוָה: עֲרוֹת
אָבִיךָ וְעֲרוֹת אִמְךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה אִמְךָ הוּא לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָהּ: עֲרוֹת
אֶשֶׁת־אָבִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹת אָבִיךָ הוּא: עֲרוֹת אַחֻזְתְּךָ בֶּת־אָבִיךָ
אוֹ בֶּת־אִמְךָ מוֹלֶדֶת בֵּית אוֹ מוֹלֶדֶת חוּץ לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָן: עֲרוֹת
בֶּת־בִּנְךָ אוֹ בֶּת־בִּתְּךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָן כִּי עֲרוֹתְךָ הִנֵּה: עֲרוֹת

רש"י

נחמד פאן: "עדות חבין", ונחמד להלן: "עדות חבין גלה" (ויקרא כ, יח) מה להלן חשת חבין, חף פאן חשת חבין: ועדות אבין. להביא חמו שחין חשת חבין: ח | ערות אשת אבין. לברות לאחר מיתה: ט | בת אבין. חף בת חנוסה במשעם: מולדת בית או מולדת חוץ. בין שחומרים לו לחבין קים חת חמה, ובין שחומרים לו הוצא חת חמה, כגון ממזרת חו נתניה: י | ערות בת בנך וגו'. דברת מלכותו הקטוב מדבר, ובתו ובת פתו מלכותו חן למדין מעדות חשה וקטה, שחמד בהן: "לח תגלה" (להלן פסוק יז) בין שהיו ממנו בין שהיו מאים חחר: ערות בת בנך. קל וחמר לגבית, חלף לפי שחין מזהירין מן הדיון, למדוה מנודה שזה מנסקת יבמות (דף ג ע"ח): יא | ערות בת אשת אבין. למד שחין חבין על חיות

תשמו. דברים שהם גזרת המלך, שיער הקדע משיב עליהם למה לנו לשמור, וזמנות העולם משימו עליהם. כגון חבילת חזיר ולבית שטעט וטהרת מי חטאת, לכך נחמד: "חן ה" - גזרת עליכם, חי חתה רשאי להפטור: ללכת בהם. חל תפטור מתוכם, שלא תחמר: למדתי חקמת ישראלי, חלך וחלמד חקמת החמות: ה | ושמררתם את חקתי וגו'. לברות שחר דקדוקי הפקשה, שלא פקדו הקטוב בהם דבר חחר, לתן שמירה ועשה לחקים ושמירה ועשה למשפטים, לפי שלא נתן חלף עשה למשפטים ושמירה לחקים (ועל פסוק ד): וחי בהם. לעולם הבא, שחם תחמר בעולם הזה, והלא סופו הוא מת: חן ה'. נחמן לשלם שחר: ו | לא תקרבו. להזהיר הנקבה כזכר, לכך נחמד לשון דבים: חן ה'. נחמן לשלם שחר: ו | ערות אבין. זו חשת חבין, חו חיו חלף כממעו?

פרק יח ב | חן ה' אלהיכם. חן הוא שחמקתי פסיו: "חנכי ה' חלף" (שמות כ, ג) וקבלתם עליכם מלכותי, מעתה קבלו גזרותי. רבי חומר: חן וידוע לקטני שסוכן לזמן בעריות פיו נקרה, לפיכך פא עליהם בגזרה. "חן ה' חלף", דעו מי גזר עליכם, דין לפרע ונחמן לשלם שחר: ג | כמעשה ארץ מצרים. מצד שמעשהם של מנרים ושל כנענים מקלקלים מקל החמות, וזאת מקום שישנו בו ישראלי מקלקל מן הכל: אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה. מצד שחיות עממין שגבשו ישראלי מקלקלים יותר מקלם: ובחוקתיהם לא תלכו. מה הציח הקטוב שלא חמר? חלף חלו עמוסות שלהן, דברים החקיקין להם, כגון טקטיות וחטטיות. רבי מחר חומר, חלו דרכי החמורי שחמן חקמים: ד | את משפטי תעשו. חלו דברים החמורים בתורה כממעו, שחלו לא נחמדו היו כדחי לחמור: ואת חקתי

DISCUSSION

➔ passage, sexual morality, there were very few, if any, injunctions observed by either of these two cultures. Rampant promiscuity was characteristic of both Canaan and Egypt. As the children of Israel moved from Egypt to Canaan, they needed to be warned to observe the boundaries of sexual morality.

18:4 | **My ordinances you shall perform, and My statutes you shall observe:** The emphasis on obedience to God's ordinances expressed in this verse contradicts the apologetic explanations of the sexual prohibitions as eugenic limitations for the purpose of improving the gene pool. These prohibitions are not based on the idea that incestuous relationships can lead

to hereditary diseases and other health problems. One cannot say that they are designed to benefit a particular human society; rather, they should be understood as laws that have been prescribed by divine decree (see Ramban, verse 6; *Sifra*, *Kedoshim* 20:26).

18:6 | **To uncover nakedness:** This is a euphemistic expression for sexual relations. The Bible

him.⁴⁸ Indeed, there are historical precedents of men marrying their stepsisters.⁴⁹

12 The nakedness of your father's sister you shall not uncover; she is your father's kin, or flesh.⁵⁰

13 The nakedness of your mother's sister you shall not uncover, as she is your mother's kin.

14 The aunts mentioned in the previous two verses are blood relatives from the side of each parent. This verse adds that even an aunt who is not a blood relative is prohibited. **The nakedness of your father's brother you shall not uncover; you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt.**⁵¹ Since she is married to your uncle, she should be considered as much your aunt as the sister of your father or mother.

15 The Torah lists further prohibitions involving relatives through marriage. **The nakedness of your daughter-in-law you shall not uncover; she is your son's wife.** Therefore, **you shall not uncover her nakedness.**

16 The nakedness of your brother's wife you shall not uncover; it is your brother's nakedness.

17 The list of forbidden relations began with close blood relatives, e.g., parents, children, and siblings, before continuing with those who are relatives through marriage. In contrast, the next two prohibitions do not involve a familial relationship between the man and woman but rather focus on a preexisting relationship with a female relative of the woman. **The nakedness of a woman and her daughter you shall not uncover.** It is prohibited for a man to have relations with a mother and her daughter. This applies not only to her actual daughter, as even **her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter you shall not take to uncover her nakedness. They are kin; it is lewdness [zima].** Alternatively, *zima* means the thought process of sinners and is similar to the word *mezima*, plot.⁵¹ Although a man is permitted to wed either woman, he may not marry one of them once he has already been married to the other. Such a marriage would ruin the mother-daughter relationship.⁵² An additional negative consequence of such a marriage is that the husband is more liable to think of one woman while he is with the other, as there is often a resemblance between mother and daughter.

18 Similarly, a woman with her sister you shall not take to be rivals to uncover her nakedness through her in her lifetime.

It is prohibited to marry two sisters. The verse clearly states that a man may not marry his wife's sister if his wife is still alive, even if she is no longer his wife and he has divorced her. The prohibition against marrying two sisters is similar to the prohibition against marrying a mother and her daughter. However, the permissibility of marrying the sister of one's wife after the wife's death is a unique feature of this case that does not apply to the prohibition of marrying a mother and her daughter or to any of the other forbidden relations. The prohibition is in effect only during the lifetime of the sister one marries first.

19 The following forbidden sexual relationships are not prohibited due to familial connections of any kind between the participants. **To a woman in her state of menstrual impurity you shall not approach to uncover her nakedness.** It is prohibited to engage in sexual relations with a woman when she is in a state of menstrual impurity. Furthermore, one may not even approach to uncover her nakedness, which is a broader prohibition than refraining from actual sexual relations. It is prohibited for a man to engage in all forms of close contact with a woman in a state of menstrual impurity, and it makes no difference whether she is not related to him or if she is his own wife.⁵³

20 And with the wife of your counterpart,⁵⁴ **you shall not engage in sexual relations, to defile yourself with her.**

21 The Torah now turns to a different type of prohibition: **You shall not give from your offspring to pass him as a symbolic or an actual offering to Molekh,**⁵⁵ which is the name of a particular idol or cult that was widespread at the time.⁵⁵ **And you shall not profane the name of your God; I am the Lord.** According to the alternative opinion that Molekh is not the name of any particular idol, this might mean that one may not worship God by sacrificing children, as in the Molekh ritual, since this is a degenerate practice that profanes the name of God. This interpretation also fits the verses in Deuteronomy that discuss the topic of burning one's sons or daughters.⁵⁶

DISCUSSION

often prefers to employ euphemistic terminology, and certainly uses it with regard to sexual relations (see commentary on Genesis 9:21–22; *Pesachim* 3a).

18:14 | You shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt: This idea that the wife of an uncle related by blood is considered like a blood relation herself is one of the sources for the halakhic principle that the marriage bond causes

husband and wife to be considered virtually like a single entity. In the words of the Sage: One wife is like his own flesh (see *Sanhedrin* 28b; *Berakhot* 24a). This concept has ramifications in many areas of Jewish law.

18:20 | With the wife of your counterpart: Although the prohibition of adultery is one of the Ten Precepts (Exodus 20:12), it is mentioned here again in the context of the other forbidden

sexual relations. Traditional Jewish sources include the prohibition of adultery together with incest in the general category of forbidden sexual relations (e.g., see *Yevamot* 91a).

18:21 | You shall not give from your offspring to pass to Molekh: Why is the prohibition of Molekh worship mentioned in the context of forbidden sexual relations? The Molekh cult was not directly related to sexual impropriety, but

יב בַּת־אִשָּׁת אָבִיךָ מוֹלֶדֶת אָבִיךָ אַחֲוִיתְךָ הוּא לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָהּ: עֲרוֹת
יג אַחֲוִית־אָבִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה שְׂאֵר אָבִיךָ הוּא: עֲרוֹת אַחֲוִית־אָמְךָ
יד לֹא תִגְלֶה כִּי־שְׂאֵר אָמְךָ הוּא: עֲרוֹת אַחֲוִית־אָבִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה אֶל־
טו אִשְׁתּוֹ לֹא תִקְרָב דִּדָּתְךָ הוּא: עֲרוֹת פִּלְתְּךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה אִשָּׁת בִּנְךָ
טז הוּא לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹתָהּ: עֲרוֹת אִשְׁת־אָחִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה עֲרוֹת אָחִיךָ
יז הוּא: עֲרוֹת אִשָּׁה וּבִתָּהּ לֹא תִגְלֶה אֶת־בִּתְּכָהּ וְאֶת־בִּתְּכָתָהּ
יח לֹא תִקַּח לְגִלּוֹת עֲרוֹתָהּ שְׂאֵרָה הִנֵּה זִמָּה הִיא: וְאִשָּׁה אֶל־אֲחִתָּהּ לֹא תִקַּח
יט לְצֹדֵר לְגִלּוֹת עֲרוֹתָהּ עָלֶיהָ בְּחַיֶּיהָ: וְאֶל־אִשָּׁה בְּנִדָּת טַמְאָתָהּ לֹא תִקְרָב
כ לְגִלּוֹת עֲרוֹתָהּ: וְאֶל־אִשָּׁת עַמִּיתְךָ לֹא־תִתֵּן שְׂכַבְתְּךָ לְזֹרַע לְטַמְאָה־בָּהּ:
כא וּמִזֶּרַעְךָ לֹא־תִתֵּן לְהַעֲבִיר לַמִּלֵּךְ וְלֹא תַחֲלֹל אֶת־שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

רש"י

לַעֲשׂוֹת חֵת זוֹ צָרָה לָזוֹ: בְּחַיֶּיהָ. לְמַדְךָ שֶׁאִם
גִּלְשָׁה, לֹא יֵשֶׁא חֵת חֲחוּפָה כָּל זְמַן שֶׁהִיא בְּחַיִּים:
כא | לְמַלְךְ. עֲבוּדָה זָרָה הִיא שֶׁשְׂמֵהּ 'מֶלֶךְ', וְזוֹ הִיא
עֲבוּדָתָהּ, שֶׁמוֹסֵר בְּנוֹ לְקַמְרִים, וְעוֹשִׂין שְׂתֵי מַדּוּרֹת
גְּדוּלוֹת, וּמַעֲבִירִין חֵת הַבֵּן בְּגִלְיוֹ בֵּין שְׂתֵי מַדּוּרֹת הָאֵשׁ:
לֹא תִתֵּן. זוֹ הִיא מְסִירָתוֹ לְקַמְרִים: לְהַעֲבִיר לַמִּלֵּךְ. זוֹ
הַעֲבֵדָת הָאֵשׁ:

יז | עֲרוֹת אִשָּׁה וּבִתָּהּ. לֹא חֵסֶד הַכְּתוּב חָלָל עַל יְדֵי
נְשׂוּאֵי הַרְחָשׁוֹנָה, לְכָךְ נִחְמָה: "לֹא תִקַּח", לָשׁוֹן קִיחָה.
וְכֵן לַעֲשׂוֹ הַעֲנֵשׁ: "חָשַׁק יִקַּח חֵת חָשָׁה וְחֵת חָמָה" וּלְהַלֵּן
כ, יד, לָשׁוֹן קִיחָה, חָבַל חָנֵס חָשָׁה, מִתֵּר לִשָּׁא בְּתָהּ:
שְׂאֵרָה הִנֵּה. קְרוּבוֹת זוֹ לָזוֹ: זִמָּה. עֵצָה, קְתִיגָמוֹ: "עֵצַת
חֲטָאִיר", שִׁינְדֵּךְ יוֹעֲנֵךְ לְחֻטֹּא:
יח | אֶל אַחֲוִיתָהּ. שְׂתִינָהוּ בְּחַיִּיתָ: לְצֹדֵר. לָשׁוֹן צָרָה,

מִשְׁפָּחָה וְנִקְרִית, לְכָךְ נִחְמָה: "בֵּית חָשֵׁת חֲבוּךְ", בְּרָחוּץ
לְקִדְוִשִׁין:
יד | עֲרוֹת אַחֲוִית־אָבִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה. וְנִמָּה הִיא עֲדִיתָהּ? "חָל
חֲשִׁיתָ לֹא תִקְרָב":
טו | אִשָּׁת בִּנְךָ הוּא. לֹא חֲמִדָתִי חָלָל בְּשֵׁם לְבָנִךְ חִישִׁית
בָּהּ, פָּקֵט לְחֻטֹּא וְשִׁפְחָה וְנִקְרִית:

BACKGROUND

18:21 | **To pass to Molekh:** This was an idolatrous ritual in which one would bring his children as an offering by burning them in fire (see Deuteronomy 12:31; Jeremiah 7:31; Ezekiel 23:39). It was a common practice among some of the nations in the region, such as the Phoenicians. Alternatively, this might refer to a ritual in which children were ceremoniously passed through fire without actually being burned (see commentary on Isaiah 57:5).

It is possible that Molekh was not the real name of this god, but a Hebrew appellation for the Amonite god Milkom, as the children of

Israel would distort the names of foreign deities (see I Kings 11:7, 33). It is also possible that its original name was Melekh, meaning "king," as in the verse "and the Sefarvites burned their children in the fire to Adramelekh and Anamelekh, the gods of Sefarvaim" (II Kings 17:31; see Ramban, verse 21). One of the common ways in which names were altered in this regard was to take the two syllables of the principle name and vocalize it with a stressed o and an unstressed e sound, as in the name Boshet (e.g., see Hosea 9:10; see also *Avoda Zara* 45a).

DISCUSSION

➔ worship of Molekh expresses a corrupt conception of parental authority. Children and other subordinate members of the family are not under the absolute control of the head of the family, to be used sexually or as ritual offerings. This sort of exploitation is a profanation of the name of God, as the verse states.

It is also possible that the appearance of this prohibition in the context of the forbidden sexual acts reflects the existence of a fertility cult in which children were slaughtered in the hope of ensuring the fertility of the land or the family (see Sforno; Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed* 3:37).

- 22** This verse adds another prohibition to the list of forbidden sexual relations that are not due to familial ties, in addition to adultery and relations with a menstruating woman: **You shall not lie with a male in the manner of lying with a woman;⁵⁷ it is an abomination.** Homosexual relations between two men is not considered a normal sexual act; it is an abomination.
- 23** *Seventh aliya (Fourth aliya)* **You shall not engage sexually with any animal to defile yourself with it.** The defilement of this deed is due to its nature as a purely sexual act, with no possibility of mutual human attachment or procreation. Up to this point, the forbidden sexual acts have been stated as prohibitions for males, though it is clear from context and parallel sources that these prohibitions apply equally to females.⁵⁷ The verses have been addressed to men because the man is generally the more active party in these acts. Here the verse addresses a situation where no man is involved at all: **And a woman shall not stand before an animal for it to copulate with her; it is a perversion.** The verse insists that bestiality is a perversion, though it appears to not have been unheard of in Canaanite culture.
- 24** To conclude the section, the verse adds that transgressions in the area of forbidden sexual relations are not only legally proscribed, but also cause moral and spiritual debasement. Therefore, **do not defile yourselves in any of these; for in all these were defiled the nations that I am sending forth from before you.** Various types of forbidden sexual relations, including adultery, homosexuality, and bestiality, were a central feature of ancient Canaanite culture.
- 25** **The land was defiled, and I visited its iniquity upon it.** These acts are not merely private, personal transgressions. When they become accepted and normative they defile the land itself. Severe sexual transgressions contaminate not only the individual who commits them, but one's surroundings as well, and they cause punishment to be inflicted on the entire land.⁵⁸ **And**
- the land spewed out its inhabitants,** by conquest at the hands of other nations or through natural disasters.
- 26** In contrast to those nations, **you,** the children of Israel, **shall observe My statutes,** which determine what is considered a familial relationship, although these definitions are not predicated on human logic, **and My ordinances,** laws with discernible logical or practical underpinnings.⁵⁹ **You shall not perform any of these abominations, the native and the stranger who resides among you,** as these restrictions apply to anyone who resides in the land.⁶⁰
- 27** **For all these abominations were performed by the people of the land, who were living there before you,** the Canaanites, **and the land was defiled** through these acts.
- 28** If you do not sin, the result will be that **the land will not expel you by your defiling it, as it spewed out the nation that was before you.** The Land of Israel in particular cannot tolerate moral debasement, and it spews out the sinners who defile it.⁶¹
- 29** *Maftir* **For anyone who shall perform any of these abominations** listed above, as opposed to other, less severe prohibitions involving sexual relations that are not mentioned here,⁶² **the people who perform them shall be excised from among their people.** Even prior to the involvement of a human court in the case of one who violates these prohibitions, those who transgress these prohibitions are liable to excision at the hands of Heaven.⁶³
- 30** **You shall keep My commission to refrain from performing any of the abominable practices that were performed before you in the land of Canaan, and you shall not defile yourselves through performing them; I am the Lord your God.** The phrase “you shall keep My commission” may also be rendered as: You shall establish a safeguard for My commission. The Sages interpreted this as a mandate to enact protective measures to prevent people from performing transgressions.⁶⁴

DISCUSSION

18:22 | **You shall not lie with a male in the manner of lying with a woman:** This law also distinguished the children of Israel from the culture of the surrounding societies at the time, for whom homosexual relations was considered perfectly acceptable.

וְאֶת־זָכֹר לֹא תִשָּׁכַח מִשְׁכַּבִּי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה הִוא: וּבְכָל־בְּהֵמָה לֹא־תִתֵּן שְׁכָבְתְּךָ
 לְטִמְאָה־בָּהּ וְאִשָּׁה לֹא־תַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵי בְּהֵמָה לְרִבְעָה תִּבֶּל הִוא: אֶל־טִמְאָו
 בְּכָל־אֵלֶּה כִּי בְּכָל־אֵלֶּה נִטְמָאוּ הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי מְשַׁלַּח מִפְּנֵיכֶם: וְטִמְאָה
 הָאָרֶץ וְאֶפְקֹד עֲוֹנָהּ עָלֶיהָ וְתִקָּא הָאָרֶץ אֶת־יֹשְׁבֶיהָ: וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם אֹתָם אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי
 וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטַי וְלֹא תַעֲשׂוּ מִכָּל הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הָאֲזֻרָּה וְהַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכְכֶם: כִּי
 אֶת־כָּל־הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵל עָשׂוּ אֲנָשֵׁי־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵיכֶם וְטִמְאָה הָאָרֶץ: וְלֹא־
 תִקִּיא הָאָרֶץ אֶתְכֶם בְּטִמְאָכֶם אֹתָהּ כַּאֲשֶׁר קָאָה אֶת־הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵיכֶם: כִּי
 כָל־אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה מִכָּל הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵלֶּה וְנִכְרַתוּ הַנַּפְשׁוֹת הַעֹשֹׂת מִקֶּרֶב עַמָּם:
 וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם אֶת־מִשְׁמַרְתִּי לְבַלְתִּי עֲשׂוֹת מַחֲקֹת הַתּוֹעֵבוֹת אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשׂוּ לִפְנֵיכֶם
 וְלֹא תִטְמָאוּ בָהֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם:

כב
כג
כד
כה
כו
כז
כח
כט
ל

שביעי
/רביעי/

מפטיר

רש"י

ל | ושמרתם את משמרת. להזהיר בית דין על כך:
 ולא תטמאו בהם אני ה' אלהיכם. ה' חס תטמאו
 חינו חלליכם ואתם נפסלים מאחרי, ומה הנחה יש
 לי בכם ואתם מתחזקים עליה, לכך נאמר: "חני ה'
 חלליכם".

שהחילוי דבר מאוס, שאין עומד במעיו חלל מקיחו,
 כך חרץ ושרחל חניה מקומית עובדי עברה. ותקצומו:
 'ולא תדוק', לשון דקון, מדיקה עצמה מהם:
 כט | הנפשות העשות. הזכר והנקבה במשמע:

כג | תבל הוא. לשון קדש ועקרה ונחור, וכן: "ואפי
 על תבליתם" (ישעיה י כה). דבר חרד, "תבל הוא" -
 לשון בליה ועדפוב, זרע חרס וזרע פהמה:
 כח | ולא תקיא הארץ אתכם. משל לבן מלך

Parashat Kedoshim

The Command to Be Holy

LEVITICUS 19:1–20:27

Until this point, the book of Leviticus has addressed specific topics of Jewish Law: offerings, forbidden foods, ritual impurity, etc.¹ The issue it now addresses, holiness, constitutes an entire way of life not restricted to any one area.

Commentaries note that the set of laws presented below echoes the Ten Precepts. Here, the contents of the Ten Precepts are expanded and deepened, taking on new meanings.² Still, it is difficult to clearly discern the organizing principle behind this section's structure and the order of its contents.³

Fear of One's Parents, the Sabbath, Idol Worship, and Observing the Laws of Offerings

LEVITICUS 19:1–8

- 19** **1** The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:
- 2** Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel,^d and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God, am holy. Before giving the Torah to the children of Israel, God declares and demands that they “shall be for Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”⁴ Now it is time for the people to actualize this declaration: Their holiness must express itself in deed. Holiness is not the performance of a specific deed, ritual, or initiation. Rather, the holiness of the children of Israel is due to their special relationship with God, and the ramifications of this relationship include a tremendous collection of requisite actions.
- 3** Each of you shall fear his mother and his father and you shall observe My Sabbaths:^d I am the Lord your God. Some explain that the juxtaposition of these two laws indicates that although one must take great care to fear one's parents and obey them, the obligation to observe the Sabbath takes precedence over this commandment; one is not obligated to obey one's

parents when their instructions involve a transgression of the Sabbath or other commandments.⁵

- 4** Do not turn to the false gods,^d and do not fashion for yourselves cast gods, because you are holy and I am the Lord your God.
- 5** And when you slaughter a peace offering to the Lord, for your propitiation you shall offer it, of your own goodwill,⁶ or in order to find favor in God's eyes.⁷
- 6** To this end, you must observe the laws of the offering:⁸ On the day of your slaughter it shall be eaten and on the next day, in accordance with that which was stated previously (7:16); and the leftover until the third day, it shall be burned in fire.
- 7** And if it, the offering, is eaten on the third day, it is detestable [*piggul*]. According to rabbinic tradition, sacrificial meat that was left until the third day is considered leftover [*notar*]. *Piggul* refers to an offering that was initially offered with intent to consume its flesh on the third day.⁹ Although it is prohibited to eat *notar*, the offering itself is accepted so long as it was offered with proper intent; it is not disqualified retroactively. *Piggul*, however, since it is offered with improper intent, shall not be accepted by God at all, no matter when its flesh is consumed in practice.
- 8** And he who eats it shall bear responsibility for his iniquity, because he profaned that which is sacred to the Lord; and that person shall be excised from his people.^d

DISCUSSION

19:2 | **Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel:** This introductory phrase differs from the standard phrase: “Speak to the children of Israel,” which introduces the previous chapter dealing with forbidden relationships (18:2), as well as from the other forms of introductions appearing in Leviticus. Here, the address is to the entire congregation, rather than to any particular assembly, as this passage presents a general perspective which expresses itself in numerous details. Thus, the chapter is delivered to the entire congregation, as it does not refer to specific issues or sins (see *Sifra*).

19:3 | **Each of you shall fear his mother and his father and you shall observe My Sabbaths:** The requirements to honor one's parents and to observe the Sabbath appear adjacent in the Ten Precepts as well (Exodus 20:8–11). It would seem that their juxtaposition serves to express two opposite extremes: On the one hand, the special status accorded to parents, and to elders in general, is a fundamental feature of human society, and is not specifically related to the sanctity of Israel. For generations, people have honored their elders, and it is this show of respect that is perceived as an example

of humanity's moral superiority over all other living creatures, whose elders are left to die alone. Here, man is commanded to fear one's parents in addition to honoring them. This commandment addresses both young children who may still be punished by their parents, as well as adults whose parents can no longer control their child's actions. Therefore, fear of one's parents is not based on force or power, but on acknowledgment of their elevated status. On the other hand, the commandment to observe the Sabbath contains an emphasis on the fact that they are “My Sabbaths,” and the Sabbath is God's

יט א וַיִּדְבֹּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּאמֹר: דָּבָר אֶל־כָּל־עַדְת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ טו
ב אֱלֹהִים קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ כִּי קָדוֹשׁ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: אִישׁ אָמוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ
ג וְאֶת־שִׁבְתֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: אֶל־תִּפְּנֹו אֶל־הָאֱלִילִים וְאֱלֹהֵי
ד מִסְכָּה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וְכִי תִזְבְּחוּ זֶבֶח שְׁלָמִים לַיהוָה
ה לִרְעֹנֵכֶם תִּזְבַּחְהוּ: בְּיוֹם זִבְחֵכֶם יֹאכַל וּמִמַּחֲרַת וְהַנּוֹתָר עַד־יוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי
ו פֶּאֶשׁ יִשְׂרָף: וְאִם הָאֵכָל יֹאכַל בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי פְּגוֹל הוּא לֹא יִרְצָה:
ז וְאֲכָלוּ עֹנֹו יֵשָׂא כִּי־אֶת־קֹדֶשׁ יְהוָה חָלַל וּנְכַרְתָּה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מֵעַמִּיהָ:
ח

ג' איש אמו ואביו תיראו. כל אחד מכם תיראו אביו
אמו, וזה פשוט, ומדלש, חוץ ללל איש, אשה מעין?
השני חומר: "תיראוי" הרי ברוך שנים אם בן למה יחמר
האיש? שהיה שפק בידו לעשות, אבל אשה - רעות
האחרים עליה: אמו ואביו תיראו. בן הקדים חס ללך,
לפי שגילו לפניו השבן ירח חת אביו יותר ממנו, ובכבוד
הקדים אל חס. לפי שגילו לפניו השבן מכתב אביו חמו
יותר מחיבו, מפני שגדלותו בדברים ומוקד שבתיו
תשמרו. פקד שמירת שבת למועד זה. לומר, חף על
פי שהזהרנו על מועד זה, חס יחמר כך חלל חת

19:8 | **And he who eats it shall bear his iniquity, because he profaned that which is sacred to the Lord; and that person shall be excised from his people:** The prophets also accused the children of Israel of partaking of offerings on the third day, in the Temples at Beit El and Dan (Amos 4:4). It seems puzzling, however, that such a transgression should incur such severe punishment and rebuke. Why is the consumption of an offering the day after its allotted time punishable by excision? Granted,

Gifts for the Poor, Honesty, and Brotherhood

LEVITICUS 19:9–18

After addressing the preservation of holiness in purely spiritual or ritualistic matters – the Sabbath, idol worship, and sacrificial offerings – the chapter turns to other facets of holiness relating to the daily lives of individuals. The Torah's concept of holiness is not limited to an isolated realm detached from the mundane aspects of life. Rather, all areas of life fall under the purview of this holiness, and its implications express themselves in a myriad of ways in the private and public domains. Therefore, the virtue of holiness demands both small and large obligations in interpersonal relationships.

- 9 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not finish reaping the corner of your field;** do not harvest it. **And the gleanings of your harvest,** the sheaves that fall from the sickle during the harvest, **you shall not gather;** rather, you must leave them in the field.



Ancient Egyptian fresco depicting a harvest, thirteenth century BCE

- 10 Your vineyard you shall not harvest completely** [*te'olel*], do not gather the small, incompletely formed clusters of grapes [*olelot*], **and the fallen fruit of your vineyard,** the grapes that have separated and fallen off the cluster, **you shall not gather.** All this produce, meaning the the corner of your field, the gleanings of your harvest, the incomplete clusters, and the fallen grapes, you may not gather from your field. Rather, **for the poor and for the stranger,** who is financially unstable, **you shall leave them: I am the Lord your God.**^D
- 11** In addition to charity, the following prohibitions, some of which are designed to prevent social injustices, are important

for the establishment of a holy congregation: **You shall not steal; nor shall you falsely deny a claim** that you owe another money, **nor shall you lie to one another.**

- 12 You shall not take an oath in My name falsely, as you will profane the name of your God** by using it for wrongdoing: **I am the Lord,** and invoking My name among your falsehoods is doubly wrong.
- 13 You shall not** use your power, status, or authority to **exploit your neighbor,** that is, you shall not prevent him from receiving that which he rightfully deserves.¹⁰ Such exploitation might occur during business negotiations or during disagreements, or may relate to the hiring of workers.¹¹ **And you shall not rob** someone of that which belongs to him; **you shall not keep the wages of a hired laborer with you overnight^D until morning.** You must pay your employees without delay. In particular, if you employ a day laborer who is to receive his wages after each day's work, you must pay him during the same evening in which he completes his labor.
- 14 You shall not curse a deaf person;^D you shall not place an obstacle before the blind.^D** Upon these prohibitions, the Torah adds the warning: **You shall fear your God: I am the Lord.** In many instances, an injured person is unaware of who harmed him, and an offender can easily escape responsibility, especially if his victim is deaf, blind, or otherwise helpless with no one to argue on his behalf. Moreover, one may harm another in a discrete manner, unnoticeable even to those surrounding the victim. Therefore, the verse stresses that even when one has no reason to fear the reactions of the victim or society, he must fear God, before whom all actions and intentions are revealed.¹²

DISCUSSION

one chooses of one's own goodwill to bring a peace offering, in order to partake of its flesh before God. Part of the offering is burned upon the altar, and a portion of the offering is given to the priests, while most of the flesh goes to the owner. Since all three parties participate in the offering, it engenders an atmosphere of peace and tranquility, hence the name "peace offering" (*Sifra, Dibbura DeNedava* 13; Rashi, 4:10). However, a peace offering is a sacred item,

and its consumption is not meant to be a personal celebratory feast of which only a portion is designated for God. If the consumption of the offering is treated merely as a large family meal, its sanctity is marred. Consequently, one who consumes it on the third day, or intends to do so, without care for when or where he consumes the offering, profanes a sacred item of God. Therefore, the severe penalty incurred by this transgression does not stem from the

temptation to actually consume an offering beyond its appropriate time; rather, it results from the desecration of a sacred item and its transformation into a non-sacred one (see *Bekhor Shor*; commentary on 22:31).

19:10 | I am the Lord your God: This declaration, repeated on ten occasions in *Parashat Kedoshim*, serves to emphasize that these actions are not merely decent human behavior. Behind each of these commands stands the

ט וּבְקִצְרְכֶם אֶת־קִצִּיר אֲרֻצְכֶם לֹא תִכְלֶה פֶּאֶת שְׂדֶךְ לַקְצֹר וּלְקַט קִצִּירְךָ
י לֹא תִלְקֹט: וְכִדְמְךָ לֹא תַעֲזֹל וּפְרֹט כְּדִמְךָ לֹא תִלְקֹט לַעֲנִי וְלִגְרֵי תַעֲזֹב
יא אַתָּם אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: לֹא תִגְנְבוּ וְלֹא תִכְחֲשׁוּ וְלֹא תִשְׁקְרוּ אִישׁ
יב בַּעֲמִיתוֹ: וְלֹא תִשָּׁבְעוּ בִשְׁמִי לִשְׁקֹר וְחָלַלְתָּ אֶת־שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:
יג לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂק אֶת־רֵעֶךָ וְלֹא תִגְזֹל לֹא־תִלִּין פֶּעֱלַת שָׂכִיר אֶתְךָ עַד־בֹּקֶר:
יד לֹא־תִקְלָל חֵרֶשׁ וּלְפָנֶי עֹזֵר לֹא תִתֵּן מִכָּשָׁל וְיִרְאָתָּ מֵאֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

רש"י

כל הלילה. ובמקום חסר הוא חומר: "ולא תבוא עליו השמש" (דברים כד, טו), מדבר בשכיר לילה, שהשלמת פעולתו משיעלה עמוד השחר, לסיכך זמן גבוי שכרו כל היום, לפי שנתנה תורה זמן לבעל הבית עונה לבקש מעות:

יד | לא תקלל חרש. חיון לי חלל חרש, מנעו לרבות כל חרש? תלמוד לומר: "בעמך לא תחר" (שמות כב, טו), חס בן, למה נחמר "חרש"? מה חרש מיוחד שהוא בחיים, אך כל שהוא בחיים, יצא המצוה שחינו בחיים: ולפני עור לא תתן מכשול. למען הסוּמא בדבר לא תתן ענה שחיה הוגנת לו, אל תחמר מכר שך וקח לך חומר, וחתה עונוך עליו ונטלה הימנו: ויראת מאלהיו. לפי שהדבר הזה חיון מסור לבדידות לידע חס

ולא תשקרו. לפי שפירש: "ונשבע על שקר" – ושלם קרן וזמנא (פסל ה, כב-כד), למדנו ענין, חזקה מנעו? תלמוד לומר "ולא תשקרו": לא תגנבו ולא תכחשו ולא תשקרו... ולא תשבעו. חס גזירת סופר לבקש, סופר לשקרה סופר להשבע לשקר:

יב | ולא תשבעו בשמי. למה נחמר? לפי שפירש: "לא תשא חת שם ה' אלהיו לשווא" (שמות כ, ז), יכול לא יהא חייב חלל על שם המיוחד, מנעו לרבות כל הפנויות? תלמוד לומר: "ולא תשבעו בשמי לשקרה", כל שם שגשג לי:

יג | לא תעשק. זה הדין שכל שכיר: לא תליון. לשון נקבה, מוסב על הפעלה: עד בקר. בשכיר יום הפינוג מדבר, שיחיתו משקיעה חממה, לסיכך זמן גבוי שכרו

ט | לא תכלה פאת שדך. שיעור פאה בסוף שדה: ולקט קצירך. שגלים הנשירים בשעת קצירה חת חו שמים, חבל שלש חיון לקט (פסל ה, ה):

י | לא תעזול. לא תמול עוללות שבה, והן נכרות חיון: עוללות? כל שחיון לה לא קתר ולא נטר: ופרט כדמך. גרזני עגבים הנשירים בשעת קצירה: אמי ה' אלהיכם. דין לפירע, וחינו גובה מקם חלל נפשות, שפירש: "חל תגל דל" וגו' "פי ה' יריב ריבם" וגו' (משל כב, כב-כג):

יא | לא תגנבו. חזקה לגונב ממון, חבל "לא תגנב" שפגע שדך הדברות חזקה לגונב נפשות. דבר הלמד מענינו. דבר שחינו עליו מיתת בית דין: ולא תכחשו. לפי שפירש: "וכחש פה" – משלם קרן וזמנא (פסל ה, כב-כד), למדנו ענין, חזקה מנעו? תלמוד לומר: "ולא תכחשו":

DISCUSSION

→ sanctity of the Lawgiver, the Creator of all existence. Just as it is the holiness of God that stands behind the prohibitions against turning to false gods or fashioning cast gods (verse 4), so too it is His sanctity that serves as the source for the obligation to leave a portion of one's property for the poor, the strangers, and the needy. In this manner, holiness permeates the fabric of daily life far more than through the performance of ritualistic acts.

19:13 | **You shall not keep the wages of a hired laborer with you overnight:** In a developed economy, it might be financially advantageous for an employer to delay paying his employees, or it might simply be a matter of convenience for the employer. Regardless, the Torah obligates the timely payment of wages in order to prevent abuse and to establish labor relations on a foundation of honesty.

The hired laborer mentioned in the Torah is one who is in need of his wages. As such, it

is prohibited to delay payment for his labor. Nevertheless, even if the situation were reversed, and the employer required the services of a particular laborer while the laborer had several job offers, it is still prohibited to delay payment of wages.

19:14 | **You shall not curse a deaf person:** Although it is prohibited to curse anyone (see *Sifra*; Rashi; Ramban; *Sanhedrin* 66a; *Shevuot* 36a), the Torah specifies a deaf person in order to highlight the damage caused by the statement itself, even when the target of the curse cannot hear it. Clearly, one who curses or demeans a deaf person in the presence of others harms him, despite the fact that the individual himself is unaware of the damage inflicted. Perhaps it is due to ignorance of this fact that people justify such behavior (see Ramban; Rabbeinu Bahya). Even if nobody hears the curse and no tangible damage will be inflicted upon the deaf person, it is still prohibited to curse him, as such speech

has a deleterious effect on the soul of the speaker (see *Derashot HaRan* 12).

Although there are specific parameters regarding this prohibition, it is clear from several places that a curse as mentioned in the Bible is not merely the expression of ill will from one to another, but also involves a statement of belittlement or mockery (see Deuteronomy 21:23, 25:3; I Samuel 3:13, and Rashi ad loc.; II Samuel 6:22; *Targum Yonatan*, Leviticus 24:11; Rashi and Ramban, Deuteronomy 21:22).

You shall not place an obstacle block before the blind: The Sages understand this prohibition to extend far beyond its literal meaning. That is, anyone who lacks knowledge in a certain field, or is unaware of all sides of a matter, is considered blind with regard to that matter. Any statement that might lead such an individual to fail or to follow the wrong course of action, or cause him to sin, is included in this prohibition (see Rashi; *Sifra*, *Kedoshim* 2:2; *Pesahim* 22b).

15 You shall not perform injustice in judgment. This is a general demand for honesty in judgment. Furthermore, not only is it prohibited to discriminate against those on the margins of society, but **you shall not favor the impoverished** as well, and conversely, **you shall not defer to the great;**^D do not favor either of the litigants. **With righteousness you shall judge your counterpart,** regardless of his identity or status.

16 You shall not go as a gossip^D among your people: Do not recount in one place certain rumors or private matters that you heard or witnessed in another place.¹³ Additionally, when you see a member of Israel in danger or distress, **you shall not stand by the blood of your neighbor.**^D That is, one must attempt to come to his aid if he is in distress. This is true even if the matter is not actually one of life and death.¹⁴ **I am the Lord,** and My commands must be obeyed. Furthermore, given that one might easily shirk this responsibility by claiming that he was unaware of his neighbor's distress, that he was in a hurry or was busy, that he did not think his assistance was critical, or that the situation was too dangerous to intervene in, God declares: I am the Lord, and I know the truth.¹⁵

17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart. Although this would seem to be a general commandment, its practical ramifications are limited. The verse does not refer to actions that express hatred, but to the harboring of negative feelings

in one's heart. Indeed, the verse instructs an alternative course of action: **You shall rebuke your neighbor,^D and thereby you shall not bear a sin because of him.**¹⁶ If you keep these matters in your heart and do not reprove him, this will be considered a sin.¹⁷

18 You shall not take vengeance upon someone who has wronged you or withheld some benefit from you; do not treat him as he treated you. Now, there are some who will refrain from seeking actual vengeance, but will harbor anger in their hearts. To counter this, the verse states: **You shall not even bear any grudge^D in your heart.** Although taking vengeance or bearing a grudge may be legitimate courses of action against foreign enemies, it is prohibited to do so **against members of your people.**¹⁸ **You shall love your neighbor as yourself;^D I am the Lord.**^D As above, the declaration "I am the Lord" serves to emphasize two points: On the one hand, although it is morally appropriate and even socially beneficial to love one's neighbor, these are not the motivations for this commandment. Rather, you must love your neighbor as yourself because God has commanded it. On the other hand, since God alone can judge the relationship between one's deeds and emotions, it is crucial to remind the people that this commandment, which pertains to the inner feelings of the individual, comes from God, and He can see what hides in one's heart.¹⁹

DISCUSSION

19:15 | **You shall not favor the impoverished; you shall not defer to the great:** All legal systems contain some sort of prohibition against favoring the rich, the powerful, or the strong. However, prohibiting a judge from pitying the poor is an anomaly.

Additionally, the "great" individual referred to in the verse is not only one who is wealthy or of noble status, as opposed to a pauper or one on the margins of society. The verse may also refer to a spiritually great person: a sage or important rabbi (see Exodus 11:3).

19:16 | **You shall not go as a gossip [rakhil]:** This expression borrows from the behavior of the wandering peddler [rakhil]. The root *reish-khaf-lamed* is similar to the root *reish-gimmel-lamed*, meaning "foot" (see Rashi), as both involve movement from place to place. The root *reish-gimmel-lamed* also has a negative connotation relating to movement and the passing on of information, namely in the term *meragel*, a spy, who uses his feet and ability to walk in order to pass on information.

The Torah prohibits one from revealing the private matters of another. This does not refer to spreading lies, nor does it refer specifically to revealing shameful or embarrassing episodes, but to the very exposure of private matters, which is today considered the duty of the press. Granted, certain matters must be revealed for specific purposes. However, there are many matters that people are accustomed to revealing, even though their revelation has no positive value. For example, a reliable account of a quarrel between a husband and wife does not involve a criminal offense, but such a report is likely to increase the tension in that relationship. A gossip who hears rumors or stories and goes off to tell them to another, creates undesirable situations through the very transmission of this information, and he violates a Torah prohibition.

You shall not go as a gossip among your people; you shall not stand by the blood of your neighbor: These two prohibitions appear adjacent to one another due to their similarity: The gossip seeks to witness deplorable acts, perhaps

even ones that involve an element of danger. Not only does he not intervene to provide assistance and save that individual, but he takes pleasure in the event and enjoys passing on the details of it to others (see Ibn Ezra; *Bekhor Shor*; Rambam, *Sefer HaMadda*, *Hilkhot Deot* 7:1).

19:17 | **You shall not hate your brother in your heart; you shall rebuke your neighbor:** Generally, one comes to hate another individual due to some unscrupulous behavior on the latter's part. One's performance of a good deed might arouse jealousy, but not hatred. Some people will quarrel with an individual they have observed acting in an improper manner, especially when they are personally affected, while others, who generally refrain from interfering in the affairs of others, will remain silent even if the improper behavior arouses feelings of hatred. If left unresolved, this hatred may not subside, and might even intensify. Therefore, one is commanded to rebuke his neighbor and inform him of his feelings. Oftentimes an individual is unaware that he has done something wrong;

לֹא־תַעֲשׂוּ עֹל בְּמִשְׁפָּט לֹא־תִשָּׂא פָנֶי־דָל וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פָּנֶי גָדוֹל בְּצֹדֶק
 תִּשְׁפֹּט עַמִּיתְךָ: לֹא־תִלָּךְ רֵכִיל בְּעַמֶּיךָ לֹא תַעֲמֹד עַל־דָּם רֵעֶךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:
 לֹא־תִשָּׂא אֶת־אָחִיךָ בַּלְבָּבְךָ הוֹכֵחַ תוֹכִיחַ אֶת־עַמִּיתְךָ וְלֹא־תִשָּׂא עָלָיו
 חֶטֶא: לֹא־תִקֵּם וְלֹא־תִטּוֹל אֶת־בְּנֵי עִמָּךְ וְאֶהְבֵּת לרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךְ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

רש"י

הלעטה, והוא חזק שדכדכו מקינים ומעמידם על האמת וזוהי הלעטה נקראת 'איבילת קורנר', לשון: 'לקרן פנינו' (משלי ו, א) שכן דרך כל הולכי דרכו לקרן פניהם ולרמז דברי רבילות, שלא יבנו שאר אומעים: לא תעבדו על עם רעך. לרחות נמיתתו וזוהי יכול להעלו, חזן טובע צדה וזוהי חזן לטטים פחים עליו: אמי ה' גמול שלכם פניה וזמן פלעו.

יז | ולא תשא עליו חטא. לא תלבין את פניו בדרבים:

יח. לא תקם. חמר לו: השחילנ מַגְלָה, חמר לו:
לחז. למחר חמר לו: השחילנ קרדמך, חמר לו:
חיי משיחך בדרך שלח השחלתנ, זו היא נקמה.
וזהו? היא נטייה? חמר לו: השחילנ קרדמך, חמר
לו: לחז. למחר חמר לו: השחילנ מַגְלָה, חמר
לו: חז. חז, וחינו כמותך שלח השחלתנ, זו היא
נטיה, שנטת חזיתו בלבד, חל פי שחיתו נוסב:
וזהב? רדך במוך. חמר רבי עקיבא: זה כפל גדול
מחור:

מִנְעֵם וּמִסְפְּרֵי לֶאֱשׁוֹן הַדָּע הוֹלְכִים בְּצֵת רֵעִים לִרְגֹל
מֶה יִרְאוּ קֵעַ אִזּוֹ מֶה יִשְׁמְעוּ קֵעַ לִסְפֵּר בִּשְׂרָה נִקְחִים
הוֹלְכֵי רֵכֶל, הוֹלְכֵי רֵעִי, אֲשֶׁיִּימִינֵנוּ בְּעֵינֵי וְדֹחִי
לְדָבָר, שֶׁלֹּא מֵעֵינֵי רֵכֶלִית שֶׁאִין כְּתוּב בְּלֶאֱשׁוֹן הַלִּכָּה,
”לֹא תֵלֵךְ רֵכֶל”, ”הוֹלְכֵי רֵכֶל חֲנֹשֶׁת וְנִזְוֹל” (ויקרא א,
כח). וְאִזּוֹ לֶאֱשׁוֹן הַדָּע אִין כְּתוּב בּוֹ הַלִּכָּה, ”מִלְּשֹׁנִי
בִּסְתֵּר רֵעִי” (תהלים קח, ה), ”לֶאֱשׁוֹן רֵמִיָּה” (סם קכ, ג-ד),
”לֶאֱשׁוֹן מִדְּבַר־תְּלֹת” (סם יב, ד). לִכְךָ אִין חֲזוֹנֵם הַלִּכָּה
”רֵכֶלִי” שֶׁלֹּא הוֹלֵךְ וּמִנְעֵהוּ שֶׁהָיָה חֲלֹפֶטֶת עֵינָיִם, שֶׁכָּל
הַחֲזוֹתִים שְׁמוֹנָה־עַרְבִית מִקְוֹם חֶדֶד מִתְחַלְּפוֹת זוּ בְּזוֹ:
בִּית בִּסְתֵּר, וְעֵינִי בִּקְרִי, וְקוֹיִן בִּקְרִי, וְעֵינִי בְּלִמְדָּה, וְעֵינִי
בְּכָרִי, וְכוּן. וְיִרְגֵּל בְּעֶדְדָּה” (שמואל ב, יט, כח). רִגְלֵ בְּמִדְרָה
לִחְזוֹר עַל־רֵעִי, וְכוּן: ”לֹא רִגְלֵ עַל לֶאֱשׁוֹן” (תהלים טו,
א). וְכֵן רֹכֵב, הַסּוֹחֵר וּמִנְעֵהוּ אֲחֵר כָּל סוֹחֵרָה, וְכָל
הַמּוֹכֵר בְּשָׂמִים לְהִתְקַשֵּׁט בָּהֶם הַגָּשָׁם, עַל שֶׁם שְׁמוֹחֵר
תְּמִיד בְּעֵרֻת כִּרְחַח רֹכֵב, לֶאֱשׁוֹן רֹגֵל וְהִתְרַמְּנוּ: ”לֹא
תִּשְׁכַּח קוֹדֶרֶת”, כְּמוֹ ”תִּשְׁכַּח לִרְעֻהוֹן וְיִהְיֶה” (דניאל
א, א). ”תִּשְׁכַּח בִּיהַּ הָרָעִיב בְּמִלְכָּה” (בריתא נח טו, א). נִרְחָה
עֵינֵי הָרֵיז מִשְׁפָּטִם לִחְלֹל בְּמִלְכָּה הַמִּהְרָב לְדִבְרֵיהֶם שֶׁם

דַּעְתּוֹ שֶׁל זֶה לַטּוֹבָה חוּ לַרָעָה, וְיִכּוֹל לְהִשָּׁמֵט וּלְמַר: לַטּוֹבָה נִתְּנָתִי, לְכִיכָּךְ נִחְמַר בּוֹ: "וְיִרְחַת מֵאֲחֵיהֶּיךָ", הַמְּפִיר מֵאֲחֵיהֶיךָ. וְכֵן כָּל דְּבַר הַמְּסוּר לְלִבּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם הַעוֹשֶׂהוּ, וְחֵין אֲחֵר הַבְּרִיּוֹת מִבְּרִית בּוֹ, נִחְמַר בּוֹ: "וְיִרְחַת מֵאֲחֵיהֶּיךָ".

וְיָדַעְתָּ שֶׁלֹא תִשָּׂא עוֹל בְּמִשְׁפָּט. מִלְמַד סֶדְרָן הִמְחִיל לְפָנֵינוּ
אֶת הַדִּין קְרוֹי עוֹל, אֵינִי וּמִשְׁקָר, חֶסֶד וְיִתְעֵבָה, שֶׁהַעוֹל
קְרוֹי תִּעְבָּה, שֶׁחֶסֶד, "כִּי תִעְבָּה ה'" וְגו' כֹּל נֶעֱשֶׂה עוֹל
(וְדַמִּים הֵם טוֹ) וְהַתִּעְבָּה קְרוֹיָה שָׁקָר וְחֶסֶד, אֲנִימָה:
וְהַתִּבְיָה תִּבְרֵי חַיִּים בִּי תִּבְרָךְ הַיִּיטֵב חֶסֶד כְּמֵהוּ שָׁקָר
שֶׁתִּקְרָאנָהּ (וְ עַס ל טו) לֹא תִשָּׂא פִי דַל. שֶׁלֹא תִחַמֵּר
עַל הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וְהַעֲשִׂיר חֵיב לִפְסוּדָהּ, חֲצוּנֵי בְּדוּן וְנִמְצָא
מִתְפַּקֵּדֵם בְּתוֹתָיִם: וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פְּנֵי גִדּוֹל. שֶׁלֹא תִחַמֵּר,
הַעֲשִׂיר הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה, בֶּן גְּדוּלָּה הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה, הַיִּחַל בְּחִשְׁבוֹ וְחִדְדָהּ
בְּבִשְׁתָּהּ? עוֹדָה לָכֵן דְּבָרָה! לָכֵן חֲמֵר: "וְלֹא תִהְדָּר פְּנֵי
גִדּוֹל: בְּעֵדָה חֶסֶד וְשִׁפְט מִיָּתֵךְ. כְּמִשְׁמַעוֹ. דְּבַר אֲחִי, הוּא
זוֹ: אֶת חֲסִדִּי לָכֵן זִכְרִי:

טז | לא תלך רביל. אני חוזר על שם שכל משפחי

DISCUSSION

➡ rebuking him might lead him to mend his ways and thus resolve the issue (see Rashbam; Ramban; Abravanel; *Sefer Yere'im* 39). In any case, the verse does not demand a public expression of disapproval, but a direct address of one's neighbor in order to help him mend his ways. In this sense, this commandment is similar to the previous one: "You shall not stand by the blood of your neighbor."

19:18 | **You shall not take vengeance; you shall not bear any grudge:** These prohibitions are related to the commandments of the previous verse. Even if one does not actually hate his neighbor, he may still harbor a grudge toward him. Perhaps had he rebuked his neighbor, he would not have come even to this.

You shall love your neighbor as yourself: A statement of Hillel the Elder seems to indicate

that this commandment is the basis of the entire Torah; indeed, Rabbi Akiva says so explicitly (see *Shabbat* 31a; *Beresheet Rabba* 24; Rashi). Love is not merely positive interaction with another individual, but is also an emotional attitude. The commandment to love one's neighbor demands this emotional component as well. Nevertheless, from a legal perspective, it is impossible to demand these emotions from a person. Therefore, it seems that this commandment requires that an individual reflect on how to properly interact with his friend: to be sensitive and to keep his friend's best interests at heart, just as he would for himself, and to refrain from doing anything to another that he would himself consider painful, unpleasant, uncomfortable, or distasteful. Hillel the Elder interpreted the verse as follows: That which is hated by you, do not do to your friend (*Targum Yonatan; Shabbat* 31a). This

formulation constitutes the minimal requirement of the verse to treat another as oneself (see *Bekhor Shor*; Ramban).

You shall love your neighbor as yourself, I am the Lord: The various commandments governing interpersonal relationships present a standard of behavior by which each individual is required to treat others as he himself wishes to be treated. Although the Torah does not offer a reason for this standard, it would seem that the basis for these commandments is the acknowledgment of the divine spark in each person. For this reason, the Sages explain that the command: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," finds broader expression in the verse: "This is the book of the legacy of Adam...in the likeness of God He made him" (Genesis 5:1; Jerusalem Talmud, *Nedarim* 9:4; *Beresheet Rabba* 24:7).

Diverse Kinds, the Designated Maidservant, and Orla

LEVITICUS 19:19–25

After stating commandments which may be classified as ordinances, namely laws governing social norms and expectations, the verse lists several statutes, commandments that are divine decrees. Some of these statutes may be understood as aimed at preserving the established framework of the natural world.

- 19** You shall observe My statutes; you shall not breed your animal with diverse kinds, you shall not crossbreed them. The verse does not state that such diverse kinds are unpleasant, harmful, or otherwise dangerous. This prohibition is a divine decree for which there is no utilitarian explanation. Likewise, you shall not sow your field with diverse kinds of seeds; and a garment that is a mixture^D of diverse kinds, of wool and linen, shall not be put on by you.
- 20** A man, if he lies sexually with a woman, and she is a maidservant, designated for a man,^D and she was not redeemed with money, or full freedom was not granted her,²⁰ there shall be an inspection.^D If she was a willing participant, she receives a punishment. However, they shall not be put to death, unlike in the case of a married woman, because she, the maidservant, was not freed. This transgression is not a capital offense. So long as she has not been fully freed, her bond to a man has an intermediate status, and she is not considered a married woman.
- 21** Nevertheless, since he has sinned, he shall bring his guilt offering^D to the Lord, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, a ram of a guilt offering. Although he is not subject to formal punishment, his act must be remedied, and to that end he brings a ram as an offering.
- 22** The priest shall atone for him with the ram of the guilt offering before the Lord for his sin that he has sinned; and he shall be forgiven for his sin that he has sinned.
- 23** The following law is also built on a foundation of behavioral restraint and moderation: **When you come into the land and plant any food tree, then you shall seal [*araltem*] its fruit.** The first fruit must be treated as *orla*. The term *orla* appears elsewhere in reference to the foreskin which is removed in circumcision, as well as in the expressions: sealed lips, sealed ears, and sealed heart.²¹ In all these cases, *orla* refers to a seal or covering that is unusable and must be removed.²² For the first **three years it, the food tree, shall be sealed for you; it, its fruit, shall not be eaten.**
- 24** And in the fourth year, all its fruit shall be sacred for praise to the Lord. Fourth-year produce maintains a level of sanctity. According to tradition, it is not completely sacred, not completely set aside from the needs of people. Rather, its sanctity is expressed in the obligation to eat it in the environment of the Temple in an atmosphere of holiness and praise.²³
- 25** And in the fifth year, you may eat of its fruit, as the tree is now considered ordinary. Not only may you eat of its fruit, but I will also cause the tree to increase its yield for you, as reward for observing My commandments: **I am the Lord your God.** This declaration is repeated here due to the difficulty in observing these commandments. It is difficult for one who has invested in a tree to refrain from eating its fruit day after day, year after year. In order for one to successfully do so, he must remember who commanded him to act in this manner.²⁴

DISCUSSION

19:19| **A mixture [*sha'atnez*]:** The source of this word is unknown, and its exact meaning is also unclear. According to the verse in Deuteronomy (22:11), it may be concluded that *sha'atnez* denotes a mixture of wool and linen (see *Shabbat* 26b). Perhaps this term comes from a foreign language, as it is not used in any other context, and it is one of the only words in the Bible with a five-letter root (see *Nidda* 61b; Ibn Ezra; Ramban).

19:20| **Designated for a man:** The translation follows Onkelos, *Targum Yonatan*, and Rashi. Some, based on a similar Arabic term, render the phrase as follows: And she is a maidservant who was turned away from acquisition as a slave to betrothal to a man (Ibn Janah; Rambam, *Guide of the Perplexed* 1:39). The verse does not refer to a Hebrew maidservant, but to a female slave from a foreign nation. Slaves in the households of Israel have the status of quasi-members of Israel. They are granted special rights and

privileges, and are even partially obligated in the commandments. The female slave described in the verse is not actually married, but lives with a Hebrew slave, in accordance with the verse in Exodus, which states that a master may give a female slave to his Hebrew slave, and their children will belong to the master (see Exodus 21:4; *Kiddushin* 15a).

There shall be an inspection [*bikkoret*]: Although in modern times *bikkoret* denotes an examination or inspection, it is clear from the

יט אֶת־חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ בְּהִמָּתֵךְ לֹא־תִרְפֶּיעַ בְּלֵאִים שְׂדֵךְ לֹא־תִזְרַע בְּלֵאִים וּבְגָד
ב בְּלֵאִים שֶׁעֲטָנָו לֹא יַעֲלֶה עָלֶיךָ: וְאִישׁ כִּי־יִשָּׁבֵב אֶת־אִשָּׁה שִׁכְבַּת־זָרַע וְהוּא
שִׁפְחָה נִחְרַפֶּת לְאִישׁ וְהַפִּדָה לֹא נִפְדָּתָה אוֹ חֲפָשָׁה לֹא נִתֵּן־לָהּ בִּקְרֹת תַּהֲיֶיהָ
כא לֹא יוֹמְתוּ כִּי־לֹא חֲפָשָׁה: וְהֵבִיא אֶת־אִשְׁמוֹ לִיהוּהָ אֶל־פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֵיל
כב אֲשֶׁם: וְכִפֹּר עָלָיו הַכֹּהֵן בְּאֵיל הָאֲשֶׁם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה עַל־חַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא וְנִסְלַח
לוֹ מִחַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא:

כג וְכִי־תִבְאוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ וְנִטְעַתֶם כָּל־עֵץ מֵאֵל וְעַרְלַתֶם עַרְלַתוֹ אֶת־פְּרִיֹו שְׁלֹשׁ טו שְׁלִישִׁי
כד שָׁנִים יִהְיֶה לָכֶם עֲרֵלִים לֹא יֵאָכֵל: וּבִשְׁנָה הָרְבִיעִית יִהְיֶה כָּל־פְּרִיֹו קֹדֶשׁ הַלְוִיִּם
כה לִיהוָה: וּבִשְׁנָה הַחֲמִישִׁת תֹּאכְלוּ אֶת־פְּרִיֹו לְהוֹסִיף לָכֶם תְּבוּאָתוֹ אֲנִי יְהוָה

ד"ש"י

לְאַחֵר שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים יִהְיֶה מִתֵּר? תִּלְמוּד לומד: "יִהְיֶה",
בְּהוֹיָתוֹ יִהְיֶה:

כד | יִהְיֶה כָּל פְּרִיֹו קֹדֶשׁ. כְּמַעֲשֵׂר שֶׁנִּי שְׁכִינָה בוֹ: "יִכָּל
מַעֲשֵׂר הָאֶרֶץ וְגו' קֹדֶשׁ לַה'" (ויקרא כו, ל), מִה מַעֲשֵׂר חֵינוּ
נִאָּכֵל חוּץ לְחוֹמַת יְרוּשָׁלַם חָלָף בְּפִדְיוֹן, חָף זֶה כֵּן וְדָבָר
זֶה "הַלְוִיִּם לַה" הוּא, שֶׁנֶּאֱסָו שֶׁסָּבַח וְלִהְלֵל לְשִׁמְיֹו:

כה | לְהוֹסִיף לָכֶם תְּבוּאָתוֹ. הַמַּעֲוָה הַזֹּאת שֶׁתִּשְׁמְרוּ
תִּהְיֶה "לְהוֹסִיף לָכֶם תְּבוּאָתוֹ", שֶׁבִּשְׁכָּרָה חָנֵּן מְנַחֵם
לָכֶם פְּרוֹת הַנְּטִיעוֹת. הִיא רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא חֹזֵר: דְּבָרָה
תּוֹקָה כְּנֻגָּה יָגֵד הַקֵּד, שֶׁלֹּא יִחְמַד אָדָם, הַדִּי חֲדָפֵעַ
שָׁנִים חָנֵּן מַנְעִיגֵר בּוֹ חֵן, לְפִיכָךְ נִחְמַד: "לְהוֹסִיף לָכֶם
תְּבוּאָתוֹ": אֲנִי ה'. חָנֵּן ה' הַמְּבַטֵּחַ עַל כָּךְ, וְנִחְמַד לְשִׁמְד
הַבְּטָחָתוֹ:

נִפְדָּתָה. פְּדִיָּה וְחֵינָה פְּדִיָּה, וְסִתֵּם פְּדִיּוֹן בְּכֶסֶף:
אוֹ חֲפָשָׁה. בְּשִׁטָּה: בְּקִרְתָּ תִּהְיֶה. הִיא לֹאֶה וְלֹא הוּא.
זֶה עַל פִּיֵּת דִּין לְבָקֵר חֵית הַדְּבָר שֶׁלֹּא לְחִיבוּ מִיָּתָה, "כִּי
לֹא חֲפָשָׁה" וְחֵין קְדוּשָׁה קְדוּשָׁתוֹ גְּמוּרָיו. וְכַדִּינֵנוּ לְמַדּוּ
מִכָּאֵן, שְׁמִי שֶׁהוּא בְּמִלְכּוּת - תִּהְיֶה בְּקִרְתָּ, שֶׁהַדִּינִים
הַמְּלָכִין קוֹדֵשׁ עַל הַלֹּקָה: "חֵם לֹא תִשְׁמַד לְעִשִּׂוֹת וְגו'
וְהַפִּלֵּא ה' חֵית מִכָּתֵךְ" וְגו' (דברים כז, נט): כִּי לֹא חֲפָשָׁה.
לְפִיכָךְ חֵין חֵיב עָלֶיהָ מִיָּתָה, שֶׁחֵין קְדוּשָׁה קְדוּשָׁתוֹ, הִיא
חֵם חֲפָשָׁה קְדוּשָׁה קְדוּשָׁתוֹ, וְחֵיב מִיָּתָה:

כב | וְנִסְלַח לוֹ מִחַטָּאתוֹ אֲשֶׁר חָטָא. לְבָדוֹת חֵית הַמִּזִּיד
כְּשֶׁיִּזְנֶה:

כג | וְעַרְלַתֶם עַרְלַתוֹ. וְאִשְׁמַתֶּם חֲטִימָתוֹ, יִהְיֶה חֲטִימָה
וְנִסְתֵּם מִלְּהוֹת מִמֶּנּוּ: שְׁלֹשׁ שָׁנִים יִהְיֶה לָכֶם עֲרֵלִים.
מִחִימָתִי מוֹנֶה לוֹ? מִשְׁעֵת נְטִיעָתוֹ, יִכּוֹל חֵם הַנְּטִיעָה

יט | אֶת חֻקֹּתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ. וְחֵלוּ הֵן: "בְּהִמָּתֵךְ לֹא תִרְפֶּיעַ
בְּלֵאִים" וְגו'. חֻקִּים חֵלוּ גְזֵרַת מִלָּה, שֶׁחֵין טַעַם לְדָבָר:
וּבְגָד בְּלֵאִים וְגו'. לָמָּה נִחְמַד? לְפִי שֶׁנִּחְמַד: "לֹא תִלְבַּשׁ
שְׁעִטָּה עִמָּךְ וּפְשָׁתִים יִחְדּוּ" (דברים כב, יח), יִכּוֹל לֹא יִלְבַּשׁ
גַּי עִמָּךְ וְחֵינָה שֶׁשֶּׁתֵּךְ תִּלְמוּד לומד: "בְּגָד", מִנֶּה לְבָדוֹת
הַלְבָּדִים? תִּלְמוּד לומד: "שְׁעִטָּה", דָּבָר שֶׁהוּא שֹׁנֵעַ טוֹוִי
וְנִחְמַד חָנֵּן, "וְנִחְמַד לָשׁוֹן דָּבָר הַנִּמְלָל וְזוֹדֵר זֶה עִם זֶה
לְחִבְרוֹ, מִשְׁטִי"ר בְּלִעְזָה, כְּמוֹ "חֲזוֹן לְחֵזוֹ דְּחֵית בְּהוֹן"
(מוֹעֵד קָטָן יב ע"ב), שֶׁחֵין מְפָדִין לָשׁוֹן כְּמוֹ, פִּיילִשְׁטֵר"ח.
וְלָשׁוֹן "שְׁעִטָּה" פִּלֵּשׁ מְנַחֵם, מִחֲבָרָת עִמָּךְ וּפְשָׁתִים:

כ | נִחְרַפֶּת לְאִישׁ. מִיָּעֲדָת וּמִיָּחֲדָת לְחֵי, וְחֵין
יִזְדַּע לוֹ דְּמִיוֹן בְּמִקְרָא, וּבִשְׁפָחָה כְּנֻגָּתִית שֶׁחֵינָה
שְׁפָחָה וְחֵינָה בֵּית חוֹדִין הַמִּזְדַּקֶּת לְעֵבֶד עֲבָדִי
שֶׁמִּתֵּר בְּשִׁפְחָה הַכְּתוּב מְדַבֵּר: וְהַפִּדָה לֹא

DISCUSSION

→ context of the verse that this is not its meaning here. According to the Sages, the word *bikkoret* is related to *bakkar* cow; *keri'ah*, reading; and *bikkur*, inspection. Thus, the word *bikkoret* alludes to the punishment of lashes, which is administered with strips of cowhide and is accompanied by the recitation of verses. It is also preceded by a detailed inspection of the sentenced party, to determine the degree to which he can tolerate the punishment of lashes

(see *Keritut* 11a; *Pesikta Zutreta*; Ibn Ezra; see also *Adderet Eliyahu*, Exodus 21:3).

19:21 | **He shall bring his guilt offering:** This offering, known by the Sages as the guilt offering of the designated maidservant (*Zevahim* 54b), is brought by the man who lay with the maidservant. Although no punishment is specified for the woman, this relationship is certainly prohibited to both parties. According to rabbinic tradition, if the act was consensual, the woman

is flogged (*Keritut* 10b–11a). The man does not receive one of the standard punishments for transgressing a Torah prohibition, due to the intermediate status of the maidservant, as explained above. In this regard, this law resembles the laws of diverse kinds: After mentioning various problematic mixtures of animals, seeds, and threads, the verse discusses a prohibition involving a sort of mixture of people, namely the relationship between a freeman and a female slave (see Ibn Ezra, verse 20).

Eating over the Blood, Customs of Idolatry, Lewdness, Sabbath, Reverence for the Temple, and Honoring the Elderly

LEVITICUS 19:26–32

Some of the following laws are likely associated with idolatrous practices.

- 26 You shall not eat over, alongside, the blood.**^D It seems that this prohibition relates to the gentile custom of pouring the blood of animals and eating nearby, either as some form of an offering or based on a popular belief that the blood is offered to the dead, or to demons and the like.²⁵ **You shall not practice divination.** It is prohibited to perform an action that involves divination through the use of appurtenances or various rituals. **And you shall not practice soothsaying** in order to discern the future by looking at the shapes of clouds or by attributing certain qualities to seasons or times. For example, it is prohibited for one to say: Today is a propitious day for going away on a journey; tomorrow is propitious for purchasing successfully.²⁶ Such actions are prohibited because they involve an aspect of idolatry, if not actual idol worship.
- 27 You shall not round the edge of your head,** the hairs that grow on the sides of your head. It is prohibited for one to shear all the hair around his head in an equal manner; rather, the hairs between one's ears and eyes must be left to grow. **And you shall not mar the edge of your beard.**^D It is prohibited to completely shave off the hairs of one's beard.



Detail from the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III depicting bearded Israelites offering tribute together

- 28 You shall not make a laceration for the dead in your flesh.** In ancient times, it was customary for mourners to lacerate their flesh as a sign of mourning. This prohibition constitutes one of the limitations imposed by the Torah on customs of

mourning.²⁷ **And the imprint of a tattoo you shall not place upon you.**^D Once again, the verse reiterates: **I am the Lord**, the ultimate authority, and I do not want you to practice such customs.



Tattoo

- 29 Do not profane your daughter to pander her as a harlot.** That is, do not hand over your daughter to prostitution. To a certain degree, the requirement to guard a daughter's modesty is connected to her father's honor. Nevertheless, even if a father forgoes his honor and permits his daughter, or even encourages her, to engage in harlotry, the practice is entirely prohibited. **And on a broader scale, the land shall not become licentious, and the land will be filled with lewdness.** Casual sexual relationships between unmarried individuals are also forbidden. Although this is not explicitly formulated in the verse as a distinct prohibition, the verse stresses that sexual relations must be clearly defined, organized, and sanctified. When these relations are treated with abandon, the land is filled with licentiousness and even becomes impure.²⁸
- 30 You shall observe My Sabbaths^D and you shall revere My Sanctuary:^D I am the Lord.**
- 31 Do not turn to mediums,** who communicate with the dead, **or to necromancers,**^D magicians or witches who claim to communicate with the dead and acquire important information from them. **Do not seek to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.**

DISCUSSION

19:26 | **You shall not eat over the blood:** The elucidation follows one of the five or six interpretations offered by the Sages regarding this commandment. This prohibition is an example

of what the Sages call a general prohibition: A single negative commandment that encompasses a variety of different cases (*Sanhedrin* 63a; see *Berakhot* 10b; *Vayikra Rabba* 25:8).

19:27 | **You shall not round the edge of your head and you shall not mar the edge of your beard:** The juxtaposition of these two prohibitions indicates that just as the latter prohibition

אלהיכם: לא תאכלו על-הדם לא תנחשו ולא תעונו: לא תקפו פאת ראשכם
ולא תשחית את פאת זקנד: ושרט לנפש לא תתנו בבשרכם וכתבת קעקע
לא תתנו בכם אני יהוה: אל-תחלל את-בתך להזנותה ולא-תזנה הארץ
ומלאה הארץ זמה: את-שבתתי תשמרו ומקדשי תיראו אני יהוה: אל-תפנו
אל-האבת ואל-הידענים אל-תבקשו לטמאה בהם אני יהוה אלהיכם:

כו
כו
כח
כט
ל
לא

רש"י

עושה כן, הארץ מזנה חת פדויה לעשותו במקום
אחר ולא בארץכם, וכן הוא חומר "וימנעו קדשים"
וגו' (ירמיה ג, א).

ל ומקדשי תיראו. לא יקנס לו במקלו ובמנעלו
ובחפצותו ובאבן שעל רגלו, ואף על פי שחט מזהירכם
על המקדש, "את שבתתי תשמרו", חיו בגן בית המקדש
דוחה שבת:

לא אל תפנו אל האבת. חזקה לבעל חוב וידעונו.
בעל חוב זה פיתוס המדבר משהו וידעונו - המכנס
עגס חיה ששמה ידוע לרוע פיו והעגס מדבר: אל
תבקשו. להיות עמוקים בם, שחט תעסקו בם חתם

חזק הראש, שהיא רחב ויש בו שתי פאות, ואחת למטה
בפניו, מקום חפז שני הלחי יחד:

כח ושרט לנפש. כן דרך של חמוריים להיות
מאדטין בשרם בשמת להם מת: וכתבת קעקע.
כתב המקרה ושרט שחינו נמחק לעולם,
שמתקעו במחט והוא משריח לעולם: קעקע.
לשון "והקע חותם" (במדבר כה, ד) "והקענוס"
(שמואל ב, כח, ו), תחבין עץ בארץ ותלין חותם
עליהם ונמצאו מחקין ותחבין בקרקע, פורפוגיט
פלעיז:

כט אל תחלל את בתך להזנותה. במוסר בתו פנויה
לביאה שלא לשם קדושת: ולא תזנה הארץ. חס חתה

כו לא תאכלו על-הדם. להקדש פנים נקדש בפניו
(דף סג ע"א), חזקה שלא יאכל מבשר הקדשים לפני
זריחת דמים, וזוהרה לחובל מזהמת חלון טרם שתיצא
נפשה, ועוד הקדשה: לא תנחשו. כגון חלו המנחשין
בחלדה ובעופות, פתו נפלה מפיו, נבי הקסיון בדרכו:
ולא תעונו. לשון עונות ופשות, שחומר, ווס פלוגי יפה
להתחיל מלחמה, שעה פלוגות קשה לציאת:

כו לא תקפו פאת ראשכם. זה המטה נדעו לחיובי
חזק ולפדחתו, ונמצא הקף ראשו עגל סביב, שעל חיובי
חזק עקרי שערו למעלה מנעונו הקדשה: פאת זקנד. סוף
הזקן וגבולו, והן חמש: שמים בכל לחי ולחי למעלה

DISCUSSION

→ applies only to men, so too the limitations on rounding the edges of one's head apply only to men. There is no such limitation with regard to the haircuts of women (*Kiddushin* 35b). Additionally, based on a comparison between this verse and other verses that discuss the shaving of one's beard, it is derived that the prohibition to shave one's beard applies only to shaving with a razor, but not to shaving with scissors and the like (see 14:9, 21:5; Isaiah 7:20; *Kiddushin* 35b).

There is no doubt that for generations it was customary for Jewish men to grow beards. Even in ancient depictions dating from the First Temple period, all Israelite males are depicted as bearded, although their beards were not long.

19:28 | **And the imprint of a tattoo [ketovet ka'aka] you shall not place upon you:** Many opinions maintain that although any sort of tattoo is prohibited, the severe Torah prohibition applies specifically to imprinting the names of idols, and perhaps also their symbols (see *Makkot* 21a).

The word *ka'aka* is unique, and its root and precise meaning are unclear. However, its appearance next to the prohibition against lacerating one's skin indicates that *ka'aka* refers to writing on one's flesh in a manner that the dye remains permanently, a tattoo (see *Ibn Ezra*).

19:30 | **You shall observe My Sabbaths:** The commandment to observe the Sabbath also appears alongside commandments pertaining to the construction of the Tabernacle (see Exodus 35). Essentially, the verse seems to indicate that the commandment of the Sabbath is superior to the commandments of the Temple, as they follow the Sabbath in the verse (see *Yevamot* 6a).

And you shall revere My Sanctuary: Many practical ramifications stem from this obligation to revere the sacred environment of the Temple. For example, people would walk in the Temple and its surrounding areas without shoes, and when they would leave the Temple, they would

walk backward so as not to turn their backs on the Temple (see *Berakhot* 54a; *Yoma* 53a).

19:31 | **Do not turn to mediums or to necromancers:** Although the appeal to mediums and necromancers is not itself an act of idolatry, it is similar to idol worship, as it involves one's subjugation to dark forces, a false belief in the power of the dead, and a reverent attitude toward death (see *Responsa of Rav Avraham ben HaRambam* 20). As mentioned above, it is one's interaction with the dead that causes ritual impurity (see commentary on 14:45, 15:24). Death is outside the boundary of mankind, and people should avoid dealing with it. Of course, it is appropriate to honor the deceased, and there is no prohibition against visiting a cemetery. Nevertheless, since death, evil, and deprivation are all connected, it is absolutely prohibited to try communicating with the dead, either through the performance of some rite or through intermediaries.

32 You shall rise out of respect **before the graybeard**,^D an old person, **and show deference before the elderly**,^D a distinguished individual. Since an encounter with such distinguished individuals might occur outside the public eye, or even in a

manner such that the distinguished individual is unaware of the encounter, one could avoid the elder or simply neglect to accord him due respect.²⁹ Therefore, the verse warns: **You shall fear your God**; the reverence of these individuals is closely related to the reverence of God. **I am the Lord.**

The Equation of the Stranger and the Native, and the Importance of Honesty in Business Dealings

LEVITICUS 19:33–37

33 If a stranger, someone of foreign origin, **resides with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him.** Do not cause him distress through hurtful comments, by cheating him, or in any other manner.³⁰ Obviously, it is prohibited to mistreat any person; however, since a stranger is unprotected and unfamiliar with local customs, there is greater opportunity, or even temptation, to upset, mock, or otherwise demean him.

34 Like a native of your own shall be for you the stranger that resides with you.^D You must treat him like one of your own, **and you shall love him as yourself, since you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God**, that is, both your God and his. Alternatively, the verse means: Your fear of God will be confirmed through your respect and love for the stranger.

35 You shall do no injustice in judgment.^D It is prohibited to deviate from the truth and from proper balance in judgment. Similarly, there may be no injustice or deviation **in measure**, measurements of area or volume, **in weight, or in liquid volume.** Likewise, it is prohibited to tamper with measuring implements.

36 The verse elaborates: **Accurate scales, accurate weights, an accurate dry measure, and an accurate liquid measure, you shall have.** You must take care to ensure that all such measuring implements are precise. **I am the Lord your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt.**

37 You shall observe all My statutes, and all My ordinances, namely My instructions for how to interact with others and with the world at large, **and perform them: I am the Lord.**^D

The Punishments for Severe Transgressions Involving Illicit Familial Relationships

LEVITICUS 20:1–21

The Torah now returns to the laws pertaining to forbidden sexual relations discussed at the end of *Parashat Aḥarei Mot*. There, the Torah delineates the various prohibited relationships, but the punishment for their transgression is listed only as excision at the hands of Heaven. Here, the Torah describes other forms of punishment as well, in particular punishments to be administered by the courts.

20 1 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:

2 And to the children of Israel you shall say: Each man from the children of Israel, or from the strangers that reside in

Israel, who gives of his offspring to the worship of Molekh,³¹ he shall be put to death; the people of the land, the community, shall stone him with stones.³²

DISCUSSION

19:32 | **You shall rise before the graybeard:** The rabbinic definition of a graybeard depends on age. One who is seventy years old is considered to have reached this status (see *Avot* 5:21; *Tikkunei Zohar* 21; *Rosh*, *Kiddushin* 1:53; *Shulḥan Arukh*, *Yoreh De'a* 244:1).

The purpose of rising before the graybeard is not to vacate a seat for him, but to express respect toward the elder, specifically toward the years he has lived and his accumulated life experience (see *Kiddushin* 33a).

And show deference before the elderly [zaken]: The term *zaken* does not refer specifically to one who is old; it is often used as an indication of a special status. For instance, the expressions “the elders [*ziken*] of the assembly” or “the elders of the people” refer primarily to the leaders or wise men of Israel, although it is often the case that such individuals are advanced in years (see 4:15; Exodus 3:16, 19:7; *Kiddushin* 32b–33a). In many other languages and cultures as well, communal leaders are known as elders.

19:34 | **Like a native of your own shall be for you the stranger that resides with you:** According to many commentaries, the verse refers specifically to a convert (see Onkelos; *Targum Yonatan*; Rashi on 19:23; *Yevamot* 46b). A convert has no family, has uprooted himself from his home, and has limited protection in society. However, the comparison of the stranger to the children of Israel in Egypt would seem to indicate that the verse refers to all foreigners (see Deuteronomy 23:16, and *Sifrei* ad loc.; *Gerim* 3:2; Jerusalem Talmud, *Yevamot* 8:1; Ibn



לג מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן ויראת מאלהיך אני יהוה:
 לד אתך גר בארצם לא תונו אותו: באזרח מכם יהיה לכם הגר | הגר אתכם
 לה ואהבת לו כמוך כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים אני יהוה אלהיכם: לא תעשו
 לו עול במשפט במדה במשקל ובמשורה: מאזני צדק אבני צדק איפת צדק
 והין צדק יהיה לכם אני יהוה אלהיכם אשר הוצאתי אתכם מארץ מצרים:
 לו ושמרתם את כל חקתי ואת כל משפטי ועשיתם אתם אני יהוה:
 כ וידבר יהוה אל משה לאמר: ואל בני ישראל תאמר איש איש מבני ישראל ומן
 הגר | הגר בישראל אשר יתן מזרעו למלך מות יומת עם הארץ ירגמהו באבן:

רש"י

פרק כ
 ב | ואל בני ישראל תאמר. ענין על החזרות: מות
 יומת. בבית דין. ואם חין פח בבית דין. "עם הארץ"
 מסייעין חותן. עם הארץ. שבעו נבדחת הארץ. שעתידין
 ליהש את הארץ על ידי ממות הללו:
 ג | אתן את פני. פניו שלי. פונה חני מכל עסקי ועוסק
 בו. באיש. ולא בעבדו. שאין כל העבד נבדחתו. כי מזרעו
 נתן למלך. לפי שחומר: "מעביר בנז וגדול בראש" (דברים
 יא יג) בן בנז וגדול בנז? תלמוד לומר: "כי מזרעו
 נתן למלך". זרע פסול מנזן? תלמוד לומר: "בתתן
 מזרעו למלך" (והלן פסוק ד) למען טמא את מקדשי.
 את קנסת וקדשך שהיו מקדשת לו. כלשון: "ולא יחלל
 את מקדש" (והלן כח כג):

במשפט. חס לדיון. הכי כבד נאמר: "לא תעשו עול
 במשפט" (לעיל פסוק טו), ומהו "משפט"? השני כאן? הוא
 המדה והמשקל והמאזנה, מלמד שהמורה נקרא דין.
 שחם שגר במדה הכי הוא ממקלל את הדין. וקרוי
 עול שני ומשקן חס ויתעבה, וגדלם לחמשה דברים
 החמורים בדין: מטמא את הארץ, ומחלל את השם,
 ומסלק את השכינה, ומפיל את יסודי ברכה, ומגלה
 חותם מארצם: במדה זו מדת הארץ: במשקל. פמשעו:
 ובמשורה. היא מדת הלח והיבש:
 לו | אבני צדק. הם המשקולות ששוקלן כנגדן: איפה.
 היא מדת היבש: חין זו היא מדת הלח: אשר הוצאתי
 אתכם. על מנת כן דבר חסר. חני הבחנת במערים
 בין טפה של כבוד לטפה שאינה של כבוד. ואני הנחמן
 לפרע ממי שטומן משקולתו במלח להונות את הקדושים
 שאין מפירים בהם:

מטמאין לפני ואני מתעב אתכם: אני ה' אלהיכם. דעו
 את מי אתם מחליטין בני:
 לב | מפני שיבה תקום. וכול זקן חשמי? תלמוד לומר:
 "זקן", חין זקן חלף שקנה חכמה: והדרת פני זקן. חזוהו
 הדור? לא ישב במקומו ולא ידבר במקומו ולא יסתיר את
 דבריו. וכול יענים עיניו כמי שלא ראהו? לכך נאמר:
 "ויראת מאלהיך". שהכי דבר זה מסוד ללבו של עושהו,
 שאין מפיר בו חלף הוא, וכל דבר המסוד ללב נאמר
 בו: "ויראת מאלהיך".
 לג | לא תונו. חונת דברים. לא תחמר לו, חמש היית
 עובד עבודה זרה ועבדו חתה בללמל תורה שנתנה
 מפי הגבורה:
 לד | כי גרים הייתם. מוס שכן חל תחמר לחברך: אני
 ה' אלהיכם. חלתיך וחלתי חני: ה לה | לא תעשו עול

DISCUSSION

➔ Ezra, Exodus 23:9). In any case, the verse states: Since you, the children of Israel, were yourselves strangers for many years, "you know the soul of a stranger" (Exodus 23:9), you are familiar with the experience of an exile in a foreign land.
 19:35 | **You shall do no injustice in judgment:** Although this prohibition was already mentioned above (19:15), the verse here does not refer only to formal adjudication. Rather, it includes any erroneous judgment of another, even when such assessments are nonbinding. The temptation to judge others unfairly can ultimately lead one to make unjust decisions. The

verse therefore warns against all unjust assessments of others (see *Sifra*).
 19:36–37 | **I am the Lord your God, who took you out of the land of Egypt...I am the Lord:** Elsewhere, the verse states that God took the children of Israel out of Egypt to be His servants (25:55). That is, their redemption was for His honor and so that they would serve as His legion. God brought them out of Egypt in order for them to become a special nation that follows its own unique system of law, whether in interpersonal matters or those between man and God.

The meaning of the phrase "I am the Lord" is that God is Commander, and God is all-knowing, and one must act with an awareness of this truth. Aside from this, the declaration "I am the Lord your God" refers to God's particular authority over Israel as their King. In general, the phrase "I am the Lord" is applied to matters of ethics or intrapersonal behavior, whereas the phrase "I am the Lord your God" emphasizes the establishment of particular laws and statutes. It is interesting to note that each of these expressions appears ten times in *Parashat Kedoshim*.

3 Meanwhile,³³ **I shall direct My attention to that man and will excise him from the midst of his people, because he gave of his offspring to Molekh, in order to defile My Sanctuary, and to profane My sacred name.** Aside from the actual sin of idol worship, this act constitutes a severe desecration of God's name.

4 **If the people of the land avert their eyes from that man, when he gives of his offspring to Molekh, and do not put him to death;** that is, if they do not fulfill their duty to execute him, such as in a case where the judges share the same false beliefs as those on trial,

5 **I will direct My attention to that man and to his family, and I will excise him^D and everyone who strays after him,^D to stray after Molekh, from the midst of their people.**

6 **The person who turns to the mediums or to the necromancers,** who communicate with the dead,³⁴ **to stray after them** by seeking their council, **I will direct My attention to that person^D and will excise him from the midst of his people.** The verse does not state that such individuals are punished by the court; rather, they are punished by God.³⁵ Other early commentaries maintain that one who turns to a medium is not punished by excision, but has indeed transgressed a prohibition.³⁶

7 In general, **you shall sanctify yourselves, and you shall be holy.** This statement refers both to the previous verses and the following ones. Some of these statutes apply specifically to the children of Israel and are not universal, while others are universally considered repulsive. In any case, the main focus of this passage is the special level of sanctity that the nation of Israel must uphold. **For I am the Lord your God,** and therefore you must be committed to this sanctity.

8 **You shall observe My statutes and perform them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you.** I am the One who bestows upon you a unique status, and therefore you must observe My commandments, both the simple, understandable ones, and those which may appear to you as the arbitrary decrees of a King.

9 **For each man who curses his father or his mother,** even if he does not harm them in any other way, **shall be put to death; he cursed his father or his mother; his blood is upon him,** on his hands. He is guilty and shall be punished for

his transgression in this world. The obligation to honor one's parents also appears in the Ten Precepts.³⁷ Here, however, the verse emphasizes the severity of dishonoring one's parents and the accompanying punishment. In other cultures as well, it is considered inappropriate to curse another, let alone one's parents. However, in the framework of the sanctity of Israel such behavior is absolutely intolerable. One who curses his parents is therefore sentenced to death.

10 **A man who commits adultery with the wife of a man, that is, who commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.** The repetitive language of the verse points to the dual aspects of the crime of adultery: Transgression of a prohibition, as well as injury to one's neighbor. The prohibition against adultery with the wife of a man points to the religious aspect, while the prohibition against committing adultery with the wife of one's neighbor points to its social aspect. Not all prohibitions of a sexual nature directly affect a third party, but the adulterer sins against both God and his fellow man.

11 **The man that lies with his father's wife, he has uncovered his father's nakedness,** the act is shameful and disgraceful to his father; **both of them shall be put to death; their blood is upon them.^D**

12 **If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to death; they have performed a perversion; their blood is upon them.** Alternatively, the verse means: Father and son have mixed up one woman between them.³⁸ This prohibition parallels the previous one, as lying with the wife of one's father and lying with one's daughter-in-law are two sides of the same coin. However, in the instance of lying with one's father's wife, there is an aspect of shaming one's father, while in the instance of lying with one's daughter-in-law, the verse stresses the repulsive intermingling and partnering.

13 **A man who lies with a male, in the manner that one lies with a woman, willingly and with consent, both of them have performed an abomination.** Just as in the cases involving relations between a man and a woman, this prohibition applies equally to both the active and passive participants. **They shall be put to death** by stoning; **their blood is upon them.**

DISCUSSION

20:5 | **And I will excise him:** There are several explanations of the nature of *karet*, excision, including an untimely death, and the even more severe penalty of excision of one's soul from the world (see commentary on 22:9). When one is penalized in this world, the punishment serves

to atone for his sins and remove their record; this is why such punishments are prevalent in the Torah. By contrast, if a person is not reprimanded in this world but only in another, his punishment is more severe, more permanent, and affects his very existence.

Everyone who strays after him: The word *zonim*, meaning stray, is derived from the word *zona*, meaning prostitute. Worship of false gods is understood as a kind of prostituting of oneself.

וְאֲנִי אֶתֵּן אֶת־פְּנֵי בָאִישׁ הַהוּא וְהִכְרַתִּי אֹתוֹ מִקֶּרֶב עַמּוֹ כִּי מִזִּדְעוֹ נָתַן לַמֶּלֶךְ
 לְמַעַן טַמֵּא אֶת־מִקְדָּשִׁי וּלְחַלֵּל אֶת־שֵׁם קֹדְשִׁי: וְאִם הָעַלְם יַעֲלִימוּ עִם
 הָאָרֶץ אֶת־עֵינֵיהֶם מִן־הָאִישׁ הַהוּא בְּתֵתוֹ מִזִּדְעוֹ לַמֶּלֶךְ לְבִלְתִּי הִמִּית אֹתוֹ:
 וְשִׁמְתִּי אֹנִי אֶת־פָּנַי בָּאִישׁ הַהוּא וּבְמִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ וְהִכְרַתִּי אֹתוֹ וְאֵת כָּל־הַזִּגְנִים
 אַחֲרָיו לְזָנוֹת אַחֲרֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ מִקֶּרֶב עַמָּם: וְהִנֵּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר תִּפְגַּה אֶל־הָאִבֶּת וְאֶל־
 הַיָּדְעָנִים לְזָנוֹת אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְנָתַתִּי אֶת־פְּנֵי בִנְפֶשׁ הַהוּא וְהִכְרַתִּי אֹתוֹ מִקֶּרֶב
 עַמּוֹ: וְהִתְקַדְּשְׁתֶּם וְהִיִּיתֶם קֹדְשִׁים כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וְשִׁמְרַתֶּם אֶת־
 חֻקֹּתַי וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם אֲנִי יְהוָה מִקְדָּשְׁכֶם: כִּי־אִישׁ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקְלַל אֶת־אָבִיו
 וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ קָלַל דָּמִיו בּוֹ: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנְאֹף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ
 אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִנְאֹף אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ רַעְהוּ מוֹת־יוּמָת הַנָּאֹף וְהַנֶּאֱפָת: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
 יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־אִשְׁתּוֹ אֲבִיו עֲרוֹת אָבִיו גֵּלָה מוֹת־יוּמָתוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם דְּמִיהֶם בָּם: וְאִישׁ
 אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־כַּלְתּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָתוֹ שְׁנֵיהֶם תָּבֵל עָשׂוּ דְמִיהֶם בָּם: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר
 יִשְׁכַּב אֶת־זָכָר מִשְׁכָּבִי אִשָּׁה תוֹעֵבָה עָשׂוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם מוֹת יוּמָתוֹ דְּמִיהֶם בָּם:

ששי
/שביעי/

דש"י

י. ואיש. פקט לקטן. אשר ינאף את אשת איש. פקט
 לחשת קטן. למדנו שאין לקטן קדושין. ועל חיוו חשת
 איש חזקתו כך? "אשר ינאף את אשת רעהו", פקט
 לחשת גוי. למדנו שאין קדושין לגוי. מות יומת הנאף
 והנאפת. כל מיתה החמוקה בתורה קתם חונה חלף
 חנה.

יב. תביל עשו. גנאי. לשון חרה, מבלבלין זרע האב
 בזרע הבן.

יג. משכבי אשה. מקנעם כמקחול בשסופקת.

המלך. לרבות שאר עבדה זרה שעבדה בכך, ואפלו
 חיון זו עבדותה.

ז. והתקדשתם. זו פרישות עבדה זרה.

ט. אביו ואמו קלל. לרבות לאחר מיתה: דמיו בו. זו
 סקילה, וכן כל מקום שצאמר: "דמיו בו", "דמיהם בם".
 ולמדנו מאיז וידענו שצאמר בהם: "באבן וקגמו חתם
 דמיהם בם" (להלן פסוק ט). ופשוטו של מקרה, כמו: "דמו
 בראשו" (יהושע ב, יט), חיו נענש על מיתתו חלף הוא,
 שהיו גרם לעגמו שיהרג.

ד. ואם העלם יעלימו. חס העלימו בקרב חדר סוף
 שיעלימו בקדמים הדפה, חס העלימו סנהדרי קטנה
 סוף שיעלימו סנהדרי גדולה.

ה. ובמשפחתו. חמר רבי שמעון: ובי משפחה מה
 חטאה? חלף ללמדך שאין לב משפחה שיש בה מוכס
 שאין כלם מוכסין, שכלן מחפין עליו: והכרתי אותו.
 למה נאמר? לפי שצאמר: "ובמשפחתו", יכול יהיו כל
 המשפחה בהכרת? תלמוד לומר: "חתו", חותן בהכרת
 ולא כל המשפחה בהכרת חלף גוסרין: לזנות אחרי

DISCUSSION

20:6 | **The person who turns to the mediums or to the necromancers to stray after them, I will direct My attention to that person:** King Saul consulted a medium (I Samuel 28:3–20),

and the book of Chronicles states explicitly that this was one of the causes of his untimely death (I Chronicles 10:13).

20:11 | **Their blood is upon them:** According to tradition, the phrase "their blood is upon them" alludes to the punishment of death by stoning (see Rashi, verse 9; *Sanhedrin* 54a).

- 14 A man who takes a woman and her mother**, or a woman and her daughter, as the order makes no difference, **it is lewdness**.³⁹ While the case where two male relatives have relations with one woman is described by the verse as a perversion, the case where one man has relations with two related women is described as lewdness. This lewdness stems from the fact that both women are intermingled in his thoughts, his imagination, and his life. **He and they shall be burned in fire,^D and there shall be no lewdness among you.**
- 15 A man who copulates with an animal, he shall be put to death; and the animal you shall kill.** Obviously, an animal does not possess mental competence and cannot be considered guilty of a transgression. Nevertheless, it is put to death due to the shame that was brought upon the children of Israel through it, and because it was a stumbling block for people.⁴⁰ In other words, the man is put to death for his transgression, while the animal is killed because it was used in the performance of the transgression, just as vegetation or vessels used for idol worship must be destroyed.⁴¹
- 16 Similarly, a woman who approaches any animal** in order for it to copulate with her, **you shall kill the woman and the animal. They shall be put to death** by stoning; **their blood is upon them.**
- 17** The verse now turns to prohibitions for which a punishment to be administered by the courts is not prescribed; rather, one who transgresses these prohibitions is liable to receive excision: **A man who takes his sister, daughter of his father or daughter of his mother**, meaning even if she is his half-sister, **and he sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness, it is a disgrace** [*hesed*]. *Hesed* resembles the Aramaic term *hisuda*,

disgrace. Note that *hesed*, which usually means kindness in Hebrew, is a contronym, a word with two opposite meanings. **And they shall be excised in the sight of the members of their people; he has uncovered his sister's nakedness; he shall bear his iniquity.** By describing a scenario in which each sibling sees the nakedness of the other, the verse makes it clear that it does not refer to a case where a young sister falls victim to incestuous rape by her older brother, but to a mutual act in which two consenting adults are aware of their actions and proceed deliberately.⁴²

- 18 A man who lies with a menstruating^D woman, and he uncovered her nakedness, he has probed**, specifically in a negative, sexual sense, **her source of blood, and she has exposed the source of her blood.** Once again, the verse stresses the participation of each side, as it is possible for this act to occur at the hands of the man alone, e.g., in the case of a man who forces himself on his wife who is menstruating.⁴³ If the woman uncovers her nakedness knowingly and willingly, then **both of them shall be excised** by the hand of Heaven **from the midst of their people.**
- 19 The nakedness of the sister of your mother and the sister of your father you shall not uncover; for he exposed his kin**, as they are blood relatives; **they shall both bear their iniquity.^D**
- 20 A man who lies with his aunt**, the wife of his father's brother or mother's brother, **he exposed his uncle's nakedness, they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless.**
- 21 A man who takes his brother's wife** as a wife for himself, even if she is no longer married to the brother, e.g., they divorced or the brother died, **it is an abhorrent^D act;⁴⁴ he exposed his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless.**

DISCUSSION

20:14 | **He and they shall be burned in fire:** Most of the punishments prescribed by the Torah are not described in detail. According to tradition, the punishment of death by burning is not actual burning but death caused indirectly by fire, specifically by pouring molten lead down the throat of the condemned (see *Sanhedrin* 52a).

The Sages have a tradition, and derive from the verses, that capital punishment as prescribed by the Torah is administered only if the offender was forewarned at the time of the act, and only if he explicitly acknowledged the warning and indicated that he is performing the deed with full knowledge of the punishment it entails.

Consequently, it is easy to surmise that the death penalty was rarely imposed in practice, and that when it was administered, it was only to those who acted brazenly, as a blatant declaration of rebellion against God (see *Sanhedrin* 40–41; *Makkot* 7a; *Rosh*, *Moed Katan*, chap. 3).

20:18 | **Menstruating [*dava*]:** The word *dava*, implying suffering, alludes to menstruation, which is usually accompanied by some discomfort (see Deuteronomy 7:15). Perhaps there is a connection between *dava* and the root *dalet-vav-beit*, which refers to flowing, as one who suffers sheds tears. In this sense, *dava* is related to *zava*, a woman who experiences a discharge of

uterine blood after her menstrual period, and to *nidda*, a menstruating woman, in terms of their literal meanings (see *Ralbag*, II Samuel 10:4).

20:19 | **They shall bear their iniquity:** The punishment for one who lies with the sister of his father or mother is not stated explicitly in the verse, unlike the previous prohibitions, for which the verse clearly states: "Both of them shall be excised," or: "They shall be put to death," and the like. Perhaps this is in order to preserve the honor of Moses, leader of Israel, who was born to Amram and Yokheved, the sister of Amram's father. Although some of these laws are not included in the seven Noahide laws and

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקַּח אֶת-אִשְׁהּ וְאֶת-אִמָּהּ זָמָה הוּא בְּאִשׁ יִשְׁדָּפוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶתְהֵן וְלֹא-
 תִהְיֶה זָמָה בְּתוֹכָם: וְאִישׁ יֵתֵן שְׂכָבְתּוֹ בְּבִהְמָה מוֹת יוֹמָת וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה
 תַּהַרְגוּ: וְאִשָּׁה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְרַב אֶל-כָּל-בְּהֵמָה לְרִבְעָה אֹתָהּ וְהִרְגַת אֶת-הָאִשָּׁה
 וְאֶת-הַבְּהֵמָה מוֹת יוֹמָתוֹ דְּמִיָּהם בָּם: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִקַּח אֶת-אֶחָתוֹ בֶּת-אָבִיו אֹ
 בֶּת-אִמּוֹ וְרָאָה אֶת-עֲרוּתָהּ וְהָיָה תְרָאָה אֶת-עֲרוּתוֹ חֹסֵד הוּא וְנִכְרְתוּ לְעֵינֵי
 בְּנֵי עַמָּם עָרוֹת אֶחָתוֹ גִּלָּה עֹנּוֹ יִשָּׂא: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-יִשְׁכַּב אֶת-אִשָּׁה דֹּהָ וְגִלָּה
 אֶת-עֲרוּתָהּ אֶת-מִקְדָּה הָעֶרְה וְהָיָה גִלְתָּה אֶת-מִקְדָּר דְּמִיָּה וְנִכְרְתוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם
 מִקְרַב עַמָּם: וְעָרוֹת אַחֹת אֶמֶךְ וְאַחֹת אָבִיךָ לֹא תִגְלֶה כִּי אֶת-שְׂאֵרֹי הָעֶרְה
 עֹנָם יִשָּׂאוּ: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת-דֹּדָתוֹ עָרוֹת דָּדוֹ גִּלָּה חֲטָאָם יִשָּׂאוּ עֲרִירִים
 יָמָתוֹ: וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִקַּח אֶת-אִשְׁתּוֹ אֶחָיו נָדָה הוּא עָרוֹת אֶחָיו גִּלָּה עֲרִירִים יִהְיוּ:

רש"י

חיותיהן מן החם, חבל על ערות חשית חזי חזי לא
 הזהר חלף על חשית חזי חזי מן החב:

כ | אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב אֶת דֹּדָתוֹ. המקרא הזה בא ללמד
 על כרת האמור למעלה, שהוא פגש הליכת ערירי:
 ערירים, פתגמונו, בלא נלה, וזמנה לו "חזקי הולך
 ערירי" (נחשית טו, ב). יש לו פגש - קוֹכְנָן, חין לו
 פגש - מת בלא פגש. לכך פנה מקראות חלו,
 "ערירים ימתו" ערירים יהיו" (להלן פסוק כז), "ערירים
 ימתו" - חם יהיו לו פשעת עברה לא יהיו לו פשימות
 לפי שקוֹכְנָן פחיו, "ערירים יהיו" - שחם חין לו פשעת
 עברה יהיה כל ימיו כמו שהוא עכשיו:

כא | נָדָה הוּא. השכיבה הזאת מנדה היא ומאוסה.
 ופשיטתו דקשה, לחסר העברה פה פגשה שהעברה
 מפשטת פה: "אֶת מִקְדָּה הָעֶרְה" (לעיל פסוק יח):

השחת שרץ וכלה, המטה את חברו מדרכי חיים לדרכי
 מיתה על אחת כמה וכמה:

יז | חֹסֵד הוּא. לשון חרמי "חֹסֵד" (נחשית לה,
 יד) - "חֹסֵד" וּמִדָּשָׁ: חם תחמה, קין נשא חיותו!
 חסד עשה המקום לבנות עולמו ממנו, שפאמר: "עולם
 חסד יבנה" (תהלים פט, ג):

יח | הָעֶרְה. גלה, וכן כל לשון 'ערה' גלוי הוא, והיו
 ויודת פתבה לשם דבה, כמו 'זערה' (דברים כז, כה) מגזרת
 "ולא קם ולא זע" (אסתר ה, ט) וכן 'לחנה' (ובריה יח, יד)
 מגזרת 'אח' והעברה זו נחלקו בה פשיטתו: יש חומרים
 זו נשיקת שמש, ויש חומרים זו הכנסת עטרה:

יט | וְעָרוֹת אַחֹת אֶמֶךְ. פנה הפתח באזהרתו, לומר
 שהזהר עליהן פן על אחת חזי ואמו מן החב פן על

יד | יִשְׁדָּפוּ אֹתוֹ וְאֶתְהֵן. חי חמה יכול לומר חשית
 הדאשנה נשפס, שהחי נשאה בזהר ולא נחסרה עליו,
 חלף "חשה וחמה" הפתחין פון שחיתן לחסרה, שפא
 חמותו וחמה. ויש מפרשניו שחומרים, חין פון חלף
 חמותו, ומהו "חיתהר"? חת חחת מהן, ולשון ויני הוא:
 'ה' - חחת:

טו | וְאֶת הַבְּהֵמָה תַּהַרְגוּ. חם חדם חטא, בהמה מה
 חטאה? חלף מפע שפחה לחדם תקלה על ידה למיכך
 חמר הפתח תשקל קל וחמר לחדם שידע להבחין פון
 טוב לרע וגורם רעה לחברו לעבד עברה. פיוצא פדבר
 חמה חומר: "חבר חלדון חת כל המקומות" (דברים יב,
 ג). הכי דברים קל וחמר: ומה חילנות שחין רחין
 וחין שומעין, על שפחת תקלה על ידם חמה תנקה

DISCUSSION

→ do not apply to anyone except the children of Israel after they received the Torah at Sinai, in which case Amram was not in violation of any prohibition, the Torah nevertheless saw fit to use a polite and vague formulation out of respect for Moses (see Ibn Ezra, based on Exodus 6:20).

20:21 | **A man who takes his brother's wife, it is abhorrent [nidda]:** The verse does not

mention the law of levirate marriage, namely the obligation of a brother to marry the wife of his brother who died childless. It seems that the verse refers specifically to a case where the deceased brother was not childless, or where the law of levirate marriage did not apply for some other reason; in such a case, the act is prohibited and abhorred. The Sages note a connection between this prohibition and the prohibition of

lying with a *nidda*, menstruating woman: Just as the prohibition against lying with a menstruating woman no longer applies after a given time, when the same woman is no longer menstruating, so too the prohibition of marrying the wife of one's brother ceases to apply in certain circumstances, such as in the case of levirate marriage (see Ibn Ezra; *Yevamot* 54b).

A Closing Statement on the Topic of Holiness, Separation between the Impure and the Pure, the Punishment for a Medium and a Necromancer

LEVITICUS 20:22–27

- 22** The chapter concludes with a general commandment: **You shall observe all My statutes**, My commandments that are not subject to human judgment, **and all My ordinances**, namely, the instructions to the courts, stated in this passage and the previous one; **and you shall perform them, and the land to which I am bringing you to live there will not spew you out**. It may be inferred that if you do not observe My statutes and ordinances, you will indeed be spewed out of the land.
- 23** *Seventh aliya* **And you shall not follow the practices of the nation, which I am sending forth from before you; as they, those nations, did all these prohibited acts, and I abhorred them.**
- 24** **I said to you: You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to inherit it, a land flowing with milk and honey.** Your inheritance of the land serves a dual purpose: On the one hand, it is the fulfillment of My promise to you; on the other hand, I will thereby expel the sinful nations who are unworthy of residing in the land. **I am the Lord**, who has the authority to perform these actions, and I am also **your God, who has distinguished you from the peoples**. The inhabitants of the Land of Israel are guilty of transgressing the prohibitions enumerated above; in response, God has rejected them and will remove them from the land. Some of these prohibitions, however, apply only to the children of Israel, due to their distinction from the peoples.
- 25** *Maftir* On account of your special and revered status, **you shall distinguish between the pure animal**, that which is permitted for

consumption, **and the non-pure**, which may not be eaten, **and between the non-pure birds and the pure**. The list of pure and non-pure animals and birds appears in an earlier chapter (11:1–31). They are referenced here in the context of the distinction between Israel and the other nations, even though these prohibitions are less severe than the forbidden sexual relations. **And you shall not render yourselves detestable by means of consuming the animals,^d or the birds, or by consuming any creature that creeps on the ground, which I have distinguished for you to deem non-pure**. The soul of a member of Israel is polluted in some manner by consuming non-kosher animals.

- 26** **You shall be holy to Me**, and distinguished in various ways, **for I, the Lord, am holy**. The holy is that which is situated beyond the boundary. To be holy, then, means to separate oneself. **And I have distinguished you from the peoples to be Mine.**
- 27** The concluding verse of this chapter seems quite puzzling. Perhaps it is related to the concept of the exclusivity of the unique bond between God and Israel: **A man or a woman, if there is among them a medium or a necromancer,^d they shall be put to death; with stones they shall stone them; their blood is upon them**. The verse is not referring to those who seek the council of such individuals (see 19:31), but to the mediums and necromancers themselves.

DISCUSSION

20:25 | **And you shall not render yourselves detestable by means of the animals:** Jewish tradition does not relate to these prohibited animals in a neutral manner; rather, these creatures have traditionally been considered detestable. For many generations, Jews not only refrained from the consumption of, e.g., oysters and pigs, but also considered them revolting creatures. This repulsion may be likened to the abhorrence with which the majority of Western society

views the consumption of cats and dogs, even if their consumption is not legally prohibited.

20:27 | **If there is among them [bahem] a medium or a necromancer:** This phrase could alternatively be translated: If they are a medium for a ghost or a wraith. Often, such individuals claim that some force enters their bodies, namely, that the dead or a spirit speaks from within them. For this reason the verse uses the word *bahem*, literally, within them, specifically targeting those who claim to channel spirits.

These actions might be a result of madness, but in most cases, the individual subjugates himself, as it were, to something that lies outside the divinely permitted realm of interaction (see *Sifra*, *Kedoshim* 3:7).

According to *Sefer HaHinnukh* (208), at that time people were fervent followers of this cult behavior. Therefore a separate prohibition was enumerated with regard to these practices, in addition to the general warning not to engage in idol worship.

- כב ושמרתם את כל חקתי ואת כל משפטי ועשיתם אתם ולא תקיאו אתכם
 כג הארץ אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה לשבת בה: ולא תלכו בחקת הגוי אשר
 כד אני משלח מפניכם כי את כל אלה עשו ואקץ בם: ואמר לכם אתם תירשו
 את אדמתם ואני אתנגדה לכם לרשת אתה ארץ זבת חלב ודבש אני יהוה
 כה אלהיכם אשר הבדלתי אתכם מן העמים: והבדלתם בין הבהמה הטהרה
 לטמאה ובין העוף הטמא לטהר ולא תשקצו את נפשתיכם בבהמה ובעוף
 כו ובכל אשר תרמש האדמה אשר הבדלתי לכם לטמא: והייתם לי קדשים כי
 כז קדוש אני יהוה ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי: ואיש או אשה כי יהיה
 בהם אוב או ידעני מות יומתו באבן ירגמו אתם דמיהם בם:

דש"י

כ"א. שתיחא הבדלתכם מהם לשמי, פורש מן העבקה ומקבל עליה על מלכות שמים:

כ"ב. כי יהיה בהם אוב וגו'. פאן נאמר בהם מיתה, ולמעלה (שעל פסוק ו) כרת! – עדים והתקנה בסקיולה, מויד בלח התקנה בהקרת, ושגגתם חטאת. וכן בקל חיבי מיתות שגגתם בהם כרת:

כ"ו. ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי. חס חתם מקדלים מהם הרי חתם שלי, ואם לאו הרי חתם של גבולעני וחבדני. דפי חלעני בן עזריה חומר, מצו שלח יחמר חס: נפשי קנה בבשר חזיר, חי חפשי ללגש בלחים, חבל יחמר: חפשי, ומה חפשי וחי שפשימם גור עלי? – תלמוד לומר: "ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות

כ"ג. ואקץ. לשון מחוס, כמו: "קצתי בחיי" (בראשית כו, מו), קצץ שחור קץ במזונו:

כ"ד. והבדלתם בין הבהמה הטהרה לטמאה. חיו עריר לומר בין פרה לטמא, שהרי מקדליו ונקדיו הם, חלח בין טהורה לך לטמאה לה, בין שגשגט דפו של סימן לגשגט חניו. וכמה בין דפו לחניו? מלא שער: אשר הבדלתי לכם לטמא. לחס:

Haftara for Kedoshim

Israel's Revival after Its Downfall

AMOS 9:7–15

This short *haftara*, taken from the concluding passage of the prophecy of Amos, is a continuation of a prophecy about the destruction of the Temple and the two kingdoms that Amos envisioned while Israel and Judah were still living complacently in their land. The prophet warns the people not to rely on the fact that they are God's chosen nation, as this

does not mean that He will ignore their sins. On the contrary, God brought Israel out of Egypt so that they should be His holy nation, and if they fail to fulfill their mission, then there is no justification for their special status. The idea that the sanctity of the nation is a direct result of their exodus from Egypt is reiterated on several occasions in the book of Leviticus, e.g., in the verse: "For I am the Lord who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; you shall be holy, as I am holy" (Leviticus 11:45).

However, alongside the reproof and prophecy of retribution, the prophet also promises the people in the name of God that His nation will ultimately be revived, once it has learned the lessons of its downfall.

9 *Ashk. begin* 7 Are you not like the children of the Kushites to Me, children of Israel – the utterance of the Lord? Did I not take Israel up from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Kaftor, and Aram
8 from Kir? Behold, the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from upon the face of the earth; however, I will not destroy the house of Jacob – the utterance of
9 the Lord. For behold, I command, and I will shake the house of Israel among all the nations, as if it is shaken in a sieve, and not a
10 grain will fall to the ground. By the sword will die all the sinners of My people who say: The misfortune will not come upon us
11 more quickly. On that day, I will raise the booth of David that is fallen, and I will repair their breaches; their ruins will I raise

12 and I will build it as in days of old, so that they upon whom My name is called will inherit the remnant of Edom and all the
13 nations – the utterance of the Lord – who does this. Behold, days are coming – the utterance of the Lord – and the plowman will encounter the reaper, the grape treader the sower of seed, and the mountains will drip nectar, and all the hills will
14 melt. I will return the captives of My people Israel and they will build the desolate cities, and they will inhabit them; they will plant vineyards and drink their wine; they will till gardens and
15 eat their fruits. I will plant them upon their land, and they will not be uprooted from their land that I gave them, said the Lord
Ashk. end your God.

Reproach for Israel's Conduct in Egypt and in the Wilderness

EZEKIEL 20:2–20

This *haftara* is part of a long sermon of reproach that encompasses the entire history of Israel from its inception. God censures the Israelites' perpetual failure to internalize their special destiny as a holy people devoted only to God. The sins of idolatry and desecration of the Sabbath take center stage in this sermon, and their prohibitions are also the opening commandments and central themes of *Parashat Kedoshim*.

20 *Seph. begin* ²/₃ The word of the Lord was with me, saying: Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel, and say to them: So said the Lord God: Do you come to seek Me? As I live, I will surely not acquiesce
4 to you – the utterance of the Lord God. Will you judge them, will you judge, Son of man? Inform them of the abominations
5 of their fathers. Say to them: So said the Lord God: On the day that I chose Israel, I raised My hand to the descendants of the house of Jacob and made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt, and I raised My hand to them, saying: I am the Lord
6 your God. On that day, I raised My hand to them to take them out of the land of Egypt to the land that I scouted for them, flowing with milk and honey; it is the most magnificent of all
7 the lands. I said to them: Each man shall cast out the detestable objects of his eyes, and do not defile yourselves with the
8 idols of Egypt; I am the Lord your God. They defied Me and

were unwilling to heed Me; no man cast out the detestable objects of their eyes, and they did not forsake the idols of Egypt; I said to pour My fury upon them, to spend My wrath upon them within the land of Egypt. But I acted for the sake of My name, that it not be profaned before the eyes of the nations in whose midst they were, before whose eyes I made Myself
9 known to them to take them out of the land of Egypt. I took them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. I gave them My statutes, and I informed them of My
10 ordinances, which a man shall perform and live by them. I also gave them My Sabbaths to be a sign between Me and them, to
11 know that I am the Lord, their sanctifier. But the house of Israel defied Me in the wilderness; they did not follow My statutes, and they despised My ordinances, which a man shall perform and live by them, and My Sabbaths they profaned greatly;

קדשים

ט הָלוֹא כִּבְנֵי כְשִׁיִּים אַתֶּם לִי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל נֹאס־יְהוָה הֲלוֹא אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל הֶעֱלִיתִי מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם
 ח וּפְלִשְׁתִּים מִמִּצְרַיִם וְאַרְם מִקִּיר: הִנֵּה עֵינִי אֲדַנִּי יְהוָה בְּמַמְלַכָּה הַחֲטָאָה וְהַשְׁמַדְתִּי אֹתָהּ
 ט מֵעַל פָּנַי הָאֲדָמָה אֶפֶס כִּי לֹא הַשְׁמִיד אֲשֶׁמִּיד אֶת־בֵּית יַעֲקֹב נֹאס־יְהוָה: כִּי־הִנֵּה אֲנִכִּי
 י מִצְוָה וְהַנְּעוּתִי בְּכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל כֹּאֲשֶׁר יִנּוּעַ בְּכַבְדָּהּ וְלֹא־יִפּוֹל צְרוּר אֶרֶץ: בַּחֲרֹב
 יא יָמוּתוּ כָּל־חֲטָאֵי עַמִּי הָאֲמֹרִים לֹא־תִגִּישׁ וְתִקְדִּים בְּעֵדֵינוּ הָרָעָה: בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֲקִים אֶת־סֶכֶת
 יב דָּוִד הַנִּפְלֹת וְגִדְדֹתַי אֶת־פְּרִצֵיהֶן וְהִרְסֹתִיו אֲקִים וּבְנִיתִיהָ כִּימִי עוֹלָם: לְמַעַן יִירָשׁוּ אֶת־
 יג שְׂאֵרֵית אָדָם וְכָל־הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר־נִקְרָא שְׁמִי עֲלֵיהֶם נֹאס־יְהוָה עֲשֵׂה זֹאת: הִנֵּה
 יד יָמִים בָּאִים נֹאס־יְהוָה וְנִגַּשׁ חוֹרֵשׁ בִּקְצֹר וּדְרֹךְ עֲנָבִים בְּמִשְׁךְ הָזָרַע וְהִטִּיפוּ הַהָרִים עֲסִים
 טו וְכָל־הַגְּבֻעוֹת תִּתְמוּגְגָנָה: וְשִׁבְתִּי אֶת־שִׁבּוֹת עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּבְנֵי עָרִים נִשְׁמָוֹת וְיָשְׁבוּ וְנִטְעוּ
 עוֹד מֵעַל אֲדָמָתָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַתִּי לָהֶם אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ:

כ וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר: בֶּן־אָדָם דַּבֵּר אֶת־זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי
 ח יְהוָה הִלְבִּדְשׁ אֹתִי אַתֶּם בָּאִים חִי־אֲנִי אֶס־אֲדַרְשׁ לָכֵם נֹאס אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה: הִתְשַׁפֵּט אַתֶּם
 ה הִתְשַׁפֹּט בֶּן־אָדָם אֶת־תּוֹעֵבֹת אֲבוֹתָם הוֹדִיעֶם: וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם כֹּה־אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה
 ו בַּיּוֹם בַּחֲרִי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִשָּׁא יָדִי לְזֹרַע בֵּית יַעֲקֹב וְאוֹדַע לָהֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאִשָּׁא יָדִי
 ז לָהֶם לֵאמֹר אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא נִשְׁאֲתִי יָדִי לָהֶם לְהוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֶל־
 ח אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־תִּתְּנִי לָהֶם זִבְתַּחֲלָב וּדְבַשׁ עֲבִי הִיא לְכָל־הָאֲרָצוֹת: וְאָמַר אֱלֹהִים אִישׁ שְׁקוּצָה
 ט עֵינָיו הַשְׁלִיכוּ וּבְגִלּוּלֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶל־תִּטְמְאוּ אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם: וַיִּמְרוּ־בִי וְלֹא אָבֹל לְשִׁמְעַי
 י אֵלַי אִישׁ אֶת־שְׁקוּצָה עֵינֵיהֶם לֹא הַשְׁלִיכוּ וְאֶת־גִּלּוּלֵי מִצְרַיִם לֹא עִזְבוּ וְאָמַר לְשַׁפֵּךְ חֲמָתִי
 יא עֲלֵיהֶם לְכָלוֹת אֹפִי בָהֶם בְּתוֹךְ אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וְאַעֲשֶׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמִי לְבַלְתִּי הַחֹל לְעֵינֵי הַגּוֹיִם
 יב אֲשֶׁר־הֵמָּה בְּתוֹכָם אֲשֶׁר נוֹדַעְתִּי אֲלֵיהֶם לְעֵינֵיהֶם לְהוֹצִיאֵם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: וְאוֹצִיאֵם
 יג מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וְאֲבֹאֵם אֶל־הַמִּדְבָּר: וְאַתָּן לָהֶם אֶת־חֻקוֹתַי וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטֵי הַדֹּעַתִּי אוֹתָם
 יד אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אוֹתָם הָאָדָם וְחִי בָהֶם: וְגַם אֶת־שִׁבְתוֹתַי נָתַתִּי לָהֶם לִהְיוֹת לְאוֹת בֵּינִי וּבֵינֵיהֶם
 טו לְדַעַת כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה מְקַדְּשָׁם: וַיִּמְרוּ־בִי בֵּית־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִדְבָּר בְּחֻקוֹתַי לֹא־הָלְכוּ וְאֶת־מִשְׁפָּטִי
 טז מֵאִסּוּ אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה אַתֶּם הָאָדָם וְחִי בָהֶם וְאֶת־שִׁבְתוֹתַי חָלְלוּ מְאֹד וְאָמַר לְשַׁפֵּךְ חֲמָתִי

יחזקאל
 לספרדים

יד עליהם במדבר לבלותם: ואעשה למען שמי לבלתי החל לעיני הגוים אשר הוצאתים
 טו לעיניהם: וגם אני נשאתי ידי להם במדבר לבלתי הביא אותם אל-הארץ אשר-נתתי
 טז זבת חלב ודבש צבי היא לכל-האדמות: יען במשפטי מאסו ואת-חקותי לא-הלכו בהם
 יז ואת-שבתותי חללו כי אחרי גלוליהם לבסוף הלך: ותחס עיני עליהם משחתם ולא-עשיתי
 יח אותם בלה במדבר: ואמר אל-בניהם במדבר בחוקי אבותיכם אל-הלכו ואת-משפטיהם
 יט אל-תשמרו ובגלוליהם אל-תטמאו: אני יהוה אלהיכם בחקותי לכו ואת-משפטי שמרו
 כ ועשו אותם: ואת-שבתותי קדשו והיו לאות ביני ובינכם לדעת כי אני יהוה אלהיכם:

I said to pour My fury upon them in the wilderness, to anni-
 14 hilate them. But I acted for the sake of My name, that it not
 be profaned before the eyes of the nations before whose eyes
 15 I took them out. I also raised My hand to them in the wilder-
 ness that I would not bring them to the land that I gave, flowing
 16 with milk and honey, it is the most magnificent of all the lands,
 because they despised My ordinances, and they did not follow
 My statutes, and they profaned My Sabbaths, as their heart

17 was following their idols. But My eye pitied them, that I not
 destroy them, and I did not engender annihilation of them in
 18 the wilderness. I said to their children in the wilderness: Do not
 follow the practices of your fathers, and do not observe their or-
 19 dinances, and do not defile yourselves with their idols. I am the
 Lord your God; follow My statutes, and observe My ordinances
 20 and perform them. Sanctify My Sabbaths, and they shall be a
 sign between Me and you, to know that I am the Lord your God.