

Likutei Divrei Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah
via the Internet

Sponsored by Alissa and Avi Ossip
on the occasion of the yahrzeits of
Irving Nordlicht, a”h, and Seymour Ossip, a”h

Volume 31, Issue 26

Shabbat Parashat Shemini

5785 B”H

Covenant and Conversation Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z”l

Spontaneity: Good or Bad?

Shemini tells the tragic story of how the great inauguration of the Tabernacle, a day about which the Sages said that God rejoiced as much as He had at the creation of the universe, was overshadowed by the death of two of Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu:

“Aaron’s sons Nadav and Avihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorised fire before the Lord, which [God] had not instructed them [to offer]. Fire came out from the Presence of the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord”. Lev. 10:1-2

Many explanations were given by the Sages and later commentators as to what Nadav and Avihu’s sin actually was. But the simplest answer, given by the Torah itself here and elsewhere (Num. 3:4, Num. 26:61), is that they acted on their own initiative. They did what they had not been commanded. They acted

spontaneously, perhaps out of sheer enthusiasm in the mood of the moment, offering “unauthorised fire”. Evidently it is dangerous to act spontaneously in matters of the spirit.

But is it? Moses acted spontaneously in far more fraught circumstances when he shattered the Tablets of Stone upon seeing the Israelites cavorting around the Golden Calf. The tablets – hewn and engraved by God Himself – were perhaps the holiest objects there have ever been. Yet Moses was not punished for his act. The Sages said that though he acted of his own accord without first consulting God, God assented to this act. Rashi refers to this moment in his very last comment on the Torah, whose last verse (Deut. 34:12) speaks about “all the strong hand, and all the great awe, which Moses performed before the eyes of all Israel”:

לעיני כל ישראל: שנשאו לבו לשבור
הלוחות לעיניהם, שנאמר (לעיל ט, יז)
ואשברם לעיניכם
והסכימה דעת הקב”ה לדעתו,
שנאמר (שמות לד, א) אשר שברת,
יִישַׁר כַּחַךְ שִׁשְׁבֵּרֶת

This refers to when Moses] took the liberty of shattering the tablets before their eyes, as it is said, “I shattered them before your eyes.” The Holy One, Blessed be He, consented to his opinion, as it is said, “which you shattered” – ‘More power to you for shattering them!’

Why then was spontaneity wrong for Nadav and Avihu yet right for Moshe Rabbeinu? The answer is that Nadav and Avihu were Kohanim, Priests. Moses was a Navi, a Prophet. These are two different forms of religious leadership. They involve different tasks, different sensibilities, indeed different approaches to time itself.

The Kohen serves God in a way that never changes over time (except, of course, when the Temple was destroyed and its service, presided over by the Kohanim, came to an end). The Prophet serves God in a way that is constantly changing over time. When people are at ease the Prophet warns of forthcoming catastrophe. When they suffer catastrophe and are in the depths of despair, the

By Dr. Larry Bryskin & family
in memory of his grandmother,
Henyah Steinberg, a”h, (Henyah bas Dov)
27 Nissan

To sponsor an issue of Likutei Divrei Torah:
Call Saadia Greenberg 301-649-7350
or email: sgreenberg@jhu.edu
<http://torah.saadia.info>

Prophet brings consolation and hope.

The words said by the Kohen are always the same. The priestly blessing uses the same words today as it did in the days of Moses and Aaron. But the words used by a Prophet are never the same. As it is noted: “No two Prophets use the same style.” Sanhedrin 89a

So for a Prophet spontaneity is of the essence. But for the Kohen engaged in Divine service it is completely out of place.

Why the difference? After all, the Priest and the Prophet were serving the same God. The Torah uses a kind of device we have only recently re-invented in a somewhat different form. Stereophonic sound – sound coming from two different speakers – was developed in the 1930s to give the impression of audible perspective. In the 1950s 3D film was developed to do for sight what stereo had done for sound. From the work of Pierre Broca in the 1860s to today, using MRI and PET scans, neuroscientists have striven to understand how our bicameral brain allows us to respond more intelligently to our environment than would otherwise have been possible. Twin perspectives are needed fully to experience reality.

The twin perspectives of the Priest and Prophet correspond to the twin perspectives on creation represented, respectively, by Genesis 1:1–2:3 (spoken in the priestly voice, with an emphasis on order, structure, divisions and boundaries), and Genesis 2:4–3:24 (spoken in the prophetic voice, with an emphasis on the nuances and dynamics of interpersonal relationships).

Now let us consider one other area in which there was an ongoing argument between structure and spontaneity, namely tefillah, prayer, specifically the Amidah. We know that after the destruction of the Temple, Rabban Gamliel and his court at Yavneh established a standard text for the weekday Amidah, comprising eighteen or later nineteen blessings in a precise order (Mishnah Brachot 4:3).

Not everyone, however, agreed. Rabbi Joshua held that individuals could say an abridged form of the Amidah. According to some interpretations, Rabbi Eliezer was opposed to a fixed text altogether and held that one should, each day, say something new (Talmud Yerushalmi Brachot 4).

It seems that this disagreement is precisely parallel to another one about the source of the daily

prayers: It has been stated: R. Jose, son of R. Hanina said: The prayers were instituted by the Patriarchs. R. Joshua b. Levi says: The prayers were instituted to replace the daily sacrifices. Brachot 26b

According to R. Jose, son of R. Hanina, Shacharit was established by Abraham, Minchah by Isaac, and Maariv by Jacob. According to R. Joshua b. Levi, Shacharit corresponds to the daily morning sacrifice, and Minchah to the afternoon sacrifice. On the face of it, the disagreement has no practical consequences, but in fact it does.

If the prayers were instituted by the patriarchs, then their origin is prophetic. If they were established to replace the sacrifices, then their provenance is priestly. Priests were forbidden to act spontaneously, but Prophets did so as a matter of course. Someone who saw prayer as priestly would, like Rabban Gamliel, emphasise the importance of a precise text. One who saw it as prophetic would, like Rabbi Eliezer as understood by the Talmud Yerushalmi, value spontaneity and each day try to say something new.

Tradition eventually resolved the matter in a most remarkable way. We say each Amidah twice, once privately and

silently in the tradition of the Prophets, then a second time publicly and collectively by the shaliach tzibbur, the “reader’s repetition”, in the tradition of a Priest offering a sacrifice at the Temple. (It is easy to understand why there is no reader’s repetition in the Maariv service: there was no sacrifice at night-time). During the silent Amidah we are permitted to add extra words of our own. During the repetition we are not. That is because Prophets acted spontaneously, but Priests did not.

The tragedy of Nadav and Avihu is that they made the mistake of acting like Prophets when they were, in fact, Priests. But we have inherited both traditions, and wisely so, for without structure, Judaism would have no continuity, but without spontaneity it would have no fresh life. The challenge is to maintain the balance without ever confusing the place of each.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Brides and Grooms, Feasts and Fasts

“And it happened on the eighth day...of the consecration of the Sanctuary, which was the first day of the month of Nisan...” (Rashi, Leviticus 9:1)

The first day of the month of Nisan is a great occasion of joy

within biblical history. It is the day when the Almighty declared His first commandment to Israel: “This renewal of the moon shall be to you the festival of the new moon; it is to be to you the first month of the months of the year” (Exodus 12:2).

Indeed, the Midrash records that these divine words were heard throughout Egypt, because they foretold that a most significant event was about to take place on this first of the yearly months, the Israelite nation was about to be born as it leaves Egypt amidst great wonders and miracles, a stupendous change was about to transform the political and social character of the greatest power in the world, the Egyptian slave society (hodesh, hidush, month, change, novelty).

Therefore, the whole of the month of Nisan is considered to be a holiday, thus, “We are not to fall on our faces (by reciting the penitential prayer tachanun) for the entire month of Nisan... and we are not even to fast (during this month) for a yearzeit (death anniversary of a departed parent). (Shulkhan Arukh, Orakh Chayim 429, with Rema)

The apparent reason for this festive quality of the month is the fact that Nisan is the month of our redemption. And this is

especially true for Rosh Chodesh Nisan, the first day of the month of Nisan, when God’s word was heard throughout Egypt and the optimistic command of sanctifying the monthly renewal of the moon was given to Israel. Indeed, this is probably the reason why the author of the Passover Haggadah even suggests that the Seder ought to have taken place on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, were it not for the requirement of matza and maror on the evening of the 15th of Nisan.

And yet, the same Rabbi Moshe Isserles who forbids fasting on a yearzeit during the month of Nisan and who generally forbids a bride and groom from fasting on their wedding day if they are married on any Rosh Chodesh (first of the month) throughout the year – since a bride and groom are forgiven all of their prior sins on their wedding day, they are by custom enjoined to make the day before their wedding a mini Yom Kippur fast up until the marriage ceremony – does specifically enjoin the bride and groom to fast on Rosh Chodesh Nisan! (Shulkhan Arukh, Orakh Chayim 572, Rema).

Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan, the Chafetz Chaim, agrees, although other authorities consider it “a great wonder.” How can we explain the tradition allowing a

bride and groom to fast on Rosh Chodesh Nisan?

The reason given by the Rema for the wedding fast is precisely because of the horrific tragedy of which we read in the opening verses of the biblical reading: The deaths of Nadav and Avihu, which occurred specifically on the first day of the month of Nisan, the eighth day of the consecration of the Sanctuary, the very day on which the Sanctuary was erected.

Why was a day of such religious sensitivity and significance transformed into such tragedy and terror? And why express the agony of what was supposed to have been a day of ecstasy into the fast of a bride and groom on that day?

According to Rashi, Nadav and Avihu were righteous individuals, even more righteous than Moses and Aaron.

Why does the sanctification of the House of God require such sacrifices – the sincerely pious sons of Aaron, the High Priest? The sacred text doesn't explain itself, it merely ordains and decrees. The Divine Presence is a flame of fire – and fire purifies, purges, but it also consumes.

But why do we recognize the tragedy of the day – a day on which we still recite the usual

Psalms of Praise (Hallel) of Rosh Chodesh – specifically by allowing the bride and groom to fast prior to their wedding ceremony if they are being married on that day?

The answer to this question is to be found in the Midrash, which suggests that the commandment to build the Sanctuary was given only after the Almighty had forgiven Israel for the sin of the golden calf, on the morrow of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. From this perspective, the Sanctuary became the nuptial home in which God and Israel were to dwell together forever, the supreme symbol that Israel had indeed been forgiven; from this moment onward, the major metaphor for the God-Israel relationship became that of bride and groom.

Hence, every bride and groom are a reflection of God the groom and Israel the bride, with the bond of matrimony reflecting a little bit of divine love and forgiveness. And just as every marriage has moments of tragedy as well as joy, of fasting as well as feasting, even God's subsequent relationship with Israel contained the zenith of our holy Temples and the nadir of our exiles. Ultimately, however, we know that God will redeem us, so that a Jewish marriage is an expression of faith in a glorious Jewish future

despite our rootedness in blood, and of Jewish belief “that there will be heard in the streets of Judea and the great places of Jerusalem the sound of joy and happiness, the sound of bride and groom” despite our exile and persecution.

The death of Nadav and Avihu on the very day of the completion and final consecration of the Sanctuary was an expression of our realization that our marriage with God will be rocky as well as rapturous, will have moments of loving communication as well as moments of inexplicable isolation and abandonment. The young bride and groom similarly reflect the heartthrobs and heartaches of married life by their fast on Rosh Chodesh, as well as their faith in each other that they will overcome every challenge and emerge from their trials strengthened and redeemed. And so Aaron is silent, “Vayidom Aharon,” (Leviticus 10:3) when faced with the tragedy of his sons' demise. He realizes that there are divine decrees which must be accepted even when they cannot be understood.

In a Munich Synagogue several years ago, I witnessed another kind of silence. There were about one hundred people in shul – but only the cantor and I were praying. Everyone else was talking – not in the hushed

tones in which neighbors generally speak during the prayer service but in loud conversations, even occasionally walking from place to place as they spoke, seemingly totally unaware of the praying and Torah reading going on at “center stage.” My host explained it very well: “These Jews are all Holocaust survivors or children of Holocaust survivors. They’re angry at God – so they can’t, or won’t speak to Him. But neither can they live without Him. So they come to shul, and they don’t speak to Him. But they do speak to each other...”

I believe that bride and groom must also learn from the congregation in Munich. There are often difficult moments in life, so difficult that you can’t even speak to God, you can only be silent before the divine decree. But at these moments you must speak to each other, give to and garner strength from each other, attempt to find comfort in the miracle of your love for each other.

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

Moshe's Premonition That "Something Like This" Was Going to Happen

Parshas Shemini contains the tragic event of the sudden death of Aharon’s two eldest sons, Nadav and Avihu. Chazal note on the opening words of the

parsha (“Vayehi b’yom hashemini”) that the term “Vayehi” connotes pain. In this context, tragedy struck on the eighth day (which coincided with Rosh Chodesh Nissan), following the shivas yimay hamiluim (seven days of inauguration) of the Mishkan, during which Moshe served as the Kohen.

Just as Aharon was taking over the job as Kohen Gadol and his sons were taking over the jobs of serving as the Kohanim in the Mishkan, Nadav and Avihu brought an “eish zarah” (foreign fire) and were struck down right then and there. Whenever I read this parsha I think to myself, imagine if there was a Chanukas Habayis of a Bais Haknesses (dedication ceremony for a new shul). Everyone is dancing. It is a beautiful moment in time, and then suddenly a beam from the roof collapses and hits someone on the head and kills him on the spot. It would be an untold tragedy. People would never look at that shul the same. How much more so in this case. Aharon’s two eldest sons die, righteous leaders of Israel, right there in the Mishkan! It must have had a horrible effect.

The pasuk says: “Moshe said to Aharon: Of this did Hashem speak, saying: ‘I will be sanctified through those who are nearest Me, thus I will be honored before the entire

people; and Aharon was silent.” (Vayikra 10:3). Rashi writes: “Aharon my brother, I knew that this House would be sanctified through those who were closest to the Omnipresent. I figured it would be through either me or you. Now I see that they (Nadav and Avihu) were greater than me or you.”

This is a very powerful, yet enigmatic statement by Rashi. “I knew that this had to happen.” What does that mean? Can it mean that a tragedy needed to happen? Why would a tragedy need to happen upon the inauguration of the Mishkan? We never consider such a possibility when we plan a Chanukas Habayis!

The Dubno Maggid in his Ohel Yakov gives a beautiful parable explaining what it means when Moshe said “I knew that this was going to happen.” As is his style, the Dubno Maggid asks “Mashal l’mah ha’davar domeh” (To what can this matter be compared)? Imagine that a country wanted to build a capital city to be the most beautiful city in the world. They hired the greatest architects and the most professional builders in the world. (When Washington D.C. was being designed, the fledgling American Government brought in Pierre Charles L’Enfant, a French army engineer who fought in the Revolutionary War, to build the

most beautiful capital city imaginable. Washington D.C. is indeed a beautiful place.) So, they build in the finest of everything, the finest materials, the finest architects, etc., etc., etc.

Of course, being a world-class city, as they envision, they want to also build there for themselves a world class hospital, the greatest hospital the world has ever seen. Again, it would have the latest technology, the best staff, the best equipment, all the ‘hidurim’. And of course, it would need to have the greatest doctor in the world. Since this is the capital city, the city that is going to put all other cities in the world to shame, and since this is going to be the hospital that is the most world-renowned medical center, it needs to have at its head the greatest doctor to walk the face of the earth.

And so it was. On the day they cut the ribbon to go into the city, everything opened as planned. People were overwhelmed by the beauty. One fellow started not feeling well on this first day of the inauguration of the city. He complained of a headache. He went into the hospital and became the first patient in the hospital. Of course, the head of the hospital, this world-renowned doctor treated him personally. (It is just a headache. “Take two aspirin and call me in

the morning.”) A few days later, the person died. He died in the best hospital in the world, in the greatest city in the world, under the care of the best doctor in the world, from a headache yet! What happened? How did this go wrong?

The Board of the Hospital gets together to analyze what happened. It is so embarrassing. The mayor comes to join in the investigation. The head doctor gets up and says “The fact that this person died is the most fortunate thing that could have happened to this city.” He explained: If we have the greatest city in the world, the most pleasant city to live in, and we have the best hospital in the world, everyone will say “I don’t need to take care of myself. I can eat without caring about my weight gain. I don’t need to watch my cholesterol. I don’t need to monitor my blood pressure. I don’t need to exercise. I have no worries about my health because I live in the city with the best hospital in the world. If I get sick, I will go to the hospital and be treated by the best doctor in the world and everything will be fine.”

The doctor said that this is why it was important, and even helpful, that the first patient in the hospital died. This lets people know that such calculations are incorrect. Someone can have the most

beautiful city, the greatest technology, the greatest hospital with the greatest equipment and the greatest doctor, but you still need to take care of yourself.

The Dubno Maggid explained the ‘nimshal’ (object of his comparison): Klal Yisrael now had a Mishkan. A Mishkan is a place where Korbonos are brought. The people might figure that now we can do whatever we want. All we need to do now is go to the Mishkan, bring a Korban, recite the Vidui (confession), v’Nomar Amen! (L’Havdil, this is a phenomenon found in the Catholic Church. Catholics feel that they can do anything that they want, go to the priest and say “Forgive me father, for I have sinned” and their sins are atoned for, without even needing to fast on Yom Kippur!)

People might think: We have a Mishkan. We can now do anything that is forbidden and be guaranteed forgiveness. So Moshe Rabbeinu told Aharon that it was important to disabuse the masses of such a notion. More importantly, Heaven needed to teach a lesson that it is crucial to be careful with the Mishkan and its holiness. If not treated with the proper deference, the Mishkan itself can kill. This thing that people think is the cure-all and panacea for all ills may actually cause

fatalities, if people don't act properly.

That is what Moshe Rabbeinu meant when he said "I knew that this House would be sanctified through those who were close to the Omnipresent." The Mishkan is akin to radiation. It is very powerful. It has much positive potential, but someone who is not careful with it may be killed by it.

The Power of Silence

The second thought I would like to share is from the end of that very pasuk: "Vayidom Aharon" (...And Aharon was silent). (Vaykira 10:3). This is an incredible thing. Aharon haKohen lost his two oldest sons who were tzadikim, and yet his reaction was silence. The Ba'al HaTurim writes that the word "Vayidom" appears only twice in Tanach. It appears once here in Parshas Shemini, and once more in Sefer Yehoshua (10:13) "And the sun was silent (vayidom hashemesh) and the moon stood still..." Klal Yisroel was in battle with the Emorites and wanted to pursue them, however it was getting dark. Yeshosua miraculously made the sun stand still. The sun did not set that day and the Jews were able to pursue their enemy.

Ostensibly, the two vayidoms have different meanings. One means that Aharon was silent and the other means that the sun

did not move. On the face of it, the identical words do not mean the same thing in these two places. Vayidom hashemesh means the sun kept on shining. How is that analogous to Vayidom Aharon, which means Aharon kept quiet? What is the connection between these two different uses of the word vayidom?

The Ba'al HaTurim addresses the connection, but I saw the following explanation in the sefer Kol Aryeh (by a Rav Yehudah Aryeh Klein, who was a Rav in Pressburg). There is a Gemara (Chullin 60b—which Rashi brings in Parshas Bereshis 1:16) that when the Ribono shel Olam created the sun and the moon, they were of equal size. The Medrashic story is well known: The moon complained that co-equal kings are not practical. One needs to be larger and one needs to be smaller. Hashem thereupon commanded the moon to make itself smaller. The sun remained its original size, and it is thereafter referred to as the "Maor hagadol" (the large illuminator) in the sky.

The Kol Aryeh says that it is a bit strange to call the sun Hamaor hagadol just because it was now bigger than the moon, because the sun did not get larger. It only remained the larger of the two luminaries by default. The Kol Aryeh suggests a different reason why the sun is

known as the Maor hagadol: When the moon said to the Ribono shel Olam that it is not right to have two kings of the same size, the sun should have immediately popped up and said "Wait a minute! You are telling me that I should be smaller? Maybe you should be smaller!" At the very least, the sun could have demanded that they both go to a Din Torah over the issue.

Instead, the sun was silent. Vayidom hashemesh. The sun didn't say anything. The Kol Aryeh says that is why the sun is called Hamaor hagadol. When someone is hurt, as the sun was (which is the natural reaction to the moon implying 'you shouldn't be that size; you are too big!'), and does not respond, that is very praiseworthy. Therefore, both vayidoms do indeed refer to silence.

The Kol Aryeh points out that this explanation enables us to understand the following Gemara very well (Shabbos 88b): "The Rabbis taught – those who suffer insult but do not insult in response, who hear their disgrace but do not reply, who perform G-d's will out of Love and are happy even in suffering, regarding them the pasuk states, 'But they who love Him shall be as the sun going forth in its might' (Shoftim 5:31)" We say that the person who silently hears his insults is

loved by the Almighty “like the sun in its might”.

Where do we see that? The Kol Aryeh says this is where we see it. The sun should have stood up for itself when the moon proposed that one of them be diminished in size. Vayidom hashemesh. The sun was silent. The ability to keep quiet and walk away when insulted by another is the strength the sun demonstrated during those first days of creation.

The Kol Aryeh says that this is what the Baal HaTurim means when he says that there are two vayidoms in the Torah. Vayidom Aharon and Vayidom hashemesh. Where did Aharon learn this capacity to stay silent after the Ribono shel Olam took away his two children? He learned it from the shemesh.

Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

What is a ‘scribe’ in Hebrew? It’s ‘sofer’, but isn’t that astonishing?

Sofer literally means somebody who counts, so the scribe who writes a Torah scroll, is a person who counts numbers.

What’s the connection?

The Talmud explains that it was so important for scribes to know how many words and how many letters there are in a Torah

scroll, so that they are able to determine, that they had not left anything out.

This is quite astonishing. In pre-computer times, the scribes knew how many words and how many letters there were in the entire Torah.

As a result, they were able to say, the Torah has an even number of words and the two middle words, are found in this week’s portion of Shemini, Vayikra chapter 10, verse 16.

They are ‘darosh darash’, which means ‘Moshe enquired’, he asked, he demanded to know what was happening.

From there we have the word ‘derasha’ – a discourse.

I think that this is so powerful. What a message! What a teaching! Right at the heart of the Torah, the essence of it all is that we need to have an inquiring mind.

We need to be asking questions, we need to be demanding answers with regard to that which troubles us in life.

The Gemara Masechet Shabbat daf lamud tells us, that Hillel the elder, was famous for being a very sweet natured, calm and patient person, nobody ever saw Hillel in a rage.

So, two friends made a bet and one said to the other, I bet you that I will make Hillel angry.

So how did he do this? He posed ridiculous questions to Hillel, such as, ‘Why do the Tarmudians have oddly shaped eyes?’ ‘Why do the Babylonians have oval shaped heads?’

Hillel’s answer to every question was ‘she’elah gedolah sha’alta’ – you have asked a great question, and he went on to give an answer, nothing was going to upset Hillel.

The man lost his bet, and the Talmud tells us as a result of this anecdote, that this is the reason we follow the Halachic decisions of Hillel, and not of Shamai, because, he was a person who loved questions, he appreciated an opportunity to explain, regardless of how great or poor the questions were.

From the middle of the Torah, let us never forget not to be shy about asking and indeed, that’s a message of Pirkei Avot, which tells us ‘lo habbayshan lamed’ – a shy student will never do well.

Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

“And he said: ‘Hineni, here I am.’”

Shimrit Budkov

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...” A new world is built from nothing. A world composed of endless

details – heavens and waters, light and darkness, animals of the land and winged creatures, and man to rule over them.

Heavens – as it is written: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth...”

Waters – as it is said: “Let the waters be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.”

Light and darkness – as is written: “Let there be light.”

Animals – as is stated: “And God created... every winged bird according to its kind.”

Man – as the Torah says: “Let us make man.”

After the creation of man, the Lord plants “a garden in Eden, in the east” and places Adam, the First Man within it. Adam, who desires the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and eats from it, violating God’s command, is punished. Death is decreed upon him, and he is expelled from the Garden of Eden. To ensure that he does not return to the Garden of Eden, God places guardians at its entrance: the cherubim with the flaming, revolving sword.

Approximately 2500 years later, God commands Moshe to erect

the Tabernacle. This singular and complex creation is composed of a myriad of materials – goats’ hair curtains and coverings, a basin and Menorah, the Ark of the Covenant. And Aharon the Kohen is chosen to serve therein and perform the Sacred Service.

In Midrash Tanhuma on Pekudei, it is stated that the creation of the world corresponds to the creation of the Tabernacle, which is, in fact, a microcosm of sorts. It is written:

“Rabi Yaakov the son of Rabi Assi asked: Why does it say ‘I love the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth’? (Psalms 26:8) Because the Tabernacle is equated with the creation of the world itself.”

How is this so?

On the first day of Creation, it is written: ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth’ (Genesis 1:1), and it is also written (Psalms 104:2): ‘Who stretched out the heavens like a curtain’. Similarly, in the Tabernacle it is written: ‘And thou shalt make curtains of goats’ hair’ (Exodus 26:7).

Of the second day of Creation, it states: ‘Let there be a firmament and divide between them, and let it divide the waters from the

waters’ (Genesis 1:6). Of the Tabernacle it is written: ‘And the veil shall divide between you’ (Exodus 26:33).

On the third day of creation, we read: ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered’ (Genesis 1:9). With reference to the Tabernacle, it is written: ‘Thou shalt also make a laver of brass ... and thou shalt put water therein’ (Exodus 30:18).

On the fourth day, God created light, as is stated: ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven’ (Genesis 1:14), and of the Tabernacle it is said: ‘And thou shalt make a Menorah of pure gold’ (Exodus 25:31).

On the fifth day God created birds, as is written: ‘Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let the fowl fly above the earth’ (Genesis 1:20), and with reference to the Tabernacle, God directed them to offer sacrifices of lambs and fowl. Moreover, and it says: ‘And the cherubim shall spread out their wings on high’ (Exodus 25:20).

On the sixth day, God created man, as it is said: ‘And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him’ (Genesis 1:27), and of the Tabernacle it is written: ‘A man’, referring to the high priest who was anointed to serve and to minister before God.”

Finally, when the great construction of the Tabernacle was completed, the Torah writes: “Thus was finished all the work of the Tabernacle of the Tent of Meeting; and the children of Israel did according to all that the Lord commanded Moshe, so did they... And Moshe saw all the work, and, behold, they had done it; as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it. And Moshe blessed them.” (Exodus 39:32, 43)

The Torah uses the words ותכל (“it was finished”), עשו (“they had done it”) and מלאכה (“work”) when describing the culmination of the Tabernacle. Seemingly ordinary words. However, given the order in which they are written, and the usage of these particular roots in the same verses, echoes a previous event:

“And the heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God in creating had made.” (Genesis 2:1-3)

Following the Divine commands, the gathering of the

materials, the planning, and the construction, Moshe finally erects the Tabernacle, and for seven days, offerings are brought forth. Yet, to his great dismay, the Divine Presence does not descend upon the Mishkan. Then, on the eighth day, Moshe declares: “For today the Lord will appear to you” – today the Almighty will manifest His presence in the Mishkan. Still and all, the Divine Presence makes no appearance.

Suddenly, Nadav and Avihu take firepans with incense and fire and enter the Holy of Holies, with the intention of actively bringing down the Divine Presence. But what is the nature of this entry of theirs? And why specifically do Nadav and Avihu seek to enter “into the innermost” realm, the Holy of Holies, not even clothed in the garments of the High Priest?

As we have seen above, the Tabernacle is a miniature model of the world, and, thus, the Holy of Holies is a miniature model of the Garden of Eden. Much like the Cherubim, who stand guard upon the Ark in the Holy of Holies, Cherubim also guarded the entrance of the Garden of Eden. When the Kohen Gadol enters the Holy of Holies [on Yomi Kippur], it is said of him that if he is found worthy, he enters there in peace and exits in peace. However,

should he not be found worthy, from between the two Cherubim comes forth a flame, and he is consumed and dies in their presence.” (Zohar Hadash on Bereshit)

After the death of Nadav and Avihu, Moshe commands Mishael and Eltzaphan to remove Nadav and Avihu’s bodies from the Holy of Holies. Our Sages tell us that Mishael and Elzaphan were the ones who approached Moshe after being unable to participate in the Pesach offering (as they were ritually impure after carrying the bodies out of the Holy of Holies), with the following claim: “We are impure by the dead body of a man [“nefesh adam”]; wherefore are we to be kept back, so as not to bring the offering of the Lord in its appointed season among the children of Israel?” The AR”I explains that the expression “nefesh adam” [literally meaning “the soul of Adam”] refers to Adam, the First Man: “In particular, in what we explained in the verse ‘We are impure by a nefesh adam,’ for Nadav and Avihu themselves are the soul of the First Man, and, as such, wanted to rectify his sin.” (Sha’ar HaPesukim).

From here, we understand that Nadav and Avihu (who were reincarnations of Adam) essentially enter the Holy of

Holies (which is the counterpart of the Garden of Eden) without the priestly garments (just as Adam was without clothing in the Garden of Eden before the sin), attempting to rectify the sin of Adam himself. However, they fail in doing so, and just like Adam in his time, death is decreed upon them.

The punishment is severe and seems unbearable. Adam, is expelled from the Garden of Eden and is devastated by sorrow. The Midrash tells us that when Adam left the Garden of Eden, darkness fell on the earth as the day was drawing to a close, and Adam said, “Woe to me, for I caused the world to be dark.” But when the sun rose the next day, he was relieved and said, “It seems that this is the way of the world.”

And now what? What reason was there to go on?

“And Adam knew Eve his wife” – Adam says to himself: “Even if death is decreed, it does not mean the world must end.

Rectification will come – if not through me, then through my descendants.”

And now to our portion of Tzav. Aharon’s punishment is likewise severe, and his world seems to have shattered. Aharon the High Priest is speechless. On the great day when the Almighty was supposed to manifest His

presence in the Tabernacle, the day when God was to demonstrate forgiveness to the people of Israel and to Aharon for the Sin of the Golden Calf – that day ends in mourning, when his two eldest sons die.

Now what? What reason was there to go on?

“And Aharon was silent” – Aharon may have stopped talking, but does not for a moment cease to act. Not for himself, but for the public. He engages in communal and spiritual work for the good of the People of Israel. From that moment onwards, Aharon the High Priest would not leave the Tabernacle, which was designed to atone for the people of Israel; rather, he would be there always with the good of the entire community in mind. Aharon says to himself: “Even if death is decreed, it does not mean the world must end. Rectification will come – if not through my children, then through the entire nation of Israel.”

In his book *Orot HaKodesh*, Rabbi Kook explains that in order for a person to successfully transcend his personal fate, he must engage in broader circles of activity. By doing so, the transition from focusing on oneself to focusing on the public creates equilibrium in the personal sphere as well, without

undermining the individual’s personal needs. When an individual immerses himself in a broader, more compassionate, and empathetic setting, he thereby expands his own being, thus becoming a vessel into which blessings and joy can flow.

In his book *Lessons in Leadership*, Rabbi Sacks explains the importance of constructive action during times of crisis: “What matters is the willingness, when challenge calls, to say, Hineni, “Here I am.”

Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org

Rabbi Daniel Stein

Beware of Religious Exhibitionism

In the first few pesukim of Parshas Tzav, the Torah thrice discusses the fire on the mizbeach, using similar language each time, indicating that there were multiple piles of wood burning simultaneously (see Rashi). However, only in the final instance is the subject of the phrase and the location of the fire stated explicitly, when the pasuk tells us, "A continuous fire shall burn upon the alter" (Vayikra 6:6). On the other occasions the pasuk is a bit vague when it states, "and the fire of the alter shall burn in it" (Vayikra 6:2, 6:6). Presumably the pronoun "it" is referring to the mizbeach itself, but the absence of a specific antecedent,

particularly in the latter instance which comes at the beginning of a pasuk, is awkward and creates the potential for an alternative interpretation.

Continuing with the theme of the intervening pesukim which instruct the Kohen about the proper procedure for removing the previous day's ashes from the mizbeach, the Kli Yakar and the Chasam Sofer suggest that the fire mentioned here is not only describing the literal fire of the mizbeach but also alluding to the passion for spirituality that should burn "within him," that is, inside of every Kohen and indeed every Jew. The Imrei Emes (Likkutei Yehudah, Parshas Tzav) echoes this idea but stresses that one's personal excitement and enthusiasm for mitzvos should not be discernable externally but rather remain hidden, burning "within him." He adds in the name of the Kotzker Rebbe, that most of the letters in the Sefer Torah are written in a uniform font size, but the letter "mem" from the word "mokdah al hamizbeach" - "burns on the alter" (Vayikra 6:2) is written smaller than usual, perhaps to indicate that the fire and fervor for Divine connection should be inconspicuous and understated.

The Beis Yisroel marshals support for this notion from the Gemara (Sukkah 28a), which defines the greatness of Hillel

the Elder by virtue of the qualities and piety of his students. According to the Gemara, the most exceptional student of Hillel the Elder was Yonasan ben Uzziel and the least impressive was Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai.

Regarding Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, the Gemara attests that he successfully explored and mastered every area and discipline of Torah, ranging from the "great matters" to the "small matters." About Yonasan ben Uzziel, the Gemara relates "that when he sat and was engaged in Torah study the sanctity that he generated was so intense that any bird that flew overhead was immediately incinerated."

Why does the Gemara insist on painting a vicarious portrait of Hillel the Elder by detailing the accomplishments of his students. Undoubtedly, the exploits of Hillel the Elder's talmidim are a critical piece of his contribution and legacy, but didn't he have his own unique achievements and abilities? The Sfas Emes explains that the Gemara was forced to provide a second-hand account of Hillel the Elder's holiness and impact because his own activities were a mystery even to his closest disciples. Hillel the Elder kept his spiritual pursuits private such that the measure of his knowledge was unknown to others and the intensity of his

religious enthusiasm was not apparent. Only by reflecting upon the nature of his students is it possible to get even a glimpse of his persona. But perhaps the tacit testament and true depiction of Hillel the Elder's towering stature was his concealed spiritual identity.

Similarly, the pasuk states in Parshas Behaaloscha with regards to the lighting of the menorah, "And Ahron did so, he lit the lamps toward the face of the menorah, as Hashem had commanded Moshe" (Bamidbar 8:3), to which Rashi comments, "in order to tell the praise of Ahron that he did not deviate." Many meforshim are bothered by the need to recognize and compliment Ahron for his faithful conduct. Why is his dependable trustworthiness somehow surprising? The Bnei Yissaschar (Igra De'kalla, Parshas Behaaloscha) answers that the Torah was noting that while Ahron was presumably ecstatic and brimming with eagerness in anticipation of lighting the menorah, he remained composed and controlled. Other tzaddikim, might have gotten caught up in the heightened emotions of the moment and spilled the oil or toppled the menorah in their anxious effort to do everything correctly. But not Ahron. Ahron was undoubtedly emotionally engaged in the mitzvah but his feelings were internalized and

his comportment disciplined and unflappable.

Nadav and Avihu's precise sin is hard to pinpoint, the Torah only gives us a cryptic clue when it states, "and they brought before Hashem a foreign fire which He had not commanded them" (Vaykira 10:1). The ambiguous written record gives Chazal wide latitude to speculate. According to the Gemara (Sanhedrin 52a), Nadav and Avihu were punished because they were once walking behind Moshe and Ahron while irreverently murmuring to each other, "When will these two old men die so that you and I can lead the generation." Rashi cites a different opinion from the Medrash, that Nadav and Avihu died because they entered the Sanctuary while intoxicated, which explains why this episode is followed by the prohibition, "Drink no wine or other intoxicant, you or your sons, when you enter the Ohel Moed, that you may not die" (Vayikra 10:9).

The Shem Mishmuel (Parshas Korach) weaves these two versions of the story together and submits that Nadav and Avihu were frustrated by Moshe and Ahron's lack of visible enthusiasm when performing mitzvos. They perceived Moshe and Ahron's dry and stoic nature as robotic and outdated. In their estimation, the passionate

pursuit of dveikus needed to be exhibited and displayed externally in order to be dynamic, vibrant, and compelling. For this reason, they entered the Mikdash while intoxicated, because "When wine enters secrets emerge" (Sanhedrin 38a), and their aspiration was to spawn a movement of liberated excitement for mitzvos which had heretofore been systematically restricted and subdued. However, their public parade of emotion and passion is labeled by the Torah as a "foreign fire" because authentic spirituality is inherently reticent and contemplative and not able to be expressed in physical or worldly terms. Therefore, any unprescribed demonstration is, by definition, shallow and superficial, and incompatible with a genuine quest for ruchniyus.

To be sure, holy individuals sometimes move rhythmically with the mitzvos, as the Gemara (Berachos 31a) relates, that when Rabbi Akiva prayed, he would unwittingly drift from one corner of the room to the other. However, the Noam Elimelech (Parshas Kedoshim) cautions onlookers, that any deliberate attempt to mimic or adopt these practices artificially is misplaced and ill-advised. Emphasizing the importance of a random gesticulations, even when accompanying the

performance of a mitzvah and intending to express a sincere pursuit of closeness, is a distortion, for it changes the focus from spirituality to externality and transforms an otherwise holy fire into one that is strange and forced. Even an earnest attempt to create a more animated spiritual experience for the admirable and altruistic purpose of increasing and inspiring interest and engagement, can easily slide into religious exhibitionism and virtue signaling, particularly in a society which promotes and celebrates performative behavior.

But alas this method is demanding and hard. For this reason, the Torah introduces the mitzvah to offer the korban olah with the word "tzav" - "command" (Vayikra 6:2), which implies an extra dose of urging and encouragement (Rashi). Why does the mitzvah to bring the korban olah receive more attention and advocacy than any other mitzvah? The Chiddushei Harim explains that perhaps it is because every other mitzvah requires some form of action or speech. All other korbanos were either eaten by the owner, the kohen, or both. Only the korban olah was burned completely on the mizbeach, and therefore aside from initiating the actual sacrificial procedure, nothing was done by the owner of the

korban. Without any external activity to focus on, the mitzvah becomes a spontaneous internal exercise, which can be significantly more difficult than operating from the platform of a prescribed deed and course of action. In recognition of this reality, the Torah lends an extra word of support to the korban olah.

We also need chizzuk in this regard. Rav Naftali of Ropshitz (Zera Kodesh, Shoftim) writes, that in order to distract us from real spiritual work the yetzer hara often presents us with an easier albeit less ambitious option. In response to this strategy, the Torah warns us "you shall not take bribes" (Devarim 16:19), because in this scenario the smaller goal functions as a bribe to satisfy our spiritual cravings and abandon our true objective. Let us not be enticed and appeased by the low hanging fruit of religious exhibitions, accessories, and gesticulations, but rather engage in the labor of building an elaborate internal spiritual world where a personal and private relationship with Hashem can develop and thrive.

Torah.Org Dvar Torah
by Rabbi Label Lam

Golden Apples

The sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, each took his fire-pan, they put fire in the them and placed them. A fire came forth

from before HASHEM an alien fire that He had not commanded them. A fire came forth from before HASHEM and consumed them, and they died before HASHEM. (Vayikra 10:1-2)

Rabbi Akiva opines that the phrase "lifnei Hashem" – "before HASHEM" means they died within the Kodesh Hakedoshim. – Toras Kohanim

This is scary. One of the greatest days in human history was marred and scarred by this sudden tragedy. Many great scholars have played the role of forensic detectives to figure out what went so terribly wrong. Why exactly were they worthy of dying? If it is not explicitly spelled out then it must be by design purposely obscured. What are we underlings to conclude? Perhaps one thing is certain. Watch out! Be cautious in the realm of the HOLY. The holier an environment is, the higher the spiritual voltage.

The Mishnah states that the Kohain Gadol would sponsor a feast upon emerging safely (Yoma 7:4 [70a]). According to the Meiri, it would appear that the celebration was due to the Kohain Gadol's safe emergence from the Holy of Holies. It seems this was a very risky venture to enter such a profoundly spiritual environment. It's like an MRI

machine. Hidden faults are exposed.

When America put a man on the moon, and I remember the day, it was cause for national celebration. Why the celebration? Did we all go to the moon? Of course not! When one man stood there, it was as if a part of each and every one of us had reached that rarified territory. There was a sense of collective pride and accomplishment.

So too when the Kohain Gadol on Yom Kippur, entered the Kodesh Kedoshim, that entirely sublime and holy realm, and he survived and exited alive, it was cause for national celebration. Did we all enter the Kodesh Kedoshim. No, of course not! When one man stood there it was as if a part of each and every one of us touched and was touched by that sacred place. It's beyond a sense of collective pride and accomplishment. He truly represents the highest of our individual and national ambitions.

Unfortunately, when one lunatic acts out in a destructive way, everyone is shocked and deeply introspective. Why? It was the doing of one crazy person. Why all the personal angst? We understand there is great empathy for the victims but it gets everyone nervous about themselves. When Achan took

spoils from Yericho, the entire Nation of Israel was blamed for the deed of one person. The Baalei Mussar explain that if one person did it, then 100,000 were quietly talking about it, and a few million were actively thinking about it. One person acted out on what too many others dreamed and fantasized about.

What is the difference between a crazy person and everyone else? One word! Filters! Before anything is manifest in the world it goes through three general check points, thought, speech, and action. Not everything we think about is spoken aloud. There is a filter between thought and speech. Not everything we speak about is acted upon. Again, there is a filter between what we say and what we are ready to act upon. Even in the world of thought, there is the thought of thought, the speech of thought, and the action of thought. A thought can be easily extinguished while it is just a thought of a thought.

A person thinks approximately 60,000 thoughts in the course of a day. To enter the Kodesh Kedoshim and survive one would probably have to be thinking 60,000 holy thoughts out of 60,000. That is 60,000 golden apples every day and all day. How many of our 60,000 thoughts are holy in the course of a day?

The Chofetz Chaim told a story about a young girl in the marketplace who was selling apples from her cart when a group of thieves came and started taking all of her apples. She was wailing about her plight and when a nearby vendor asked her why she was crying. She told him that the thieves are stealing all of her apples. He told her, “Why don’t you steal some apples too!” So many of our thoughts are hijacked and stolen by the thieves of the world around us, but we can steal back some holy thoughts, some golden apples as well. When we identify with the accomplishment of the Kohain Gadol, we are identifying with the possibility that a person can live such a holy existence and we are cherishing our golden apples.

Yeshivat Har Etzion: Virtual Bet Midrash

Mizrachi Dvar Torah

Rav Doron Perez

The Sound of Silence

What are the right words to say to a mourner? What words can offer some measure of comfort? The answer is: nothing. There are no words that can offer any measure of appropriate comfort. That’s why our Sages say that in a shiva house you should say nothing unless the mourner begins to speak. Otherwise, the

only sound that is appropriate is the sound of silence.

“Vayidom Aharon, Aharon was silent.” This was Aharon’s reaction when facing the horrific, unexpected death of his two righteous children – silence. Silence is a profound language of the human heart. To be with somebody, doesn’t require words.

In the Kaddish it says that only G-d is beyond words of comfort, and that is why the only words we say to the mourner is a prayer: “May G-d give you comfort...” since we cannot adequately comfort you, only He can...

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm’s Derashot Ledorot

Moving Beyond Respect*

In today’s portion we read of the tragedy that struck Aaron, the High Priest of Israel, when his two sons were devoured by a fire from the Lord when they ministered in the Temple and changed part of the regulations. We read that Aaron was silent at the time of this tragedy. Probably the grief, the inner protest, was too overwhelming for him to say anything at all. At this moment Moses turns to his mourning brother and says to him, “Through those who are close to me will I be sanctified (ekadeish), and before the entire people will I be honored (ekaveid)” (Leviticus 10:3).

What is it that Moses told his brother, and that he wished to impart to all posterity, at this time?

There are two concepts that are mentioned by Moses: kedusha, holiness, and kavod, honor or respect. Both of these are worthy Jewish goals deserving of our highest aspirations. Yet, they are not equal to each other – one is a higher level than the other. Kavod, honor, refers to an attitude that is external to the soul. I honor or respect somebody, but that does not necessarily mean that I subscribe to his opinions. I admire or give reverence to a great musician, although I may be absolutely flat and monotone. It is an external act of courtesy, a gesture that is sincere but does not involve my whole personality. Kedusha, holiness, contrariwise, implies an inner transformation, a total commitment and dedication of the entire personality toward the transcendent goal for which it strives. One can give kavod without being changed within. One cannot achieve kedusha until one has undergone a complete spiritual metamorphosis.

Now, kavod is something that the masses are capable of. Kedusha is something which only the initiates are capable of and obligated to achieve. Isaiah (6:3) proclaims even as we do

thrice daily, “Holy holy holy is the Lord of Hosts, the world is full of his kavod.” The Lord of Hosts, He who is above and beyond the world, is in His essence kadosh, holy. That is the highest realm and the highest level. But insofar as kol ha’aretz, the entire world, ordinary people, are concerned, all they can perceive is kavod, honor or respect.

Respect is a noble, good virtue. But it is antiseptic, it does not require the involvement of one’s inner self. Sanctity, on the other hand, is a higher, deeper, profounder commitment. Therefore Moses said, “Before the entire people will I be honored,” will I receive kavod. For ordinary people it is sufficient that they come into the Temple and minister, that they pray, that they observe the decorousness that is so appropriate in a House of God. For ordinary Jews, an attitude of kavod is about all that one can require of them. But when it comes to kerovai, those who are close to God, then kavod is not by any means sufficient; then only the transcendent and lofty goal of kedusha, holiness, is worthwhile.

This, indeed, is what Moses told his brother Aaron. You may in your heart of hearts feel aggrieved – after all, your sons were ministering to God in the Temple, their heart was in the

right place; so what if they changed a part of the service? The answer is: An attitude of kavod, honor for God, is sufficient for ordinary people. For priests, for the children of Aaron, however, kavod is never enough. From them I expect a total dedication, the uncompromising commitment to kedusha, to holiness. If your sons failed, it is because as kerovim, those close to God, they have failed to aspire to higher kedusha.

This is part of our problem in American Jewish life today. We suffer from what Prof. Abraham Joshua Heschel has called “a theology of respect.” People come into the synagogue and they respect it – therefore they need not learn from it. They respect Torah, they respect Judaism, they respect religious people, they respect rabbis. And therefore the whole thing is externalized, it never penetrates within their hearts and souls. What is required is a sense of kerovai, of being close to God and therefore setting up as our ideal goal not only kavod but kedusha. In recent years, with the so-called return to religion that we have witnessed, it has often seemed to me that as religion has become respectable, it has tended to become unholy; with its gain in prestige and external acceptance, it has lost some of its passion, its power of criticism, its totality, its

involvement with mankind's most basic and fundamental destiny.

The haftara of this week indicates the same idea. We read of the Ark being taken captive by the Philistines and then being recaptured by David. David was overjoyed at the return of the Ark to the Camp of Israel: "and David danced with all his might" (II Samuel 6:14). His sense of joy and thrill was excited by this great event, and so he responded in a blazing passion of holiness, realizing in practice the words he was to write later in the Psalms, "All my bones say: 'Lord who is like unto thee?'" (Psalms 35:10). And then we read, in one verse "The Ark of the Lord was brought to the city of David" (II Samuel 6:16) – the great and wonderful moment when the holiness of the ages was stamped indelibly upon the city of Jerusalem – "and Michal the daughter of Saul watched from beyond the window." What a difference is revealed in the contrast between the attitude of David and that of his wife, the princess Michal! While David is involved with his people in the holy undertaking, she, the princess, heiress to the aristocratic traditions of her family, stands far and distant, remote and removed behind the pane of glass, watching her husband David involved with his people and with his joy and

with his faith – "and she despised him in her heart" (ii Samuel 6:16). She could not abide the whole theme of David dancing about the Ark. And so when her husband comes home to bless his home, she releases a torrent of abuse and reproach at him. How can you, she cries, dance there as though you were one of the commoners, with the maids and the servants and all the ordinary people? The whole corruptness of her attitude is revealed in two words in her first sarcastic barb at her husband: "ma nikhbad, what kind of honor, of respect, is it for the King of Israel to act the way you have?!"

This was the undoing of Michal the daughter of Saul. She was limited in her horizons. She could not see beyond the level of kavod. She was forever sealed off from a vision of kedusha. And therefore she did not understand that her husband had transcended the limits of kavod and had risen to the level of kedusha. No wonder that she was doomed to wither away and die and not leave any memory behind her.

This, then, must be our understanding, our duty and our ambition. It is important, of course, that our synagogues possess the element of kavod – of courtesy, of respect, of honor, of decorum. But it is far more important that they attain, as

well, the ideals of kedusha – true devoutness, piety, and love of Torah.

When people come into a synagogue and listen to a sermon and they "enjoy" it – that is the level of kavod. When they are disturbed by it to the point of feeling they want to do something – then they are on their way to kedusha.

The rabbi who strives to institute decorum, respectability, and honor in his congregation, has made the steps towards kavod – an absolute prerequisite for a decent service. But that is not enough. The next step must be holiness, the establishment of a kehilla kedosha, a holy community. To be "inspired" by a synagogue, the services, and the sermon – that is kavod. To be moved by them to obey the message, to follow their line of thinking, to live the life of Torah – that is the beginning of the beginning of a life of kedusha, a life of holiness. [*Excerpted from Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's Derashot Ledorot: A Commentary for the Ages – Leviticus, co-published by OU Press, Maggid Books, and YU Press; edited by Stuart W. Halpern*]
*March 23, 1957