

A Taste of Text: Source based learning for Shabbat

This weekly sheet is brought to you by Rabbi Dr. Moshe Freedman of Northwood United Synagogue in conjunction with Shapell's/Darché Noam

PARSHAT ACHAREI-MOT KEDOSHIM

DVAR TORAH: THE TEENAGER WITHIN

A teenager doesn't always properly think out what to do and how to do it. A teenager often buckles under peer pressure. A teenager often takes the easy way out.

And many an adult still walks around with a little teenager inside of him – not properly thinking out his actions, often buckling under peer pressure, and sometimes taking the easy way out.

In one verse in this week's parshah, Hashem – perhaps – addresses Israel's teenager within. Hashem says to the people of Israel, "Don't act like they did in the land of Egypt that you dwelled in, and don't act like they do in the land of Canaan that you're going to" (Vayikra 18:3).

Egyptian behavior, Egyptian law, Egyptian practices, were very familiar to the people of Israel. It would be very easy for them, when they reach the promised land, to set up a society on well-known Egyptian lines, living their lives as transplanted Egyptians. This would be an easy – teenager-like – path, to lapse into familiar childish habits.

It would also be easy for the Jews, when they reach their destination, to just try to fit in to Canaanite society – quickly picking up on the nuances of Canaanite culture, speech patterns, and religious practices. Like a teenager whose parents relocate and is forced to change high schools and is anxious to fit into a new social setting – Israel could just learn to be like everyone else around them.

Says Hashem: "Don't act like the Egyptians – you'll have to move on from the familiar – and don't act like the Canaanites – you can't just assimilate into your new surroundings. Rather, follow My laws and My practices." When it comes to morality, culture, religion, spirituality, you'll have to develop an independent identity, as Hashem's people. Stick to your principles, don't imitate others, and don't take the easy way out.

But there is also a positive side to being a teenager. Teenagers have, to a degree, the power to determine what kind of an adult they'll become. They can choose their role models and start building a new setting for their lives. Israel as a people, and each of us as individual Jews, can at any point in our lives choose a new future. We can even choose to reframe our past, if need be. Who says our Egyptian background dictates our future? We have the ability to determine that the relevant personalities of our past – our role models – are Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov. And who says our new setting must be Canaanite? We can set up a society in Eretz Yisrael following the ideals Hashem has given us.

May we merit doing this speedily in our days.

SOURCE GUIDE: THE ROOTS OF TOCHECHAH

Tochechah – translated as rebuke or correction – is one of the 613 mitzvot (Rambam Sefer Hamitzvot Positive Mitzvah 205), and appears in the following verse in this week’s parshah:

<p>1. Vayikra 19:17-18 17. Do not hate your brother in your heart; you must correct your friend and not bear sin on his account. 18. Do not take revenge or bear a grudge against the people of your nation; love your neighbor as yourself; I am God.</p>	<p>ויקרא יט:יז-יח יז. לא תשנא את אחיך בלבבך, הוֹכַח תוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתְךָ וְלֹא תשא עָלָיו חֲטָא. יח. לא תקם וְלֹא תטֹר אֶת בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ וְאַהֲבַת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי ה'.</p>
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What is at the root of this mitzvah? This source guide (originally prepared as part of a Ner Leelef *Thinking Gemara* shiur) explores the ideas and approaches that are reflected in the mitzvah to correct a fellow Jew who needs to improve.

Tochechah is rooted in the mutual responsibility Jews have for each other. One Jew must help another better himself because we are responsible for each other.

How did this evolve? The first step, says the Sefer Chasidim (Section 233) was when the Jews accepted the Torah as one on Mount Sinai and, without exception, declared, “All that God commanded we will do” (Shemot [Exodus] 19:8). Forty years later they made a national covenant of mutual responsibility when they entered the land of Israel (Sotah 37b).

Jewish mutual responsibility carries with it awesome potentially negative repercussions:

<p>2. Sanhedrin 27b [In God’s rebuke to the people of Israel the Torah tells us that if Israel sins,] “One man will stumble over his brother” (Vayikra 26:36): A man [will stumble because of] the sin of his brother. The underlying assumption of this verse is that all Jews are responsible for each other’s behavior.</p>	<p>סנהדרין כז: “וְכָשְׁלוֹ אִישׁ בְּאָחִיו” (ויקרא כו:לו): אִישׁ בְּעוֹן אָחִיו. מִלְּמַד שְׂכוּלָן עֲרֵבִים זֶה בְּזֵה.</p>
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The Midrash brings the point home with a parable.

<p>3. Midrash Yelamdeinu, quoted in Torah Shleimah Vayikra 5:1 “And a soul (person) when he sins” (Vayikra 5:21) – Why does it not say “Souls (people) when they sin”? This is because all of Israel is called one soul (being), for it says (Shoftim [Judges] 20:11), “Every man of Israel, all as one man.” And if one of them sins they are all responsible for each other. What is this likened to – to people that were coming home together on a boat. One of them took a drill and began to start drilling [under his own seat]. They said to him, “Crazy man! You are drilling underneath your own place but the water will enter the boat and we will all be destroyed!” Thus, the Torah says, “A soul when he sins.”</p>	<p>מדרש ילמדנו, מובא בתורה שלימה ויקרא ה:א “וְנַפְשׁוֹ כִּי תַחַטָּא” (ויקרא ה:כא) – לָמָּה אֵינוֹ אוֹמֵר נַפְשׁוֹת כִּי יַחַטָּאוּ? שְׂכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל נִקְרָאוּ נַפְשׁ אַחַת, שְׂנֵאמַר, “כָּל אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּלֵם כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד” (שופטים כ:יא). וְאִם תַּחַטָּא אֶחָד מֵהֵם כָּלֵם עֲרֵבִים זֶה בְּזֵה. לָמָּה הַדְּבָר דּוֹמֵה, לְבָנֵי אָדָם שֶׁהֵיוּ בְּאִים בְּסַפִּינָה. נִטַּל אֶחָד מִקִּדְמָתָהּ וְהִתְחִיל קוֹדֵם בְּתַחֲלִילָה. אָמַר לוֹ, “שׂוֹטֵה! אַתָּה קוֹדֵם תַּחֲתִיךָ וְהַמַּיִם נִכְנָסִין וְכוּלֵן אֲבוּדִים!” כֵּן “נַפְשׁוֹ כִּי תַחַטָּא.”</p>
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Jewish mutual responsibility is also built into the halachic system.

<p>4. Gemara with Rashi's Commentary, Megillah 29a Ahava the son of Rabbi Zeira quoted the following Baraita: With regards to all blessings – even though one already fulfilled his own obligation he can still say the blessing on behalf of another (Rashi – for all of Israel is responsible for each other's mitzvot).</p>	<p>מגילה כט. – גמרא ורש"י תני אהבה ברבי זעירא: כל הברכות כולן אף על פי שיצא מוציא (רש"י - שְׁהָרִי כֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרַבִין זֶה בְּזֶה לְמִצְוֹת).</p>
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All Jews' mitzvah observance is tied together by a covenant of mutual responsibility. Therefore, even though one person has already fulfilled his own obligation, he is still considered an obligated person, because another Jew has still not fulfilled his obligation (to further explore the subtleties of this issue, see Hagaon Rav Asher Weiss's discussion of whether he is considered "still obligated" or "not yet having fulfilled his obligation" in Minchat Asher Devarim p. 366). That is why he can do that mitzvah on behalf of another Jew, even though a non-obligated person cannot perform a mitzvah on behalf of one who is. This principle is applied every Rosh Hashanah when someone who has, himself, already fulfilled the mitzvah of blowing the shofar goes to the hospital and blows shofar on behalf of the Jewish patients there who were not able to hear it. A non-Jew, on the other hand, cannot blow shofar on behalf of a Jew, because he is not obligated at all.

Kol Yisrael areivim zeh bazeh – Jewish mutual mitzvah responsibility – is also, at least according to Rabbeinu Yonah, the principle at the root of the mitzvah of *tochechah*.

<p>5. Rabbeinu Yonah's Igeret Hateshuvah Day One All of Israel is responsible for each other, for the Torah says, "You must correct your friend and not bear sin on his account."</p>	<p>רבינו יונה אגרת התשובה יום א' וְכֹל יִשְׂרָאֵל עֲרַבִין זֶה לְזֶה, שְׁנֵאמַר, "הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חַטָּא."</p>
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According to Rabbeinu Yonah the mitzvah of *tochechah* is the **source** for the principle of *areivut*! Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, הי"ד, elaborates on this in his *Kobetz Shiurim* on Beitzah 30. He quotes the following as support:

<p>6. Rabbeinu Yonah's Shaarei Teshuvah 3:72 "You must correct your friend and not bear sin on his account" (Vayikra 19:17). We have been warned here (in the second half of the verse) not to sin through our friends' sinning if we refrain from correcting him. If one man sins – if his sin is revealed – the whole congregation is punished because of him if they do not rebuke him with their "staff of chastisement." And thus it is written (Yehoshua [Joshua] 2:20), "Did not Achan son of Zerach steal from the forbidden property and the anger went out against the entire congregation of Israel? And that man did not perish alone in his iniquity." It also says (Devarim 29:28), "But the revealed [sins – that we know others within Israel commit] are our and our children's [responsibility] forever." Even the nations of the world said (when their ship was in danger of sinking in the stormy sea – Yonah [Jonah] 1:7), "We will know who is responsible for this misfortune." Certainly this applies to the people of Israel, who are mutually responsible for each other.</p>	<p>שְׁעָרֵי תְשׁוּבָה ג: עב "הוֹכַח תּוֹכִיחַ אֶת עֲמִיתְךָ וְלֹא תִשָּׂא עָלָיו חַטָּא" (ויקרא ט: יז). הַזְהַרְנוּ בְּזֶה, שְׁלֹא נִשָּׂא חַטָּא בְּחַטָּא חֲבֵרֵינוּ בְּהַמְנַעְנוּ מִהוֹכִיחַ אוֹתָם. וְאִם אִישׁ אֶחָד יַחֲטֵא, בְּהַגְלוֹת נִגְלוֹת חַטָּאוֹ, כֹּל הָעֵדָה יִעֲנָשׁוּ עָלָיו אִם לֹא יוֹכִיחוּהוּ בְּשֵׁבֶט מוֹסְרָם. וְכֵן כְּתוּב, (יְהוֹשֻׁעַ כב: כ) "הֲלוֹא עֶכְן בֶּן זְרַח מֵעַל מֵעַל בְּחָרָם וְעַל כֹּל עֵדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל הָיָה הַקְּצָף וְהוּא אִישׁ אֶחָד לֹא גִוַע בְּעוֹנוֹ." וְנֵאמַר (דְּבָרִים כט: כח), "וְהִנְגַּלְתְּ לָנוּ וּלְבָנֵינוּ עַד עוֹלָם." וְאֶפְלוּ אַמּוֹת הָעוֹלָם אָמְרוּ (יוֹנָה א: ז), "וְנִדְעָה בְּשִׁלְמֵי הַרְעָה הַזֹּאת," אִף כִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁהֵם עֲרַבִין זֶה בְּזֶה.</p>
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WHOLLY HOLY BY RABBI ELIE SILVERBERG

In this week's double parshah, Acharei Mot-Kedoshim, the second parshah starts off with a command, קדושים תהיו, to be "kadosh." What is meant by being "kadosh"? How does one fulfill this command? This is unlike commands like "Put on tefillin," "Eat matzah on Pesach," where one can point to a specific act. But how does one go about being kadosh, loosely translated as "being holy"?

Rashi quotes the midrash that says that it means to be פרושים מן העריות, to distance one's self from forbidden sexual relationships. The midrash seems to be predicated on the fact that this command קדושים תהיו follows on the heels of a long list of forbidden relationships that come at the end of the previous parshah, Acharei Mot.

While a high moral standard is a large component of what it means to fulfill קדושים תהיו, the realm of kedushah goes beyond this. Looking up the root קדש in a concordance, one is overwhelmed by all the different Tanach references to this root in all its permutations: הקדש, מקדש, קודש, קדוש. Similarly, in halachah we have Kiddush on wine, Kiddush Hachodesh, Kiddush Levanah, a whole section of the Mishnah called Kodashim. The concept of kedushah permeates all aspects of Judaism. Hence, the command קדושים תהיו takes on the form of a mitzvah kelalit, a general mitzvah, that affects every action and situation.

Note the continuation of the pasuk. קדושים תהיו כי קדוש אני ה' אלקיכם. "Be kadosh, because I, Hashem your God, am kadosh." Hence, kadosh becomes a self-description of the Divine. As, indeed, we refer to Hashem as Hakadosh baruch Hu, the Holy One, blessed be He.

In reading literature on the rise of Chassidut one of the main themes spoken of was that of מלא כל הארץ כבודו, that there is a Divine element in every aspect of life. Indeed, in the part of Shemoneh Esrei we call Kedushah, we declare, קדוש קדוש קדוש ה' צבאות מלא כל הארץ כבודו.

Hence I suggest that we fulfill קדושים תהיו, at least on one level, by seeking and trying to reveal the Divine element in every situation we find ourselves, in every action we do.

Our attempt to do so brings us closer to the goal set upon us as we surrounded Har Sinai, to be a ממלכתו, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

This issue is dedicated in memory of
Sandra G. Lehman ז"ל

*This publication is compiled by the staff and Rabbonim at **Shapells/Yeshivat Darché Noam** for men and **Midreshet Rachel v'Chaya Seminary** for women in Jerusalem. Find out more about the **married couples' programme** and the **Pathways Israel** and **Pathways Plus** programmes offered at www.darchenoam.org +972-2-651-1178, 5 Beit Hakerem Street, Jerusalem.*

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