And the Lord spake to Moses after the death of Aaron's two sons, when they drew near before the Lord, and they died. And the Lord said to Moses, Speak to your brother Aaron, that he should not come at all times into the Holy within the dividing curtain, in front of the cover that is upon the ark, so that he should not die, for I appear over the ark cover in a cloud. With this shall Aaron enter the Holy: with a young bullock for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He shall wear a holy tunic and linen pants shall be upon his flesh, and he shall gird himself with a linen sash and wear a linen cap these are holy garments, (and therefore,) he shall immerse himself in water and don them.

participating in the Avodah of Yom Kippur. The identity of the corpse makes no difference: whether it is the body of a king or a simple shepherd, all men carry within them the image of God. Mankind is redeemed only when the honor and the value of the individual are upheld simply on the basis of his humanity, not based on his position or accomplishment. (Mishnei Harav, pp. 36-58)

There is a disagreement between Resh Lakish and Rabbi Yochanan regarding the reason that we sequester the Kohen Gadol for seven days prior to Yom Kippur (Yoma 2a). According to Rabbi Yochanan, the rule is derived from the precedent of the inauguration of the Mishkan in the desert (milium), where Aaron and his sons were separated from their families for seven days. Disagreeing with Rabbi Yochanan, Resh Lakish maintains that the reason the Kohen Gadol must be sequestered is because one cannot enter the presence of God without first being isolated for six days. He learns this from the precedent of Moses, who waited six days before ascending Mount Sinai (Ex. 24:16). According to Rabbi Yochanan, the purpose of the sequester is to impart holiness to the Kohen Gadol over and above his normal status—the same function as the seven days of the milium. According to Resh Lakish, the purpose of the sequester is not to elevate the personal status of the Kohen Gadol, it is a prerequisite to grant license for the Kohen Gadol to enter the Holy of Holies through introspection and self-examination.

According to Rabbi Yochanan, during this seven-day prelude the Kohen Gadol experiences two fundamental changes of his personal status. On one level, the seven-day period elevates the Kohen Gadol until he is the virtual personification of Aaron himself. For this reason the Biblical Avodah description refers specifically to tasks that Aaron was to perform (תֵּקֵּץ אָדָם אֶל־מֹשֶׁה) rather than a generalized description of the Kohen Gadol's duties. Therefore, just as Aaron underwent a seven-day sequester prior to the Avodah, so must every Kohen Gadol. On a second level, the Kohen Gadol assumes the status of a holy temple vessel, as he was required to use his hands to transfer incense from the ladle to the coal-pan while in the Holy of Holies. The seven-day period of Avodah preparation facilitates both transformations. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 44-50, 68-70)

He shall wear a holy linen tunic. Why is only the tunic referred to as holy? Netzvi, in his Ha'amek Duvar, explained that there exists a hierarchy of holiness pertaining to parts of the Torah written on parchment. The holiness of a Torah scroll exceeds that of tefilin, which in turn exceeds that of a mezuzah. The hierarchy is based on the quantity of Torah sections written in each—the more Torah sections, the greater the holiness. Similarly, the body of the Kohen Gadol is comparable to a Torah scroll. Each limb is parallel to a portion of the Torah. Because the tunic covers the largest portion of his body, it is more holy than the other garments, and therefore, it is the only garment which the Torah describes as sanctified. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 73-75)
And from the community of the children of Israel, he shall take two he goats as a sin offering, and one ram as a burnt offering. And Aaron shall bring his sin offering bull, and he is to atone for himself and for his household. And he shall take the two he goats, and place them before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. And Aaron shall place lots upon the two he goats: one lot “For the Lord,” and the other lot, “For Azazel.” And Aaron shall bring the he goat upon which the lot, “For the Lord,” came up, and designate it as a sin offering. And the he goat upon which the lot “For Azazel” came up, shall be placed while still alive, before the Lord, to atone upon it, and to send it away to Azazel, into the desert. And Aaron shall bring his sin offering bull, and shall [initiate] atonement for himself and for his household, and he shall [then] slaughter to a cliff, hurled to its destruction. The Talmud (Yoma 67b) explains that the two goats must be identical in appearance, size and value, and were to be purchased at the same time. Though they resembled each other in every respect, their destinies were entirely different.

Rashi describes how their destinies were decided: [Aaron] placed one goat at his right hand and the other at his left. He then placed both hands into an urn and took one lot in his right hand and the other in his left. These he placed on [each one of] the goats. The goat upon which fell the lot bearing the inscription laShem “was for the Lord, and that bearing la’Azazel was for Azazel.” There is a profound idea behind the casting of lots in this ritual of atonement. The penitent must approach God freely and of his own volition. Only then can God know that he wants to receive atonement, and not only that he is forced to do so.

Maimonides writes that the scapegoat is so powerful a means of atonement that, even without accompanying repentance, it provides acquisit for all transgressions, except those punishable by a judicial death sentence or a divinely inflicted death penalty (hapes).

The owner of the sa’ir hamishmalei’ach is not a particular individual; it is the community, Knesses Yisrael, which possesses its own independent personality. The sacrifice of the scapegoat atones for the sins of each member of the people of Israel who adheres to Knesses Yisrael and remains inseparably linked to it. The individual receives atonement only in his capacity as a member of the community. It is here that one can understand Maimonides’ distinction between sins which are punishable by the death penalty and those which are not. Concerning people deserving of death it is written: This shall be cast off from Israel (Num. 19:13) and That soul shall be cut off from the congregation (Num. 19:20). These individuals have done something which banishes them from the community of Israel. Consequently, the communal atonement of the sa’ir hamishmalei’ach will have no effect on them. (Tishahav Lecture, 1969)
his sin offering bull. 12 And he shall take a pan full of burning coals from upon the altar, from before the Lord, and both hands full* of fine incense, and bring [it] within the dividing curtain. 13 And he shall place the incense upon the fire, before the Lord, so that the cloud of the incense shall envelope the ark cover that is over the [tablets of] Testimony, so that he shall not die.* 14 And he shall take some of the bull's blood and sprinkle [it] with his index finger on top of the ark cover on the eastern side; and before the ark cover,* he shall sprinkle seven times from the blood, with his index finger. 15 He shall then slaughter the he goat of the people's sin offering and bring its blood within the dividing curtain, and he shall do with its blood as he had done with the bull's blood, and he shall sprinkle it upon the ark cover and before the ark cover. 16 And he shall effect atonement upon the Holy of Holies for the defilements of the children of Israel and from their rebellions and all their unintentional sins. He shall do likewise to the Tent of Meeting, which dwells with them amidst their defilements.*

amount of incense from the ladle into the palm of his hand, without dropping a single particle. The Talmud Yerushalmi (Yoma 5:3) notes that although during the First Temple the Ark itself provided illumination, during the Second Temple the Holy of Holies was completely dark. For the Kohen Gadol to perform this aspect of the Avodah properly was an almost superhuman feat. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, p. 170)

The even shesia is probably not the rock located in the mosque known as the Dome of the Rock presently found on the Temple Mount. That rock is much taller than the prescribed three finger widths in height, although it is conceivable that the area surrounding the rock eroded over time. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, p. 182)

Netziv, in his Ha’amek Davar, offers a different approach. The Torah adds the phrase so that he shall not die. Netziv suggests, to teach us that none of the other services that take place in the Holy of Holies can occur without first offering incense. The incense serves as a mattr, a license, for the subsequent entry to perform the sprinkling ritual that occurs later in the service. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 161-162)

- *before the ark cover. When he reentered the Holy of Holies to sprinkle the blood, the Kohen Gadol was to stand in the precise location where he had earlier burned the incense. The license (mattir) to reenter the Holy of Holies was the prior offering of the incense, and was limited to that precise spot. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 6, p. 182)

- which dwells with them amidst their defilements. We know from daily experience that the father loves to stand beside his baby’s cradle and rock it—when the baby is clean. If the baby dirties his diaper, the father will often immediately call to the baby’s mother to clean the baby, while he stands aside. The mother, on the other hand, is constantly ready to clean the baby and do all necessary unpleasant tasks.

So is it in the spiritual world. The Creator relates to us as a mother relates to her child. He hears the cries resulting from man’s spiritual crisis and immediately appears to offer help. At that moment
17 And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to effect atonement in the Holy, until he comes out.* And he shall effect atonement for himself, for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel. 18 And he shall then go out to the altar that is before the Lord and effect atonement upon it: He shall take some of the bull’s blood and some of the he goat’s blood, and place it on the horns of the altar. 19 He shall then sprinkle some of the blood upon it with his index finger seven times, and he shall cleanse it and sanctify it of the defilements of the children of Israel. 20 And he shall finish effecting atonement for the Holy, the Tent of Meeting, and the altar, and then he shall bring the live he goat. 21 And Aaron shall lean both of his hands [forcefully] upon the live he goat’s head and confess upon it* all the willful transgressions of the children of Israel, all their rebellions, and their overblown pride, our artificial existence. (Teshuvah Lecture, 1967; Shuvi Harav Hagaon R. Yosef Dayan HaLevi on Maseches Yoma, p. 141)

chuppah is yichud, no one else can be present; the presence of a stranger destroys yichud. (The Lord is Righteous, p. 106)

And Aaron shall lean both of his hands [forcefully] upon the live he goat’s head and confess upon it. Confession over the head of the goat is an allusion to sins resulting from man’s tendency to be overly practical, to act exclusively in accordance with one’s head rather than one’s heart. The modern Jew is very utilitarian and practical, expanding most of his energy on accumulating wealth. Lacking a spiritual sensitivity, he acts with his head rather than his heart. (Yemei Zikaron, p. 121)

and confess upon it. The Kohen Gadol’s confession does not include remorse or resolve not to sin again, both of which are necessary for individual confession. When reciting a communal confession—for his family, for other kohanim, and for all of Israel, respectively—the Kohen Gadol could not express remorse because he cannot do teshuvah for the sins of others. As recited by the Kohen Gadol, vidui is not an expression of teshuvah but serves as a means of communal kapparah, as atonement, just as a communal sacrifice performs this function.

In a real sense, the pain and remorse associated with sincere vidui serve as an actual sacrifice which performs a kapparah function. Confession, which is not merely a perfunctory verbalization of a set formula but is bound up with tribulations of the soul and pangs of conscience, shall be deemed a sacrifice.

Confession compels man—in a state of terrible torment—to admit facts as they really are, to give clear expression to the truth. This, indeed, is a sacrifice, a breaking of the will; a tortuous negation of human nature. Both remorse and shame are involved in this process. You have taught us, O Lord, our God, to confess before You all of our sins—to look inward at the truth, to look ourselves straight in the eye, to overcome our mechanism of self-defense, to smash asunder the artificial barriers, to go against our natural inclination to run and hide, to tear down the screen, to put into words what our hearts have already determined—so that we may desist from the violence of our hands. And then—Accept us as we come before thee in full repentance, as burnt offerings and sweet-smelling incense (Amidah of Yom Kippur Ne’ila). Just as the sacrifice is burned upon the altar, so do we burn down, by our act of confession, our well-baricaded complacency, our overblown pride, our artificial existence. (Teshuvah Lecture, 1967; Shuvi Harav Hagaon R. Yosef Dayan HaLevi on Maseches Yoma, p. 141)

The verse says, “And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to effect atonement in the Holy, until he comes out.” According to Jewish law, the revelation at Sinai symbolizes the erusin, the betrothal, of Knesses Yisrael to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. The entire Knesses Yisrael stood at the foot of the mountain, ready to enter into this relationship. When they built the Mishkan, the marriage, the nisui’in, was completed. In this view, erusin was translated into nisui’in with the building of the Mishkan.

The Mishkan and Beis Hamikdash, then, are the symbols of the marriage of Knesses Yisrael to Hakadosh Baruch Hu. I will arrange My meetings with you there (Ex. 25:22) is the yichud, the chuppah.

The verse says, “And no man shall be in the Tent of Meeting when he comes to effect atonement in the Holy, until he comes out.” Why? Because service in the Mikdash is an act of marriage, and since
and all their unintentional sins, and he shall place them on the he goat's head, and send it off to the desert with a designated person.* 22 The he goat shall thus carry upon itself all their sins* to a precipitous land,* and he shall send off the he goat into the desert.*

The ritual of the sa'ir la'Azazel was classified by Chazal as a chok, a statute which cannot be understood (Yoma 67b). However, Nachmanides (verse 8) developed a most enigmatic rationale for this ritual. He first quotes Pirkei DeRabi Eliezer (chapter 46), which states that on Yom Kippur, the Satan not only ceases to indict the Jewish people but, paradoxically, acts as their defense attorney. God thus commanded us, in return, to sacrifice the sa'ir la'Azazel as an offering to the Satan. Nachmanides in his comment suggests that, in fact, both the sa'ir laShem and the sa'ir la'Azazel were sacrifices to God, but that God Himself offers the latter to Azazel—the Satan.

What is the nature of this offering? As a sacrifice to a person, the offering to the Satan? The necessity for offering sacrifices as a means of atonement is not limited to the time that the Beis Hamikdash was in existence. Even nowadays, one must offer sacrifices. Today, these sacrifices are known as yisurin, suffering (Yoma 86a).

Yisurin can be described in general terms as defeat, when man feels that he has lost a battle, that his efforts are for naught. In the constant struggle of life, whenever there is a discrepancy between ambition and realization, between aspiration and reality, man experiences defeat. These negative, destructive forces are indifferent and cruel. Man suffers, loses, feels frustrated and lonely. The feelings of sorrow, of disappointment, of frustration that man endures are often the price of petty human cupidity, financial covetousness or craving for honor. This terrible feeling of alienation and loneliness are due to his pursuit of futile vanities. These involuntary defeats that are imposed upon man are represented by the sa'ir la'Azazel.

When man regrets all those sacrifices offered up to Satan, when he repents on Yom Kippur, God will accept the yisurin as an atonement—even though the suffering itself was experienced through the pursuit of vanity, as a sacrifice to Satan rather than an offering to God. (Norusim Harav, Vol. 6, pp. 194-206; Teshuvah Lecture, 1972)

...and he shall send off the he goat into the desert. A person is blessed with free will. This gift was not given to inanimate objects whose essential nature is passive. Free will, however, allows man to fulfill his role as a subject, as one who acts. Sin occurs when man becomes an object, when he is transformed from a creator to a victim.

The simplest verbs which denote the dichotomy between a subject and an object are those of ascent and descent, respectively. Ascent involves an act of overcoming the force of gravity, while descent involves succumbing to this force. Gravity is a force that is not characteristic of personality; it is characteristic of objects, things. If a person loses his dynamic, subjective existence and cannot counteract various forces which tend to pull him downward, he is acting as a simple object.

The object most closely identified with sin is the sa'ir ha'nishmatel'ach, the scapegoat. The Mishnah in Yoma 67a describes the ultimate fate of the scapegoat in the ritual: It went backward, and it rolled and descended until it was halfway down the mountain, where it became dismembered into many parts. Can there be a more accurate description of what sin itself does to a person? Even before his total descent he is broken apart, an abject victim of gravity. (Before Hashem, pp. 31-32)
And Aaron shall enter the Tent of Meeting" and remove the linen garments that he had worn when he came into the Holy, and there, he shall store them away. And he shall immerse his flesh in a holy place and don his garments. He shall then go out and sacrifice his burnt offering and the people's burnt offering, and he shall effect atonement for himself and for the people. And he shall cause the fat of the sin offering to go up in smoke upon the altar. And the person who sent off the he goat to Azazel, shall immerse his garments and immerse his flesh in water. And after this, he may come into the camp. And the sin offering bull and he goat of the sin offering, [both of] whose blood was brought to effect atonement in the Holy, he shall take outside the camp, and they shall burn in fire their hides, their flesh, and their waste. And he and his sons shall immure his flesh in a holy place and don his garments. He shall then go out and effect atonement for himself and for the people. There are five so-called "afflictions" (inyinyim) that apply to Yom Kippur: abstaining from eating and drinking, washing, anointing, wearing leather shoes and marital relations. Rashi, in explaining a passage in Shabbos 11b, suggests a practice that enhances the lasting experience:Henivas Hayerek, preparing salad at the time of Minchah to be eaten after the fast. According to Rashi, coming in contact with and becoming tempted by food on Yom Kippur afternoon and resisting this temptation constitutes a complete fulfillment of inyinyim.

The reason the Avodah is not performed in the sequence written is because there is a halachah leMoshe miSina, an oral tradition handed down from Moses at Sinai, that the Cohen Gadol must sanctify his hands and feet ten times and immerse himself five times during the ritual. If the Biblical description of the Avodah were to be followed in the written sequence, there would be only six sanctifications and three immersions.

These inconsistencies between the written text and the actual practice teach us an important principle. The Torah is deliberately ambiguous to teach us that Torah Shelcha without Torah Sheb'al Peh is in fact not Torah at all. (Before Hashem, pp.144-147)

And Aaron shall enter the Tent of Meeting. The description of the Avodah in this chapter is complete in almost every way. One seldom finds any Biblically mandated mitzvah formulated in this amount of detail. However, there is one anomaly in the Biblical prescription. In the course of the Avodah description, at the point in which the scapegoat is dispatched to the desert, the Torah states: And Aaron shall enter the Tent of Meeting and remove the linen garments. According to the Gemara in Yoma 71a, this portion of the ritual is out of sequence. The change of garments actually took place much later in the Avodah, after the removal of the incense ladle and coal-pan from the Holy of Holies.
For through this day* He will atone for you* to cleanse you. From all your sins before the Lord,* you shall be cleansed. * It is a Sabbath of rest for you, and you shall afflict yourselves. It is an eternal statute. 32 And the Cohen who is anointed or who is invested to serve in his father’s stead, shall effect [this] atonement, and he shall don the linen garments, the holy garments; 33 And he shall effect atonement upon the Holy of Holies, and he shall effect atonement upon the Tent of Meeting and upon the altar, in a court of Jewish law. This disqualification is not an additional punishment per se, but a natural result of the metaphysical corruption of the human personality as a result of sin. True teshuvah not only achieves kapparah but also taharah, the removal of this impurity. *(Teshuvah Lecture, Undated)*

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In the nineteenth century, a great Lithuanian scholar was traveling and spent Yom Kippur in the German community of Frankfurt am Main at the home of Amshel Rothschild, an observant scion of the wealthy Rothschild family. During a break in the prayers at the synagogue before Minchah, Amshel Rothschild invited this rabbi to his home. The guest was ushered into the dining room, where he was astonished to find a lavishly set table. As his host proceeded to pour wine into his kiddush cup, the rabbi almost fainted in shock. Rothschild stood at the head of the table and said: ‘Master of the Universe, today is Yom Tov and we should make kiddush. However, since it is Yom Kippur and the Torah says you shall afflict yourselves, we shall forgo the meal, return to the synagogue, recite vihui and pray.”

Although there is generally a prohibition of preparing on Shabbos or Yom Tov for the weekday , the time of the Temple, communal atonement was attained on Yom Kippur through the elaborate Temple ritual known as the Avodah. Today, when these rituals no longer exist, the means to atonement is described by the verse: For through this day, when the Lord your God will atone for you, to purify you from all your sins, before the Lord you shall be purified. The word bayam in this case does not mean “on this day” as it is often translated. Instead, it means “through this day.” The day itself provides the atonement. The capability of the day of Yom Kippur to effect atonement for an individual is in direct proportion to the holiness that the Jew himself experiences on Yom Kippur. *(Before Hashem, pp. 87-88)*
and he shall effect atonement upon the kohanim and upon all the people of the congregation. 34 [All] this shall be as an eternal statute for you, to effect atonement upon the children of Israel, for all their sins, once each year. And he did as the Lord had commanded Moses.

17 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to Aaron and to his sons, and to all the children of Israel, and say to them: This is the thing the Lord has commanded, saying: 3 Any man of the House of Israel, who slaughters an ox, a lamb, or a goat inside the camp, or who slaughters outside the camp, but does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to offer up as a sacrifice to the Lord before the Mishkan of the Lord, this [act] shall be counted for that man as blood he has shed blood, and that man shall be cut off from among his people; 4 in order that the children of Israel should bring their sacrifices, dealing with them in great detail. Slaying animals in a non-sacred manner is not even permitted by the Torah, and it ruled that only legitimate shedding of animal blood was granted to him by God. Nothing less than this is permitted, nor is anything permissible except what God has commanded. 5 The sanctity of the deity is preserved and the atonement is performed. 6 Man以上י is the image of God. He created man in the beginning of his days, as a man who is able to create and to destroy, to make all that he wants and to be present in every place. 7 In this way he destroys all that he wishes and all that he desires. 8 All life is created by the deity, and he is the only master who exercises unlimited dominion over it. Each life must be surrendered to God; this is the only way life shall be terminated. Destroying life because of selfish motives is forbidden. Judaism was the first religion that combined both and therefore introduced basic changes into the idea of korban, stripping it of its barbarism. We evolved the substitution of the human sacrifice for other sacrifices, using the sacrificial animals. 9 Slaughter is forbidden. Judaism was the first religion that combined both and therefore introduced basic changes into the idea of korban, stripping it of its barbarism. We evolved the substitution of the human sacrifice for other sacrifices, using the sacrificial animals. 10 Only God, who gives life, can take life away.

With respect to human sacrifice, the religious ethos-experience interfered with the cult-experience and converted the actual sacrifice to a mental one, expressed in submission and surrender. Animal sacrifice, however, was retained by the Torah. The sacrificial act of offering a life to God is the only legitimate shedding of animal blood.

Killing an animal for the sake of satisfying my carnal desire, besar ta’avah, was classified as bloodshed and was therefore forbidden. Only after the people entered the Land of Israel did the Torah make a concession and begin to tolerate the slaughtering of animals for non-sacral purposes. To this compromise, however, many conditions were attached that made the slaughtering of the animal and its consumption the most complicated process. By committing the slightest error, man may forfeit his privilege to enjoy the meat of the animal.

Even as the Torah came to terms with the lusty sensual human being concerning the meat, it retained full possession and dominion over the blood. Blood is life, and as such it can never become the object of man’s desire or lust—hence the many prohibitions against blood consumption (e.g., verse 11-12, Deut. 12:23). Blood shall be sacrificed to God on His Altar, never misused by man for satisfying his carnal drives. (The Emergence of Ethical Man, pp. 37-44)
6 And the kohen shall dash the blood upon the altar of the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and he shall cause the fat to go up in smoke, as a pleasing fragrance to the Lord. 7 And they shall no longer slaughter their sacrifices to the satyrs after which they stray. This shall be an eternal statute for them, for [all] their generations. 8 And you should say to them: Any man of the House of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers up a burnt offering or [any other] sacrifice, 9 but does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to make it [a sacrifice] to the Lord, that man shall be cut off from his people. 10 And any man of the House of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My attention upon the soul that eats the blood,* and I will cut him off from among his people. * 11 For the soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have therefore given it to you [to be placed] upon the altar, to atone for your souls. For it is the blood that atones for the soul. 12 Therefore, I said to the children of Israel: None of you shall eat blood, and the stranger who sojourns among them, who traps a quarry of a wild animal or bird that may be eaten, and sheds its blood, he shall cover it [the blood] with dust. 13 For [regarding] the soul of all flesh its blood is in its soul, and you shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the soul of any flesh is its blood all who eat it shall be cut off.

And the kohen shall dash the blood upon the altar of the Lord at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and he shall cause the fat to go up in smoke, as a pleasing fragrance to the Lord. And they shall no longer slaughter their sacrifices to the satyrs after which they stray. This shall be an eternal statute for them, for [all] their generations. And you should say to them: Any man of the House of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among them, who offers up a burnt offering or [any other] sacrifice, but does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting to make it [a sacrifice] to the Lord, that man shall be cut off from his people. And any man of the House of Israel or of the strangers that sojourn among them, who eats any blood, I will set My attention upon the soul that eats the blood, and I will cut him off from among his people. It is interesting that the term *תּוּ הַנַּפְשׁ (nafsh) from the community of Israel (Ex. 12:19) or מִקֶּרֶב (micrav) from among his people. Judaism identifies the termination of existence with cutting off the self from the community, for the individual strikes roots in eternity only by abiding within its confines. (Family Redeemed, p. 166)

The Emergence of a mode of existence willed from the transcendental order of existence—is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵﬠֲדַת, a mode of existence willed from the community of Israel, is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵﬠֲדַת, a mode of existence willed from the community of Israel, is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵﬠֲדַת, a mode of existence willed from the community of Israel, is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵﬠֲדַת, a mode of existence willed from the community of Israel, is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵﬠֲדַת. It is interesting that the term מֵﬠֲדַת, a mode of existence willed from the community of Israel, is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵﬠֲדַת, a mode of existence willed from the community of Israel, is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵﬠֲדַת, a mode of existence willed from the community of Israel, is mostly linked in the Bible with the expression מֵ FontWeight 128129. The phrase מֵ ark, meaning that God will single him out, occurs only twice in the Torah: here and in forbidding child sacrifices (20:3). The Torah looks upon blood-eating with such horror and abomination that it is almost placed on a par with the worship of Moloch. Blood is the very essence of life and as such it must be consecrated as a sacrificial offering to God. (The Emergence of Ethical Man, p. 39)
And any person, whether a native or a stranger, who eats carrion or what was torn, shall immerse his garments and immerse himself in the waters, and shall remain unclean until evening, and then shall he become clean. But if he does not immerse [his garments] or immerse his flesh, he shall bear his sin.

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: I am the Lord, your God. 3 Like the practice of the land of Egypt, in which you dwelled, you shall not do, and like the practice of the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you, you shall not do. 4 You shall fulfill My ordinances and observe My statutes, to follow them. I am the Lord, your God.

Nature’s laws are also independent of situational factors, changing philosophies and ideologies, or time. Several verses support this meaning: 19:23-24). Such engravings are protected against the erosion of time and become unalterable and universal. The same Legislator instituted both chukim and an ultimate command, demanding total submission without reservations. It is to be affirmed that as different as they were from each other, neither of these fundaments is independent of time.

The Torah emphasizes here that as different as they were from each other, neither of these fundaments is independent of time. We must uphold this unique identity; under no conditions are we to consider assimilation. Egypt...you shall not do, and like the practice of the land of Canaan...you shall not do.

Generally, chukim seem to be irrational: if not for the divine imperative, we would never observe them. We assume a divine purpose and value, but we cannot fathom them. Mishpatim, on the other hand, reflect cultural and humanistic considerations. Yet the force of the divine command applies to both, demanding observance and unqualified commitment.

Rashi (Num. 19:2) cites a Rabbinic comment on the parah adumah rite: It is a decree ordained by Mr. You have no right to question it. This suggests that the chok can be defined as an absolute norm and an ultimate command, demanding total submission without reservations. It is to be affirmed even if Satan and the nations of the world taunt Israel, ridiculing its irrationality. The observant Jew accepts the Torah even as a patient follows the prescription of his doctor, taking complex medications and submitting to required surgical procedures. We may seek to understand and make all possible inquiries, but ultimately we accept it on faith. The Lord, Creator and Healer of all flesh, undoubtedly knows what is best for our bodies and souls as well as what is harmful to them.

The chok may be said to possess two characteristics. The first is its universal immutability: the fact that a chok is independent of situational factors, changing philosophies and ideologies, or shifting practical and economic conditions. All these have no effect or bearing on a chok, which persists and retains its value under all circumstances, at all times and everywhere. Obviously, only an absolute faith in God as the Legislator of the chok could motivate such acceptance.

Etiologically, the root כְּעֹבָדֵי עַמָּא דְאַרְעָא כְּעוֹבָדֵי עַמָּא דְאַרְעָא signifies the act of carving, engraving, making incisions in a hard surface such as stone or metal. Several verses support this meaning. Behold, I have graven you [כְּעֹבָדֵי] upon the palms of my hands (Is. 49:16). Oh that My words were...engraven with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever (Job 19:23-24). Such engravings are protected against the erosion of time and the elements. Used in religious language, the term signifies that the chok is characterized by perpetual validity and is engraven in the rock forever. Chok implies eternity; it is not a temporary regulation.

Nature’s laws are also chukim, unalterable and universal. The same Legislator instituted both systems of law, governing physical nature as well as man’s deportment. The Bible uses the word chok in regard to nature, as in Proverbs 8:29: When He gave to the sea His decree [כְּעֹבָדֵי], that the waters should not transgress His commandment; when he appointed [כְּעֹבָדֵי] the foundations of the earth. Nature is not capricious; it unfailingly abides by God’s laws, even as man should in the human realm. There are no exceptions or surprises. Nature is reliable and predictable and its laws are universally valid.

The second characteristic of the chok is its incomprehensibility: it demands the surrender of one’s mind and the suspension of one’s thinking. It is a total commitment precisely because it requires an abdication of one’s reason. The commitment of a child to his parents, however fervent, is not total; it is rooted in the family setting and has many qualifications and reservations. A parent’s commitment is rooted in the family setting and has many qualifications and reservations. A parent’s commitment to both, demanding observance and unqualified commitment.

The Torah emphasizes here that as different as they were from each other, neither of these fundaments is independent of time.

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You shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, which a man shall do and live by them. I am the Lord. No man shall come near to any of his close relatives, to uncover [their] nakedness. I am the Lord. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father or the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. The nakedness of your sister, whether your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, or whether born to one who may remain in the home or born to one who must be sent outside you shall not uncover their nakedness. And for a child, however, it is instinctive and total; it is irrational and therefore not contingent or conditioned. The reason for the chok remains a mystery. Indeed, the chok is often contested by one's thinking mind. Although man is a rational being, the chok demands that he violate his reason.

Scripture. We make no distinctions between the two in the quality and totality of our commitment. In our modern world, there is hardly a mishpat which has not been repudiated. Stealing and corruption are the accepted norms in many spheres of life; adultery and general promiscuity find support in respectable circles; and even murder, medical and germ experiments have been conducted with governmental complicity. The logos has shown itself in our time to be incapable of supporting the most basic of moral inhibitions. The Torah, therefore, insists that a mishpat be accepted as a chok; our commitment must be unshakable, universally applicable, and upheld even when our logos is confused. Without chok, every social and moral law can be rationalized away, leaving the world a sophisticated jungle of instincts and impulses. Even a mishpat can endure only when it is sustained by an unmotivated commitment which is impervious to confusing circumstances. (Reflections, Vol. 1, pp. 100-105; see Appendix A in Chumash Mesoras HaiRav Sefer Shemos)

This law is the watchword of Judaism. The teachings of the Torah do not oppose the laws of life and reality, for were they to clash with this world, were they to negate the value of concrete, physiological-biological existence, then they would contain not mercy, loving-kindness, and peace but vengeance and wrath. Even if there is only a doubtful possibility that a person's life is in danger, one renders a lenient decision; and as long as one is able to discover some possible danger to life, one may use that doubt to render a lenient decision.

My grandfather, R. Chaim of Brisk, disagreed with the legal view that on the Day of Atonement one feeds a sick person who is in mortal danger small amounts of food at a time, each amount less than the forbidden measure of food for that day. Rather he instructed those who were taking care of a sick individual to serve him a regular meal, just as they would on other days. When my father was about to travel to Rasseyn, a town close to Kovno, to take up a rabbinical post, R. Chaim took him aside and said, “I command you to follow my view regarding a sick person in danger on the Day of Atonement, for it is an absolute halachic truth.”

This law that piskeh nefesh, saving a life, overrides all the commandments is indicative of the high value which the halachic viewpoint attributes to one's earthly life—indeed, it serves to confirm and nurture that value. Temporal life becomes transformed into eternal life; it becomes sanctified and elevated with eternal holiness (Halakhic Man, pp. 34-35)
Bride and bridegroom are young, physically strong and passionately in love with each other. Both have patiently waited for this rendezvous to take place. Just one more step and their love would have been fulfilled, a vision realized. Suddenly the bride and groom make a movement of recoil. He, gallantly, like a chivalrous knight, exhibits paradoxical heroism. He takes his own defeat. There is no glamour attached to his withdrawal. The latter is not a spectacular gesture, since there are no witnesses to admire and to laud him. The heroic act did not take place in the presence of jubilant crowds; no bands will sing of these two modest, humble young people. It happened in the sheltered privacy of their home, in the stillness of the night. The young man makes an about-face; he retreats at the moment when fulfillment seems assured.

The idea of catharsis through the dialectical movement manifests itself in all halachic norms regulating human life. Nowhere, however, does this doctrine of dialectical catharsis assert itself more frequently than it does in the aesthetic-hedonic realm. How does man purge himself in this realm? By engaging in the dialectical movement: by withdrawing, at the moment when passion reaches its peak. The stronger the grip of the physiological drive is felt by man, the more intoxicating and bewildering the prospect of hedonic gratification, the greater the redemptive capacity of the dialectical catharsis—the movement of recoil. (Catharsis, pp. 45-46)

- And to a woman during the uncleanness of her separation, you shall not come near. (7:3)
- Thy body shall not experience such as the rules of sexual morality, it can lead to “Molech,” that is, violation of the mishpatim as well. (Boston, 1976)
from a natural existence, from that finite and determinate character of an earthly being. And this spells doom for man. Tumah is identical with death or disease: hence it is associated with meis (corpse), nevelah (carrion), skoretz (creeping swarming thing), tav, zavah, metzora and yolezah. All these are anomalous in organic life. Pathology is identical with tumah.

What is true of physical tumah is true as well for spiritual tumah, tunes hachet (defilement from sin). Any anomaly in the pattern of living, any pathological deviation from the straight path of existence, is tumah. (The Emergence of Ethical Man, pp. 55-57)

But as for you, you shall observe My statutes and My ordinances. Most of our Sages distinguished between chukim and mishpatim. They declared the compliance with chukim to be a gesture of pure obedience and subordination to God. Conversely, adherence to mishpatim is a result of an inner moral need that God implanted in Man, when He created him in His image. The mere fact that Man carries God's image suggests that morality is indeed illumined by a rationale, can be developed by human reason, and contain peripheral areas that are as strange and alien to reason as the most mysterious chukim. Along this periphery, the cultivated, friendly and attractive scenery of mishpatim suddenly turns into a dark jungle.

As an example of a mishpatim’s “periphery,” consider the law against theft. Every sensitive individual confirms and abides by such a law. The thief is held in contempt, the embezzler despised by society. The rationale is simple and self-evident. Only a psychopath would approve of stealing candy from a child or money from the box of a blind beggar. 

You shall not lie down with a male, as with a woman: this is an abomination. And with no animal shall you cohabit, to become defiled by it. And a woman shall not stand in front of an animal to cohabit with it; this is depravity. You shall not defile yourselves by any of these things, for the nations, whom I am sending away from before you, have defiled themselves with all these things. And the land became defiled, and I visited its sin. In the case of murder, the atonement can be made to the land only by the blood of the murderer; when he begins to sin, to grasp for something not belonging to him, he divorces himself from his Creator which accentuates his naturalness, he remains ben adam, the son of Mother Earth. As long as man lives in unison with natural law, he remains protected from the defilement of sin.

If human conscience is the authority judging the validity of the mishpat, we could conclude that there was no transgression, that the act of stealing the loaf of bread was justifiable and quite possibly heroic.

22 You shall not lie down with a male, as with a woman: this is an abomination. 23 And with no animal shall you cohabit, to become defiled by it. And a woman shall not stand in front of an animal to cohabit with it; this is depravity. 24 You shall not defile yourselves by any of these things, for the nations, whom I am sending away from before you, have defiled themselves with all these things. 25 And the land became defiled, and I visited its sin upon it, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26 But as for you, you shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, and you shall not do like any of these abominations that the nations who preceded you, did all of these abominations, and the land became defiled. And the land became defiled, and I visited its sin. 27 For the people of the land who preceded you, did all of these abominations, and the land became defiled. 28 And the land became defiled,* and I visited its sin. 29 And the land vomited out its inhabitants. 30 But as for you, you shall observe My statutes and My ordinances,* and you shall not do like any of these abominations that the nations, whom I am sending away from before you, have defiled themselves with all these things. 31 For the people of the land who preceded you, did all of these abominations, and the land became defiled. 32 And the land became defiled,* and I visited its sin. 33 And the land vomited out its inhabitants. 34 But as for you, you shall observe My statutes and My ordinances,* and you shall not do like any of these abominations that the nations, whom I am sending away from before you, have defiled themselves with all these things. 35 For the people of the land who preceded you, did all of these abominations, and the land became defiled.

But when he begins to sin, to grasp for something not belonging to him, he divorces himself from that union. Nature begins to resent the presence of man; in response, man attempts to subjugate an insurgent and malicious nature. The struggle, once begun, ends in man's defeat. Mother Earth spits out her unruly son. Man is cast out of his environment.

There is a very close kinship between man and nature. As long as man lives within the bounds set by his Creator which accentuates his naturalness, he remains ben adam, the son of Mother Earth. As long as man lives in unison with natural law, he remains protected from the defilement of sin.
28 And let the land not vomit you out* for having defiled it, as it vomited out the nation that preceded you. 29 For anyone who commits any of these abominations, the persons doing so shall be cut off from the midst of their people. 30 And you shall observe My charge, not to commit any of the abominable practices that were done before you, and you shall not become defiled by them. I am the Lord your God.

In order to meticulously observe the mishpatim which form the very foundation of civilized society, and to avoid the abominations practiced by the Canaanites, the community must be trained to observe chukim as well as mishpatim. The imperative to observe My chukim precedes My mishpatim. Only in this way can one guarantee that you shall not do like any of these abominations.

One must teach the people how to surrender their intellectual pride and arrogance and commit themselves to the Almighty, even when we are unable to comprehend the moral necessity and practical utility of the chukim. Secular ethics have failed because the concept of chok is not acceptable to secular man. If the integrity of the moral law is to be preserved, then one must accept the chukim, to abstain from acts that seem to hold great promise, and conversely, to act in ways that may sometimes seem illogical and even painful. (Derashot Harav, p. 237; see Appendix A in Chumash Mesoras HaRav Sefer Shemos)

There is only a single response to this dilemma: the Almighty forbids stealing, and at Sinai we gave our assent. We will abide by Your will, whether we understand it or not.

Morality is not based on man's cognitive abilities, even in regard to mishpatim, since certain aspects are inaccessible to human moral exploration and illumination. The entire structure of morality would collapse should society actually permit their violation. Thus the Torah states here,
KEDOSHIM

19:1 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy,* for I, the Lord, your God, am holy. 3 Every man shall revere his mother and his father,* and you shall observe My Sabbaths. * I am the Lord, your God. 4 You shall not turn to the worthless idols,

The Gemara (Yevamos 6b) states, One is not to revere the Sanctuary but Him who commanded us regarding the Sanctuary. Likewise, expressing yirah is tantamount to showing yirah for God. The Gemara (Kiddushin 31b) says that Rabbi Joseph would stand when he heard his mother's footsteps, saying that he was standing for the Divine Presence he heard approaching. Rabbi Joseph rose out of the awe and reverence which he was obligated to show God. The Divine Presence is contracted into the Mikdash, visits us on the “great and holy” day of Shabbos, and is also embodied in each father and mother. When a child shows reverence for his parent, he is expressing reverence for God.

Shabbos, reverence for parents and reverence for the Mikdash are thus connected, as all have a common theme: fulfillment of the mitzvah results in an expression of yirah for the Shechinah. (Rabbi Joshua Rapp’s Furahah Series)

Fear and love are mutually contradictory, but awe and love do not negate each other. On the contrary: they are entwined with each other. One great personality can bring about feelings of love and awe at the same time. When the storm of longing overpowers the lover and draws him to love, it also reveals the awe, which is a love as fierce as death.

This sometimes takes the form of silent suffering. I love the other and yearn for him because of his greatness and majesty, but this valuation also leads to the retreat of the lesser one in the face of the greater one. Coming closer leads to an axiological diminishing of one’s self-image. Love contains equality of value, but also the negation of value.

Honor your father and your mother (Ex. 20:12) is juxtaposed with Every man shall revere (יִרְאוּ) his mother and father—honor and reverence go well together. The son does not fear his kind father and his gentle mother, and the Torah has never commanded us to fear our parents. Its emphasis is on reverence interwoven with enlightened, appropriate love. In this case, both reverence and love are rooted in gratitude. Similarly, our love and awe of God grow out of the experience of the connection between the universe and God. From this experiential awareness, the fiery attachment of love bursts forth, as well as the retreat of awe before His Majesty. (From There Shall You Seek, p. 67)

and you shall observe My Sabbaths. The Zohar (Parashas Terumah) indicates that the plural shabbos signifies two Sabbaths, Shabbos dele’ela (the supernal Sabbath) and Shabbos dele’tata (the earthly Sabbath).

When Adam ate the forbidden fruit, God cursed him (Gen. 3:17-19). However, because God also blessed the Sabbath, Adam’s curse becomes nullified when Shabbos arrives.

Adam’s curse contains four components. The first component is hard labor: With the sweat of your face shall you eat bread (Gen. 3:19). The second is endless, uninterrupted, pointless work—amal, the type of work mentioned in Ecclesiastes (2:11): Then I turned [to look] at all my deeds that my hands had wrought and upon the toil [amal] that I had toiled to do, and behold everything is vanity and frustration, and there is no profit under the sun. The third component of the curse is itzavon (Gen. 3:17), the restlessness, fear and suffering that characterize competitive society. A person in need of a livelihood is
nor shall you make molten deities for yourselves. I am the Lord, your God. 5 When you slaughter a peace offering to the Lord, you shall slaughter it for your acceptance. 6 It may be eaten on the day you slaughter it and on the morrow, but anything left over until the third day, shall be burned in fire. 7 And if it would be eaten on the third day, it is abominable; * it shall not be accepted.

the world unites with the Creator, recreating the wholeness of Creation as on the original Friday, a wholeness that will be replicated in the World to Come. This is why our Sages indicate that Shabbos is a foretaste of the World to Come.

In the Friday night prayers, we ask God to spread His shukah shalom, His shelter of peace, over us. All evil forces depart, and a shelter of rest and peace descends from heaven and rests on earth. The world will be free of suffering, and there will no longer be death. This is the eschatological Shabbos, the Shabbos dele‘ila. (Darosh Darash Yosef, pp. 249-252, Besh Yirzah, Vol. 40, p. 288)

The Greek identified religious action with the cultic gesture, and ethos was restricted to soci-religious action. Religious action was generally considered as an activity that was restricted to soci-religious activity and was not allowed to occur outside the environment of the Church.

I once read a short report by a German journalist about Franco. He portrayed Franco as a sincere devout Catholic, a religious person who actually enjoyed religious services. He went to Church every Sunday, prostrated himself on the floor, banged his forehead against the cold stones of the Church and whispered, “Not my will, but Thy will, shall be done.” However, as soon as he emerged out of the shadows of the Church, from the semi-darkness into the sunlight, he signed a death sentence for a young girl who was caught reading illegal literature.

Moral schizophrenia was resented by Yahadus. We must not separate the theological faith premise from the moral normative system.

There is danger that American piety is oblivious of the moral norm. Morality cannot be separated from faith; the worship of God cannot be separated from morality. (Noraos Harav, Vol. 5, pp. 28-31)

Although pigul is invalid in the case of any sacrifice, the Torah here mentions the invalidation of pigul specifically in regard to shelamim. Shelamim is a peace offering, a voluntary sacrifice given to express thanks to God. The Midrash on the verse for your voice is pleasant and your appearance is comely (Song 2:14) interprets the pleasant voice in the verse as referring to song, while the comely appearance refers to the sacrifices. Both song and sacrifices are expressions of joy. This is the underlying meaning of the phrase וַאֲרֵי תִּכְּסוּן נִכְסַת קוּדְשַׁיָּא (verse 5): the offering of the shelamim is a reflection of one’s desire to express his love for God. However, once the decision is made to offer this sacrifice, it must be done in accordance with strict guidelines. The shelamim is a voluntary offering, but how it is to be offered is not in the province of the person making the offering. (Morah, 1974)

always frightened that someone will take his possessions away him. The Marxist concept of the class struggle reflects this anxiety. The fourth component of the curse is our mortality—for dust you are and to dust you shall return (Gen. 3:19). Adam’s curse was to suffer continuous, exhausting, pointless labor that is by nature unproductive, resulting in conflict and ultimately death.

The blessing of Shabbos relieves man from all four components of this curse. Work is dignified and ennobling as long as one knows when to stop. And God completed on the seventh day His work (Gen. 2:2). The Torah tells us that God worked and then stopped, so that we may imitate Him. On Shabbos, we are released from the monotony, jealousy and rancor that are often a part of mundane pursuits.

Endless work estranges people from their families. The Torah commands that the family rest together. Ties between parents and children are renewed on Shabbos. All members of the family are released from the curse of competition and alienation from their neighbors. The Talmud tells us of the Sambaton River, which is so turbulent and dangerous during the week that no one can cross it, but becomes calm every Shabbos (Sanhedrin 65b). This is a reflection of Shabbos deletata.

The fourth component of the curse, the curse of death, is addressed in Shabbos dele‘ila, alluded to in the final Mishnah in Tamid: “A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day” (Ps. 92:1): [meaning] a psalm, a song for the time to come, for the day which will be entirely Sabbath and rest for life everlasting.

Shabbos itself is associated with the World to Come, based on the narrative in Genesis: And God saw all that He had made, and behold it was very good (Gen. 1:31). On the sixth day of creation the verse states that the world was “very good,” a world of complete unity and totality, as implied by the word טו. The world was in a state of wholeness and perfection. After the sin of the Tree of Knowledge, however, the world was no longer whole, divided into disparate entities of good and evil, darkness and light. After the sin, the world reverted to being merely “good” as after the first five days of creation, as opposed to “very good” as recorded for the sixth day. On Shabbos, however,
it shall not be accepted. And whoever eats it shall bear his sin, because he has profaned what is holy to the Lord, and that person shall be cut off from his people. 9 When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not fully reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you collect the [fallen] individual grapes of your vineyard, you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am the Lord, your God. 11 You shall not steal. You shall not deny falsely. You shall not lie, one man to his fellow.

The punishment of lashes for which one must sacrifice his life rather than violate is tantamount to violating the cardinal sins for which one must sacrifice his life rather than violate is tantamount to violating the cardinal sins themselves. (Sharei Harav - Sanhedrin, pp. 74-75)

to one who is physically blind, but to one who is intellectually or morally “blind” or “blinded” by strong emotions.

What if one actually were to place a rock in the path of one who cannot see? Would he be in violation of this prohibition? One can infer from the words of Sefer Hachinuch (Mitzvah 232) that this would not be the case. Sefer Hachinuch states that violation of this prohibition does not carry the punishment of lashes because there is no physical action associated with it. Obviously, actually placing a stone in front of someone who cannot see constitutes an action. Apparently Sefer Hachinuch considers only the interpretation of ריקש as normative, and not its literal meaning.

This idea actually conflicts with the maxim in mikra yotzei midas peshufo, one cannot ignore the literal meaning of a verse (Shabbos 62b). How can Sefer Hachinuch completely ignore the literal meaning of this phrase?

It appears that placing a stone in front of a blind person is such a cruel, grotesque act that the Torah did not even think it worthy of mention. For a Jew to act with such evil intent would cause us to question his very Jewishness (see Bamidbar Rabbah, Parashas Naso, 8). Because the Torah is addressing the Jewish people exclusively, mentioning such a prohibition explicitly was unnecessary.

According to a passage in Sanhedrin 7a, the verse one who praises a compromiser insults God (Ps. 10:3) refers to Aaron. The Gemara relates that Aaron saw Hur slaughtered when he attempted to stop the people from making the Golden Calf. Aaron thought to himself that if he also refused to allow them to build the Calf, the people would murder him as well, and their sin would never be forgiven. Aaron reckoned that it was better that they make the Calf, with the possibility that God would forgive the sin, rather than kill him, with no such possibility of forgiveness.

The application of the phrase from Psalms to this incident clearly indicates that Aaron did not act appropriately—he should have allowed himself to be killed rather than acquiesce to the people's request. By extension, it can be inferred that one must give up his life rather than violate the prohibition of ריקש in the case of idol worship. In fact, there is a difference of opinion between Baal Hamaor and Nachmanides whether one must give up his life rather than violate ריקש in such a case, and this passage in the Gemara supports the opinion of Baal Hamaor that one should give up his life. One can also infer that the violation of ריקש in the case of all three cardinal sins for which one must sacrifice his life rather than violate is tantamount to violating the cardinal sins themselves. (Sharei Harav - Sanhedrin, pp. 74-75)
15 You shall commit no injustice in judgment; you shall not favor a poor person or respect a great man;* you shall judge your fellow with righteousness.  
16 You shall not go around as a gossipsmonger amidst your people. You shall not stand by [the shedding off] your fellow’s blood. * I am the Lord.  
17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow,* but you shall not bear a sin on his account.

think that we might have been able to save many. There is no doubt, however, that had we properly grieved over the afflictions of our brothers, had we raised our voices and forcefully demanded that Roosevelt issue a sharp protest-warning, backed by concrete actions, we could have substantially slowed the process of mass murder. We were witnesses to the greatest and most terrible tragedy in our history—and we were silent.

I do not wish to enter here into a discussion of details. This is a very sad and disturbing chapter in our history. But we all sinned by our silence in the face of the murder of millions. Have we not

It was because Job did not possess the sense of its burdens, as the verse states, although the people shared historical circumstances and shared suffering, and the obligation of shared action that follows therefrom. We did not suf-

We are not to regard our weapon of prayer lightly, nor our mitzvah of prayer carelessly. They are not optional, but obligatory. (Halachic Positions, Vol 2, pp. 43-46; see commentary on Chumash Mesoros Harav - Sefer Bereishis, pp. 380-381)

* You shall surely rebuke your fellow. The Gemara in Yevamos 65b states, just as it is a mitzvah for one to provide proof if the proof is heeded, so too is it a mitzvah not to re-prove if the proof is not to be heeded. The wording of this statement suggests that, depending on the
You shall neither take revenge from nor bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. You shall observe My statutes: You shall not crossbreed your livestock with different species. You shall not sow your field with a mixture of seeds, and a garment which has a mixture of shaatnez shall not come upon you. You shall not sow your field with a mixture of seeds, and a garment which has a mixture of shaatnez shall not come upon you.

The Torah sees kilayim as a Biblical injunction. Although the act of comforting mourners is indeed a rabbinic, but there is an inner fulfillment, a mitzvos bincic, that is to take a sinner and make him righteous. The Gemara in Beitzah 30a indicates that it is preferable for one to sin inadvertently than willfully, because an inadvertent sinner is on some level a righteous individual. If we give reproof knowing that the person will continue his sin, we transform him in a sense from a righteous to a sinful person. Thus, maintain one’s silence at the appropriate time is an integral part of this mitzvah. (Mesorah, Vol. 8, p. 55; Nefesh Harav, p. 294)

The purpose of this mitzvah is to take a sinner and make him righteous. The Gemara in Beitzah 30a indicates that it is preferable for one to sin inadvertently than willfully, because an inadvertent sinner is on some level a righteous individual. If we give reproof knowing that the person will continue his sin, we transform him in a sense from a righteous to a sinful person. Thus, maintaining one’s silence at the appropriate time is an integral part of this mitzvah.

circumstances, through silence, one can fulfill this mitzvah just as it can be fulfilled by actual reproof.

You shall shall love your neighbor as yourself. This verse, which Rabbi Akiva declared to be a cardinal precept of the Torah, which made us realize that we should love our fellow man. This social responsiveness is derived from one’s healthy self-regard, namely, as [you love] yourself. Individual importance is emphasized, but for goals beyond self-indulgence; personal fulfillment is valued, but for sublime purposes.

This may explain why the Sheva Berachos relate the personal happiness of the groom and bride to the Messianic fulfillment. Soon, O Lord our God, may there be heard in the cities of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem a sound of gladness, a sound of joy, the sound of the bridegroom and the sound of the bride. May your people be enabled to enjoy this joyous celebration. (Based on Jer. 33:10-11)

We find a similar correlation in Isaiah 62:5. As the bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so shall God rejoice over thee. As the bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so shall God rejoice over thee. The purpose of this mitzvah is to take a sinner and make him righteous. The Gemara in Beitzah 30a indicates that it is preferable for one to sin inadvertently than willfully, because an inadvertent sinner is on some level a righteous individual. If we give reproof knowing that the person will continue his sin, we transform him in a sense from a righteous to a sinful person. Thus, maintain one’s silence at the appropriate time is an integral part of this mitzvah.

You shall not crossbreed your livestock with different species. You shall not sow your field with a mixture of seeds. Nachmanides, in his commentary on this verse, attributes the prohibition against mixing species (kilayim) to the quality of group-belonging with which God endowed plants and animals at the birth of organic life. There is no doubt that he has hit upon the raison d’etre of the prohibition: the Torah looks askance at artificial changing of the group-traits. We find kilayim applicable to plant and animal alike. Unnatural mating for the purpose of developing an organic hybrid culture was prohibited. The Torah sees in such an act an attempt on man’s part to interfere with the structural and functional patterns that are inherent in organic systems and to bring about unnecessary mutations of forms. (The Emergence of Ethical Man, pp. 23-26)
they shall not be put to death, because she had not been [completely] freed. 21 He shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord, to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, a guilt offering ram. 22 And the kohen shall effect atonement for him with the guilt offering ram, before the Lord, for the sin that he had committed, and he shall be forgiven for the sin that he had committed.

23 When you come to the Land and you plant any food tree, *you shall surely block its fruit [from use]; it shall be blocked from you [from use] for three years, not to be eaten. 24 And in the fourth year, all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the Lord. * 25 And in the fifth year, you may eat its fruit; [do this, in order] to increase its produce for you. I am the Lord, your God.

Later, after the Exodus, they acquired *kinyan haguf, full ownership. Therefore, before the Exodus they had no right to develop an agricultural economy; to dig, to build, to destroy, to change the structure of the land. All they possessed was the right to enjoy the fruit, and that is exactly what the pastoral community did. It did not exploit the land as would an agricultural society. It only took whatever the land offered.

As they left Egypt, the Torah began to prepare the Israelites for the new challenge they were facing. The change from shepherders into farmers, the transformation of a simple pastoral society into a relatively complex agricultural society. Many actions in the Pentateuch are concerned with this change. (Festival of Freedom, pp. 127-128)

~ And in the fourth year, all its fruit shall be holy, a praise to the Lord. Based on the plural form פירות, Rabbi Akiva extends the scope of this verse, deriving the rule that one must praise God both before and after eating all food through recitation of blessings. Rabbi Akiva thus bases the obligation to make a berachah on the necessity to praise God for the food. On the other hand, the Rabbis' understanding of the role of berachah is based on a passage in Berachos 35a: The Rabbis have learned: It is prohibited for a person to derive pleasure from this world without reciting a berachah, and anyone who indeed derives such benefit without a berachah has violated the prohibition of me'ilah. Rabbi Levi asked: One verse states, To the Lord is the world and its inhabitants (Ps. 115:1), and [an apparently conflicting verse] states, The heavens are heavens of the Lord, but the earth He gave to the children of men (Ps. 115:16). There is no conflict; one [verse refers to partaking] before a berachah [is made], while the second [refers to partaking] after a berachah [is made].

The entire world is consecrated to God, or heked. If one derives pleasure from this world without reciting a berachah, he has violated the prohibition of partaking of heked, that is, the violation of me'ilah. Note that the transgression is not that of stealing, the infractions are the more severe sin of me'ilah.

Based on Rabbi Akiva's assertion, it would seem that not only does one avoid the me'ilah infraction by reciting a berachah, he also fulfills an obligation to praise God for the food. There could be a practical halachic implication to whether a berachah recitation merely obviates the me'ilah infraction if or if there is a fulfillment (kiyum) of praise inherent in the obligation as well. According to the former view, if one has already eaten without a berachah, there would be no point to later reciting the berachah. me'ilah would already have taken place. If, however, in the recitation of berachos there is a concomitant kiyum of praise to God, then there may indeed still be reason to recite a belated berachah; the requirement to praise would not exhaust itself upon consumption.

(Reshimos Shuirim – Maseches Berachos, pp. 400-401)
 prayer should be close to my bed—in other words, he made sure to pray immediately after arising. Kesef Mishneh notes that according to Rashi, Abba Benjamin refrained not only from doing work before he had prayed, but also from learning Torah as well. Maimonides, however, seems to disagree, and prohibits only work before prayer, but not Torah study. Tosafos likewise disagree with Rashi and maintain that it is permitted to study Torah before praying.

The dispute between Maimonides and Tosafos, on the one hand, and Rashi, on the other, seems to be about how to define the prohibition of ma’aseh berachos. According to Maimonides and Tosafos, secular activities are prohibited before prayer, but Torah study, which is a spiritual endeavor, is permitted. According to Rashi, however, not only secular activities, but even spiritual endeavors are forbidden before one acknowledges God through prayer. (Rishimos Shuirim – Maaseh Berachos, pp. 69-70)

This verse is used specifically to prohibit eating prior to praying Shacharis, but is not applied to eating before Minchah. Shacharis is a prayer for the necessities of life, and is thus a prayer for one’s own “blood.” A major theme in the Shacharis prayer is the indebtedness of man to God for his very existence, for the mere fact that he regains consciousness in the morning and finds that his five senses, his body and his mind function. This type of thanksgiving is best expressed in the morning meditation Elohai Neshamah. In contrast, in the prayer of Minchah, we request that whatever is gracious and beautiful in our lives should continue. This is a prayer that asks for more than basic human needs; it is a prayer for the finer things in life, as represented by the wine that was part of the Minchah offering. The Gemara thus states that one should always be vigilant in regard to the Minchah prayer (Berachos 6b). It is a thanksgiving prayer for everything that one has, and a petition for the good to continue. (Rishimos Shuirim – Maaseh Berachos, pp. 559-560, Lecture on Synagogue and Prayer, 1969)

You shall not eat over the blood. Among the many halachos derived from this verse, the Gemara in Berachos 10b interprets it to mean that one should not eat before praying for his own blood (that is, his life). Maimonides writes (Hilchos Tefillah 6:4) that it is prohibited to eat anything or to do any work after dawn without having prayed Shacharis. As a source, Kesef Mishneh cites the statement of Abba Benjamin (Berachos 5a): All my life, I took great pains...
and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. * I am the Lord, your God. 35 You shall not commit a perversion of justice with measures, weights, or liquid measures. 36 You shall have true scales, true weights, a true ephah, and a true hin. I am the Lord, your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt. 37 You shall observe all My statutes and all My ordinances, and fulfill them. * I am the Lord.

The difference between merachem and rachaman is that merachem describes an act, not a disposition. Whoever engages in loving or commiseration is called merachem, no matter how kind or merciful he is by nature. Rachaman describes not an action, but a trait, a temper, a bent in one's character, a disposition. The rachaman cannot help but to love. Even when he wants to be strict and rigid, he cannot do it, since his very personality is overflowing with love. Rachamanus means that love, and only love, is what one ought to give to people.

The fact that in Egypt we were exposed to all kinds of chicanery, that we were treated there like objects and not people, the fact that later in Persia we were sold by the king to the prime minister for slaughter and annihilation, engendered in us a sensitivity and emotional tenderness not to be found in anyone else. The Jew is saturated with compassion and mercy. We all know that love, and only love, is what one ought to give to people.

Without the experience of Egypt and Persia, we would have remained emotionally coarse and tough. That is the reason for the frequent mention of the Exodus whenever the Torah speaks of our duty to respect the feelings of others, particularly the feelings of the defenseless, helpless, and lone-

For example, the State of Israel was a central experience that underlies the very morality of the Jew. The unique morality of the Jew is rooted in a very sensitive, exceptionally tender and warm approach to man. The Torah is describes an act, not a dis-

This casts a light upon our mysterious historical destiny. Our nation was born in the crucible of exile, bondage, and suffering. We emerged as a people from the sand dunes of the Sinai Desert, where we wandered forty years. Why could we not rise as a people in our own land, in prosperity and abundance? The answer is simple. If our morality was to be one of kindness and mercy, it could not have been formulated for people who knew not what suffering is. Only people in exile could understand and appreciate a morality of kindness. Therefore, galus was a central experience in the life of our patriarchs and it is still a major experience in our lives. (Abraham's Journey, p. 197)

Egypt is a central experience that underlies the very morality of the Jew. The unique morality of the Jew is rooted in a very sensitive, exceptionally tender and warm approach to man. The Torah is concerned with kovod habayis, human dignity. The latter must not be denied. It must not be denied to the weak and the helpless. Sensitivity and compassion are the central axis of our moral experience. To hurt the feelings of a person by uttering some innocuous remark is a severe transgression.

We have two terms for kindness—mercy and compassion, rachamin and rachamnu. The term rachamin is derived from the verb rachen, which basically means to love. A merachem is one who sympathizes. Rachmanus is derived from rachamam. The latter is an adjectival noun meaning one who is compassionate.
And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, 2 And to the children of Israel, thou shalt say: Any man of the children of Israel or of the strangers who sojourn among Israel, who gives any of his offspring to Molech, shall surely be put to death; the people of the land shall smite him with stones. 3 And I will set My attention upon that man, and I will cut him off from amongst his people, because he gave of his offspring to Molech in order to defile My holy ones and to profane My holy Name. 4 But if the people of the land ignore that man when he gives of his offspring to Molech, not putting him to death 5 I will set My attention upon that man, and upon his family, and I will cut him off, and all who stray after him to stray after Molech, from amidst their people. 6 And the person who turns to Ov or Yid’oni, to stray after them I will set My attention upon that person, and I will cut him off from amidst his people. 7 You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy,* for I am the Lord, your God. 8 And you shall observe My statutes and fulfill them. I am the Lord, Who sanctifies you. 9 For any man who curses his father or his mother; his blood is upon himself. 10 And a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, committing adultery with the wife of his fellow the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. 11 And a man who lies* with his father’s wife has uncovered his father’s nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon themselves. 12 And a man who lies with a moist virgin who is a virgin; and finds its fulfillment in the observance of the laws regulating human biological existence, such as the laws concerning forbidden sexual relations, forbidden foods, and similar precepts. And it was not for naught that Maimonides included these prohibitions in his Book of Holiness. (Halachic Man, pp. 46-47)

You shall sanctify yourselves and be holy. An individual does not become holy through mystical adhesion to the absolute, nor through a boundless, all-embracing ecstasy, but rather through his whole biological life, through his animal actions, and through actualizing the halachah in the empirical world. Holiness consists of a life ordered and in accordance with halachah and finds its fulfillment in the observance of the laws regulating human biological existence, such as the laws concerning forbidden sexual relations, forbidden foods, and similar precepts. And it was not for naught that Maimonides included these prohibitions in his Book of Holiness. (Halachic Man, pp. 46-47)

The adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. And a man who lies. The Torah presents the prohibition of forbidden sexual relations in the parashah of Acharei Mos, and presents the punishments for these infractions in Kedoshim. Maimonides is of the opinion that not only are the actual sexual relationships mentioned in the Torah forbidden, but manifestations of physical closeness such as embracing and kissing are also prohibited by the Torah. Maimonides derived these added prohibitions from the phrase found in Acharei Mos (18:6): No man shall come near... to uncover [their] nakedness. However, the punishments mentioned in Kedoshim apply only to the forbidden sexual relationships, where the Torah uses variants of the term בֵּן.
with his daughter in law both of them shall surely be put to death; they have committed a depriv- aty, their blood is upon themselves. 13 And a man who lies with a male as one would with a woman* both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon themselves. 14 And a man who takes a woman and her mother it is evil counsel. They shall burn him and them in fire, and there shall be no evil counsel in your midst. 15 And a man who lies with an animal, shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. 16 And a woman who comes close to any animal so that it will mate with her you shall kill the woman and the animal;* they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon themselves. 17 And a man who takes his sister , whether his father’s daughter or his mother’s daughter, and he sees her nakedness, and she sees his nakedness it is chesed,* (bestiality and homosexuality) apply to non-Jews as well and form part of a universal religion that is based upon the concept of man and personality. (The Emergence of Ethical Man, p. 27)

you shall kill the woman and the animal. Through the juxtaposition of the words קָדָשִׁים and הַבְּהֵמָה, the Gemara in Sanhedrin 15a derives the rule that just as the capital punishment for the woman who practices bestiality is handed down by a court of twenty-three judges, so too is the death sentence for the animal. The very next line in Sanhedrin 15a derives from the juxtaposition in the verse regarding a bull that kills a man, the bull shall be stoned, and also its owner shall be put to death (Ex. 21:29), that the death sentence of the bull is handed down by a court of twenty-three, just as a death sentence for its owner. Why is this rule regarding the destructive ox not also derived from the juxtaposition in our verse?

In the case of bestiality, it is the human act which condemns the animal. For this reason, one might think, the animal is sentenced by the same type of court as the person involved. In the case of the goring bull, when the bull is sentenced for its own act of gore, one might think that the bull could be sentenced by a lesser court. To obviate such an assumption, a separate derashah is used in the latter case. (Shiurei Harav - Sanhedrin, pp. 206-207)

Rashi (19:2) notes that wherever we find a barrier to illicit sexual relationships, we also find chesed. This is the reason we read the section regarding illicit sexual relationships during Mincha of Yom Kippur. The initial portion of Parashas Acharei Mos, which is read during Shacharis, details the Yom Kippur Temple service, which is the process through which kedushah is restored to the congregation of Israel. The other reading on Yom Kippur relates to kedushah that can be attained by each and every Jew through refraining from forbidden sexual relationships. (Rabbi Joshua Rapps Parashah Series)

*Also termed chesed—lovingkindness—does not convey the gist of the idea. What is in- triguing and strange is the fact that in Hebrew, the word chesed is applied in an antithetical manner, semantically denoting two mutually exclusive extremes. On the one hand, chesed signifies the ideal ethical deed, bordering on the superhuman; on the other hand, it also has the connotation of the most sordid and base behavior. It is needless, of course, to introduce passages from the Bible in which chesed is used in the positive sense; the Bible abounds in them. Yet, the crime of incest is also termed chesed by the Bible.

What does this strange usage of chesed indicate? The answer was given by Maimonides in the Guide for the Perplexed (III 53): In our commentary to the Ethics of the Fathers, we have explained the expression chesed as denoting an excess [in some quality]. It is especially used of extraordinary kindness. Chesed is practiced in two ways: first, we show kindness to those who have no claim whatsoever upon it; second, we are kind to those to whom it is due, but in a greater measure than is due to them. In the Bible, the term chesed occurs mostly in the sense of showing kindness to those who have no claim to it whatsoever. For this reason, the term chesed is employed to express the good bestowed upon us by God—I will mention the
and they shall be cut off before the eyes of the members of their people; he uncovered his sister’s nakedness; he shall bear his sin. 18 And a man who lies with a woman who has a flow, and he uncovers her nakedness he has bared her fountain, and she has uncovered the fountain of her blood. Both of them shall be cut off from the midst of their people. 19 And you shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother’s sister or your father’s sister, for he would be baring his close relative; they shall bear their sin. 20 And a man who lies with his aunt has uncovered his uncle’s nakedness; they shall bear their transgression; they shall die childless.* 21 And a man who takes his brother’s wife it is a repulsive act; he has uncovered his brother’s nakedness; they shall be childless.

Chapter Four [of the Eight Chapters which preface the commentary to the Ethics of the Fathers], and his deeds are greater than his wisdom. Therefore he is called a chesed. Also in the world is built by the call of ethical duty, he acts in accordance with the norm of chesed—limless depravity and evil. (Out of the Whirlwind, pp. 208-209)

*they shall die childless. The word נאום ריחי רוז is not mean alone, but rather suggests an existential loneliness. One is alone when he is cut off from social contact, the way a metzora is isolated from contact with others (13:46). After the destruction of the Temple, all Jerusalem’s inhabitants were expelled and the city was left desolate and alone. O how has the city that was once so populous remained alone! She has become like a widow! (Lam. 1:1). Loneliness, on the other hand, suggests that a person is cut off from his connection to the coming generations. Abraham asked (Gen. 15:2): O Lord God, what will You give me, since I am going ריא? Abraham was not suggesting that he was alone in the sense that he had no friends—but he was lonely because he had no offspring. Loneliness differs fundamentally from aloneness; it occurs when one is detached from the future. A person may be satisfied in his day-to-day life, but can feel loneliness in the sense of feeling adrift. The fear of loneliness forces us to cleave to our parents even after their death. This fear lies behind the instinct to build a house, to raise children. A person wishes to cleave to the cycle of generations; he is reborn with the birth of his own children and lives with them, through them, and for them. (Yomei Zikaron, p. 188)

chesed of the Lord” (Is. 63:7). On this account, the very act of creation is an act of God’s chesed—“The world is built by chesed” (Ps. 89:3); that is, the building of the universe is an act of chesed. Also in the enumeration of God’s attributes, Scripture says, “And abundant in chesed and truth” (Ex. 34:6).

In his commentary to the Ethics of the Fathers (Avos 5:6), Maimonides says as follows: The chasid is the wise man who has inclined somewhat to an extreme in his ethical attributes, as we have explained in

and for them. (Yomei Zikaron, p. 188)
And you shall distinguish between clean animals and unclean ones, and between unclean birds and clean ones; thus you shall not make yourselves disgusting through [unclean] animals and birds and any [creature] which crawls on the earth, that I have distinguished for you to render unclean.

And a man or a woman who has [the sorcery of] Ov or Yid'oni, shall surely be put to death; they shall pelt them with stones; their blood is upon themselves.

And you shall be holy to Me, for I, the Lord, am holy, and I have distinguished you from the peoples, to be Mine. And a man or a woman who has [the sorcery of] Ov or Yid'oni, shall surely be put to death; they shall pelt them with stones; their blood is upon themselves.