



# Carnegie Shul Chatter

April 27, 2023



## And yet...

This week, from Tuesday evening until Wednesday evening, Israel celebrated the seventy-fifth anniversary of its creation as an independent state.

Israel at 75 — so much to celebrate. And yet...

And yet Israel is again in a state of turmoil. After having new elections seemingly every year for the last five years or so, Israel now has perhaps the most conservative government in its history, and the divide between liberals and conservatives, between the religious and the secular, is now greater than ever.

Weekly protests against the government and its desire to reform the judiciary are bringing thousands into the streets.

Tensions between Israel and the Palestinians continue to fester near the boiling point.

Conflict over Gaza, the Temple Mount, and west bank settlements continue to cause clashes, and rocket fire now comes from Lebanon and Syria as well as Gaza.

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## Shabbat Services

Join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19, or attend virtually. Watch your email for a Zoom link or contact Rosalyn Hoffman at [rjlynman@yahoo.com](mailto:rjlynman@yahoo.com).

The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found at [https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading\\_cdo/aid/2495866/jewish/Acharei-Kedoshim-Torah-Reading.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2495866/jewish/Acharei-Kedoshim-Torah-Reading.htm)

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Will there be civil war? Will there be war with the Palestinians? Will Israel survive?

This week's parshah stresses that we are to be a holy people. Should Israel, our promised land, be a holy land as the Haredi desire, or should it be secular?

The haftorah promises, "And I will return the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall rebuild desolate cities and inhabit [them], and they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their produce. And I will plant them on their land, and they shall no longer be uprooted from upon their land, that I have given them, said the L-rd your G-d."



Israel has indeed rebuilt desolate cities, planted vineyards, gardens, and produce in deserts that had never previously yielded such crops. It has produced incredible scientific, technological, and medical advances. It has been America's best friend and ally. When disasters occur anywhere in the world, Israel is always there to lend a helping hand.

And yet.

Let us all pray for the welfare of the State of Israel, as we do every Shabbos. Let us pray that Israel overcomes both its internal and external strife. And let us pray for the coming of Moshiach so that our promised land will indeed be a Holy Land and we will be the holy people that God has instructed us to be.

# Acharei-Kedoshim in a Nutshell

**Leviticus 16:1–20:27**

*From Chabad.org*

The name of the Parshah, "Acharei Mot," means "after the death of" and it is found in Leviticus 16:1. The name of the Parshah, "Kedoshim," means "holy [ones]" and it is found in Leviticus 19:2.



Following the deaths of Nadav and Avihu, G-d warns against unauthorized entry "into the holy." Only one person, the kohen gadol ("high priest"), may, but once a year, on Yom Kippur, enter the innermost chamber in the Sanctuary to offer the sacred ketoret to G-d.

Another feature of the Day of Atonement service is the casting of lots over two goats, to determine which should be offered to G-d and which should be dispatched to carry off the sins

of Israel to the wilderness.

The Parshah of Acharei also warns against bringing korbanot (animal or meal offerings) anywhere but in the Holy Temple, forbids the consumption of blood, and details the laws prohibiting incest and other deviant sexual relations.

The Parshah of Kedoshim begins with the statement: “You shall be holy, for I, the L-rd your G-d, am holy.” This is followed by dozens of mitzvot (divine commandments) through which the Jew sanctifies him- or herself and relates to the holiness of G-d.

These include: the prohibition against idolatry, the mitzvah of charity, the principle of equality before the law, Shabbat, sexual morality, honesty in business, honor and awe of one’s parents, and the sacredness of life.

Also in Kedoshim is the dictum which the great sage Rabbi Akiva called a cardinal principle of Torah, and of which Hillel said, “This is the entire Torah, the rest is commentary” — “Love your fellow as yourself.”



## Haftorah in a Nutshell

### Amos 9:7-15.

This week’s haftorah foretells the exiles and punishments that will befall the Jews because they strayed after the ways of the heathens — behavior that this week’s Torah reading proscribes.

The prophet Amos delivers G-d’s message, reminding the people of G-d’s kindness to them — taking them out of Egypt and singling them out as His chosen nation. Nevertheless, because of their misdeeds, G-d will destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel; but will not completely destroy the house of Jacob. The Jews will be scattered amongst the nations, but eventually they will return to their land — on the day of the redemption. G-d will then reinstall the House of David to its former glory and there shall be peace and abundance upon the land.



The haftorah ends with G-d’s promise: “And I will return the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall rebuild desolate cities and inhabit [them], and they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine, and they shall make gardens and eat their produce. And I will plant them on their land, and they shall no longer be uprooted from upon their land, that I have given them, said the L-rd your G-d.”

# Haftorah Commentary

## Parshas Acharei Mos

*By Rabbi Dovid Siegel*



This week's haftorah presents the Jewish nation in a most unique context. In his last words of prophecy the prophet Amos describes the Jewish people in a very peculiar manner. He says in the name of Hashem, "Aren't you likened to the Kushites, to be Mine?" (9:7)

Who are Kushites and in what way are the Jewish people compared to them? Chazal in the Yalkut Shimoni (157) interpret the term Kushites to refer to the Ethiopian community whose skin color is distinctly different than all other nations. This physical distinction renders it virtually impossible

for the Kushites to intermingle with anyone without maintaining their national identity.

Chazal continue that in this same manner the Jewish people are distinctly different than all other nations. The moral and ethical code of the observant Jewish people inhibits them from intermingling with the nations of the world. The drastic skin color contrast of the Ethiopians serves as a striking analogy to the drastic ethical contrast between the Jewish people and all other nations.

The prophet continues and reminds the Jewish people that it is this distinct ethical conduct which renders them Hashem's chosen people. After likening the Jewish people to the Kushites, the prophet completes his analogy with the profound words, "to be Mine". The Metzudos Dovid (9:7) explains this to mean that we are Hashem's people exclusively because of our distinguished ethical conduct. He adds that we will remain Hashem's special nation as long as we possess elevated ethical standards. The prophet then draws our attention to our earliest origins and says, "Didn't Hashem bring you up from the land of Egypt?"

Malbim explains that these words allude to the distinguished qualities of the Jewish people in whose merit they were liberated from Egypt. Although they existed for two hundred years in the corrupt and immoral Egyptian environment they remained a distinct and distinguished entity. Their moral code of dress and speech reflected their pure attitudes about life which made intermingling with the Egyptians a virtual impossibility. For the most part, their Jewish values were not corrupted or distorted, which allowed the Jews to remain distinguished and elevated.

The prophet concludes our haftorah with this theme and promises our ultimate redemption from our extended exile. Amos says, "On that day I will establish the kingdom of Dovid.... so that you, upon whom My name rests, will inherit Edom and all nations." (9:11,12)

Our identity with Hashem as a nation upon whom His name rests, will play a significant role

in our final redemption. The Jewish people will inherit their archenemy Edom solely because of their identity with Hashem. Our elevated standards of morality will truly earn us the title of His people and in this merit we will be finally liberated from the world's corrupt influence and environment.

This special lesson reflects the essence of this week's parsha, Kedoshim, which embodies Hashem's lofty call to us for spiritual elevation.

The Torah begins and says, "Be holy for I, Hashem, am Holy." (Vayikra 19:2) Nachmanides shares with us his classic insight into this mitzva.

"Be holy", says the Ramban, "refers to the introduction of sanctity and spirituality into every dimension of our lives." Even our physical and mundane activities should be directed towards Hashem. We are forbidden to excessively indulge in worldly pleasures and are expected to limit our passions and pleasures to productive and accomplishing acts. Morality and spirituality should encompass our entire being and our every action should ultimately become the service of Hashem. This philosophy is diametrically opposed to that of the nations of the world. To them physical pleasure and enjoyment have no restrictions or limitations and religion does not govern their passions or cravings. As said, our standards of morality are truly unique and it is this factor that elevates us and distinguishes us from amongst the nations of the world.

The parsha concludes with this message and says, "And you shall be holy unto Me for I am holy and I have separated you from the nations to be Mine." As stated, we are Hashem's people because of our holiness — elevated moral and ethical standards — which truly separate us from the nations of the world. And in this merit we will soon experience our final redemption and be a nation unto Him, privileged to remain in His presence for eternity.

## Yahrtzeits

*This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:*

**Pauline Kaiser**

**Harry Levine**

**Bernard Bales**

**Hirshel Peresman**

*May their memories be for a blessing.*

## Donations

*The Carnegie Shul is most grateful for the following recent donation:*

**Paul Lederstein**

*In Memory of Hyman Lederstein*