

You Should  
Be Holy, Because  
**I YOUR G-D  
AM HOLY**

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## YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Acharei Mos

Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky

**Aaron as the Original Intention of Creation on the Terrestrial**

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**The Scenario When Satan is Silenced**

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**The Sons of Aaron Overstepped Their Bounds**

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**The 2 Sin Offerings Brought by the Kohen Gadol**

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## YadAvNow.com Weekly Video Series: Acharei Mos

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### Orientation for Spiritual Ascension

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1. There is a positive Commandment to be holy.
2. Rashi: Separating oneself from forbidden sexual relationships causes sanctity.
3. Ramban: Sanctity-weaning oneself from what is permitted.
4. Hedonism: The antithesis of holiness.
5. G-d wants the Jew to be holy because He is holy.
6. G-d has no relevance to the material; The Jew engages in the material at a minimum.
7. The physicality of man is not inclined to the spiritual.
8. The Torah first delineates the kosher & non-kosher species, and then what is an abomination
9. First sanctify the vessel (the body) to function in spiritual arena (performing Mitzvos).
10. Psalms: The prerequisite to wisdom is fear of G-d.
11. Submitting to the will of G-d, one actualizes a relationship with G-d through Torah and Mitzvos.

### Establishing a Benchmark of Absolute Truth

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1. A Jew is not permitted to turn towards idolatry.
2. Rambam: It is not only forbidden to read about the rituals of idolatry, one is not permitted to gaze upon an idol.
3. Any thought that may cause one to reject any of the fundamentals of Torah is forbidden.
4. Man's intellect is limited; he cannot grasp truth on an absolute level.
5. Permitted to veer after the reflections of his heart he would destroy the world.
6. Not having a concrete irrefutable position he would vacillate in his belief.
7. At Sinai, G-d openly communicated with every Jew.
8. They witnessed G-d speaking to Moshe and transmitting to the Jews, so establishing him as His prophet.
9. Moshe's prophecy is thus unquestioned.
10. Sinai is the reference point for the the Jew; no reason for the Jew to reflect on the truthfulness of these issues.

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**Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky**

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## Weekly Torah Commentary Series: Acharei Mos



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### Every Man's Handicap

*Torah:* On the second day of Passover the *Omer* offering was brought. This offering was comprised of barley flour. On the festival of *Shavuos*, the day on which the *Torah* was given to the Jewish people, the communal offering that was brought was comprised of two loaves of wheat bread. What is the significance of the *Omer* offering being made of barley flour and the two loaves of bread brought on *Shavuos* being made of wheat flour?

*Mishna* in Tractate *Sotah*: The meal offering (*Mincha*) of the suspected adulteress was made of barley flour. "Since her behavior was similar to that of an animal (by sequestering herself with a man other than her husband), the material make-up of her meal offering is the grain used as animal fodder (which is barley)." The majority of barley grain is used for animal consumption.

*Maharal* of Prague: When the Jewish people left Egypt they were devoid of spirituality. They were nearly at the

point of spiritual extinction, which was the 49th level of spiritual contamination. At that point, the classification of the Jewish people was the equivalent of the animal that has no relevance to spirituality and is totally physical. Therefore, the *Torah* chooses the ingredient of barley for the *Omer* offering to signify the spiritual level of the Jewish people at that moment. Fifty days later at Sinai when the *Torah* was given to the Jewish people, they had reached the pinnacle of their spirituality. At that moment they had achieved the classification of "adam (man/the perfected human)" whose objective and function is to achieve spirituality.

*Yechezkel*: "You (the Jewish people) are 'adam (man)'." The *Gemara* infers from this that the Jewish people are called "adam (man)" but the nations of the world are not classified as "adam." Adam was the ultimate spiritualized being that was created by G-d Himself. From the time the Jewish people had left Egypt until they had arrived at Sinai, they had experienced a metamorphosis from being the "animal" to advancing

themselves to the level of "Adam." In order to signify their advanced spiritual level at the time of the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai, the *Torah* tell us that the communal offering was comprised of wheat flour.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Huryos*: The primary consumption of wheat grain is by man.

*Chinuch* in his codification of the *mitzvos*: The philosophical understanding of the counting of the days of the *Omer*. "The counting of *Sefira* is from the time of the exodus from Egypt to the receiving of the *Torah* at Sinai. The significance of the counting is to demonstrate the anticipation of the Jewish people for the receiving of the *Torah* that was given on 50th day. Just as the slave who works in the sun longs and yearns for the moment that he will have the relief of the shade, so too is our counting an expression of anticipation and yearning for that moment of the giving of the *Torah* at Sinai."

*Maharal* of Prague: All meal offerings were comprised of *matzah* (unleavened), with the exception of two: the thanks offering (*todah*) and the two loaves of bread that were brought on *Shavuos*. The significance of the two loaves of bread that were brought on *Shavuos* is to represent the spiritual level of the Jewish people, it would seem that this offering should have been unleavened (*matzah*). Since leavened bread signifies the evil inclination and *matzah* represents humility and submission to G-d, why were the loaves that were brought on *Shavuos*, at the time of the pinnacle of the spirituality of the Jewish people, leavened?

One would think that *matzah*, made of wheat, would have been more appropriate since it would have represented the Jew as being at the level of "Adam" by the fact that it was comprised of wheat and humbly submitting to G-d as represented by the fact that it was *matzah*. The thanks offering (*todah*) was comprised of forty loaves of bread. Although the *todah* offering was a meal offering, ten of the forty loaves were leavened. What is the significance of this?

The significance of the two loaves of bread that were brought on *Shavuos* being leavened was to convey to the individual that regardless of one's spiritual achievements and advancements in life, one is not assured that he will not regress and fall from that special level.

*Mishna* in *Ethics of Our Fathers*: "Do not believe in yourself until the day you die." Meaning, as long as one

has the ability to make choices, one does not know how his life will come to a close. It is only after one passes on, is his spiritual status established forever. This is something we find even regarding the Patriarchs. G-d would not associate His holy Name with them until they had passed on.

Similarly, regarding the *todah* offering, the significance of the loaves that were leavened is to indicate that although one has a choice to process and perceive life's events incorrectly by not attributing one's survival to G-d's Beneficence, but rather to chance, he chose to see it correctly and express his appreciation to G-d through the offering. Perceiving reality that it is G-d's Will that he should live, creates a sense of indebtedness to G-d. However, if the individual had chosen to attribute his good fortune to chance, he would not be bound.

*Sforno* in his commentary on the thanks offering: The reason there is a leavened element in the *todah* offering is to communicate that although the individual is culpable and deserves to die (because of some element of sin), nevertheless, because of G-d's Mercy, the individual remains alive.

## **Inner Peace, the Prerequisite to Clarity**

*Torah*: Leprosy (*tzaras*) manifests itself not only upon the skin of the individual but also it may afflict one's garments or home.

*Ramban*: "This is something that is not found anywhere in nature. The intense discoloration and affliction of the walls of one's house is to be considered a miracle. However, this affliction only occurs among the Jewish people and not to any of the nations of the world because G-d's Presence is upon them continuously. Because of their special relationship with Him, G-d watches over them and maintains the good appearance of their houses and garments.

"However, when the Jew brings sin upon himself, he develops lesions upon his skin and discolorations on his garments and home. This is to indicate that G-d has removed His Providence from him because of his misdeeds. Consequently, the individual is susceptible to these unnatural afflictions....This leprosy only occurs in the Land of Israel because it is considered to be G-d's Portion....It is not because it is a law that is connected to the Land (such as tithing of grains and produce), but rather because the Land is G-d's location.



“The laws of leprosy only took effect after the conquest and dividing of the Land (among the tribes). It was only at that moment that each individual recognized his portion in the Land. Once the minds of the Jewish people were settled and they were not distracted by the concern over their portion, the laws of leprosy became relevant to them. It is only then that the Divine Presence dwelt in their midst.”

The only way one could appreciate and focus upon what he has is if he has inner peace and thus is not distracted. It was only after the Jewish people were settled could they focus and appreciate the lesson that was being communicated through the various types of leprosy. Prior to this period of time, the affliction of leprosy and all of its applications, would not have been meaningful.

*Rambam in Laws of Conduct (Hilchos Deos):* The reason one must maintain one’s wellbeing is because, “it is impossible to perceive or delve into wisdom if one is hungry, ill or if his body is aching.” It is only when one is in good health and is not experiencing pain that one can focus on G-d and appreciate the true meaning of the events in his life. Since the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jewish people, they no longer experienced the various types of leprosy mentioned in the *Torah*. This is because G-d only alters nature when it will bring about an affective result. Because the Jew is in a state of exile and is detached to a degree from G-d, he is unable to appreciate and thus be a beneficiary of the miracles that are willed by G-d such as leprosy.

*Torah:* After the suspected adulteress undergoes the ritual of the “*Sotah*” and drinks the water that is administered to her by the Priest (*Kohen*), she will either be vindicated and proven innocent or she will die a gruesome death. If she is vindicated, despite the initial suspicion, if she had been infertile she will conceive. If she had difficulty in childbirth, it would subsequently come without pain. If she had given birth to ugly children, she will give birth to beautiful children.

*Ramban:* Although during the Second Temple period there were no longer any miracles, the miracle of the *Sotah* continued. Why was this? It is because the purity of pedigree of the Jewish people is primary to G-d. If a woman were to commit adultery it would seriously compromise the pedigree of the Jewish people. Thus, the miracle of the *Sotah* continued even after other miracles ceased.

King David in *Psalms*: “The dictates of G-d bring joy to one’s heart.” If one feels content and believes that his life is meaningful, he will feel joy. Therefore, in order for one to be able to feel secure and settled in one’s life, it is necessary to engage in *Torah* study and *mitzvos*. He will thus be able to put life’s events in perspective and become a greater beneficiary of what G-d provides.

## The Objective of Life

*Torah:* “*Hashem* spoke to *Moshe* saying – Speak to the entire assembly of the Children of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for holy am I, *Hashem* your G-d.” It is a Positive Commandment for a Jew to sanctify himself.

*Rashi* citing *Chazal*: For one to assume the status of “sanctity,” one must separate himself from forbidden sexual relationships and from other areas of transgression. The result of separating oneself from this type of behavior is sanctity. As it states, “Wherever there is a separation from something not appropriate one finds sanctity.”

*Ramban:* The *mitzvah* of, “You shall be holy” is not referring to separating oneself from that which is forbidden; but rather, “one should sanctify himself in areas that are permitted,” as it is indicated from the verse which states, “You shall be holy for holy am I...” In order to establish an intimate relationship with G-d one must assume a posture that is similar to His.

The aspect of holiness to which the *Torah* is referring is not assuming G-d’s Attributes (such as Mercy and Justice) but rather, it is within the context of one being removed from the physical realm. Since G-d is completely removed from the material and has no relevance to it, one must also do the same. The more one weans himself from the material the more he will reflect the spiritual, thus reflecting G-d’s Holiness. This establishes a commonality, which allows one to bond with his Maker. The objective of physical existence was to create a setting in which man will utilize the material to facilitate his own spiritual potential.

Although one engages in the material, which is a necessity for the human being to exist, if it is only done for the sake of one’s spirituality, the material assumes a spiritual status. However, if one were to engage in the material beyond what is absolutely necessary for one’s

function, it would be considered to be excess and thus it would create an impediment between himself and G-d. Holiness in the absolute sense for a human being is to engage in the physical solely for the spiritual.

*Ramban*: “There are explicit laws that prohibit certain sexual relationships and food items. The *Torah* however permits one to procreate and conjugate with one’s wife. One may also consume meat and partake of wine. If one would allow himself to indulge in both of these areas which are permitted by the *Torah*, one can easily become fully indulgent in sexual activities with his wife (or wives) and become a true hedonist through eating and drinking. He will assume the classification of a detestable person within the context of what is permitted by the *Torah* (*minuval b’reshus ha Torah*). He becomes a person who is driven and motivated by the physical.” The hedonist, as a result of his behavior, no longer has any relevance to G-d because his emphasis and focus in life is the material. He has completely disengaged from what G-d is.

The fact remains that each individual has needs and desires. If those needs are within a permitted context then one may satisfy them and be able to pursue greater spiritual heights. However, if what one desires is not permitted by the *Torah* and one does not have the means to satisfy those needs, it would create a serious spiritual impediment, not allowing him to further his spiritual growth.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Chulin*: G-d provides us with permitted situations which correspond to forbidden areas of the *Torah*. For example, if one craves the taste of meat and milk that is cooked together, which is forbidden by the *Torah* (not even to benefit), one may consume the utter of a cow that contains its own milk, which is permitted. If one wants to have a sense of what it is to cohabit with one who is a menstruant, the *Torah* allows one to cohabit with his wife for a thirty-three day period after she had given birth to a male (this is only permitted on a *Torah* level).

If one craves the taste of pork, there is a tongue of a certain permitted fish that has a similar taste. Thus, in order for one not to be distracted and feel denied, which can be destructive and detrimental for one’s spiritual development, G-d provides permitted means to satisfy these areas of desire and interest. This will then allow one to address his spirituality and to disengage gradually over time from the material, thus resulting in sanctity. It is only in this context that one can achieve

a sufficient degree of holiness that will allow him to secure his relationship with G-d, Who is Holy.

## Creation of One’s Own Destiny

*Torah*: “You shall be holy...”

*Midrash* citing *Psalms*: “‘May He dispatch your help from holiness and from Zion shall you be supported.’ What is the meaning of ‘May He dispatch your help from holiness?’ As a result of the sanctity of one’s actions one will merit Divine Assistance. What is the meaning of ‘and from Zion shall you be supported?’ Based on how meticulously and perfectly one fulfills the *mitzvos*, one will merit that degree of Assistance. Thus, Divine Assistance is determined by the degree of sanctity of one’s actions as well as how exemplary one performs the *mitzvos*.”

*Reb Chaim* of Volozhin in *Ruach Chaim* (his commentary on *Ethics of Our Fathers*): The statement, “Every Jew has a share in the world to come” does not mean that there is a location called “the world to come (*olam habah*).” In addition, there is no location that is called “*gehenom*.” Rather, when one performs a *mitzvah* a spiritual energy is created that is eternal. The majority of this energy detaches itself from this existence and remains in the spiritual realm until the individual passes away.

Conversely, when one transgresses, an impure and destructive spiritual force is created which detaches itself and also awaits the individual to pass away. After one passes away, one will experience the spiritual bliss that accumulated from all his *mitzvah* performance throughout his life. This will be one’s share in the world to come. One’s suffering after his passing is dependent on the amount of negative impure energy that accumulated from all the sine that one committed throughout his lifetime. This is considered to be one’s “*gehenom*.”

*Reb Chaim* of Volozhin based on the *Zohar*: There is a principle of “*mitzvah goreres mitzvah* – the performance of a *mitzvah* brings about another *mitzvah*.” Although the majority of the positive spiritual energy that is created from the performance of a *mitzvah* detaches itself and ascends to the spiritual realm to wait for the individual, some degree of this pure energy remains and engulfs the individual, thus causing him to be motivated to perform another *mitzvah*. It is also true in the converse, when one

transgresses, a residue of the spiritual impurity that is generated remains with the individual and encourages and motivates him to sin further. This is the principle, “*aveira goreres aveira* – one transgression brings about another transgression.

It is interesting to note that the level of the *mitzvah* which follows the initial *mitzvah* performance is determined by the quality and purity that was infused in the initial *mitzvah*. There are many classifications of quality of *mitzvah* performance. One may perform a *mitzvah* because of an ulterior motive (such as reward). This is classified as “*shelo l’shmah* (not for its own sake).” One may perform a *mitzvah* purely because it is the Will of G-d, which is “*l’shmah* (for its own sake).”

In addition, within the classification of “*l’shmah*” there are many levels. Thus, if one performs a *mitzvah* on a special qualitative level, the *mitzvah* opportunity that will emanate and present itself will be minimally of the equivalent quality and purity of the initial *mitzvah*. This is the meaning of the verse in *Psalms* which states, “May He dispatch your help from holiness...” To the degree of one’s purity and holiness of one’s actions it will determine the degree of Divine Assistance.

*Torah* in *Ki Seitzei*: “If a man will have a wayward and rebellious son, who does not hearken to the voice of father and the voice of his mother...they shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is wayward...he is a glutton and a drunkard...’”

*Gemara* in Tractate *Sanhedrin*: The only way a child can assume the status of a “rebellious” child is if he steals from his parents to buy meat and wine to satisfy his desire. If his parents should become aware of this behavior, they take him to the Court (*Bais Din*) and subject him to lashes. If he becomes a repeat offender, they take him to the Court and declare “our son has become a glutton and a drunkard.” The Court then condemns him to die by stoning. Why does the rebellious son deserve to be put to death? Stealing alone is not the basis for his liability but rather, it is the satisfying of his craving for meat and wine.

*Ramban*: The transgression of the “rebellious son” is not that he stole from his parents to buy meat and wine to satisfy his desire, but rather he had violated the positive commandment, “You shall be holy...”

*Torah*: One must wean himself from the material by not partaking excessively in areas that are permitted

to him. If one indulges his desires, he will become addicted and overwhelmed by the material. He will no longer be able to control his animalistic drives and desires. This is based on the principle of “one transgression brings about another transgression.” Thus, since the rebellious son did not sanctify himself by abstaining from the meat and wine, which was permitted to him, he chose to pursue a path of evil that would ultimately cause him to commit the most grave of sins, which is murder.

*Gemara*: “Better he should die in an innocent state rather than in a more culpable state.” By violating the commandment of “You shall be holy,” the rebellious son created a negative energy that engulfs him and intensified his attraction to the material. In order to prevent him from escalating his level of sin the court sentences him to death.

## **Familiarity, A Double-Edged Sword**

*Torah*: “Hashem said to Moshe: Speak to Aaron, your brother – he shall not come at all times into the Holy of Holies, within the Curtain...so that he should not die; for in a cloud I will appear upon the Ark cover.” The day of the year that the High Priest was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies was *Yom Kippur*.

*Rashi* citing *Chazal*: “You shall not enter into the Sanctuary at all times because My Presence is there continuously with the pillar of My Cloud. Therefore you must be careful so as not to become too familiar (*regilus*) with Me.”

*Gemara* in Tractate *Zevachim*: *Moshe* was permitted to enter into the Holy of Holies whenever he chose to do so. However, *Aaron* his brother was only permitted to enter on *Yom Kippur*. *Moshe* was unique because he was the one who was chosen to ascend to heaven and receive the *Torah* on behalf of the Jewish people. It was only *Moshe* who was the most humble person who ever lived who was able to retain the clarity and appreciation for G-d. The High Priest needed to maintain an exceptional level of reverence and cognizance of G-d. If he were allowed to enter before His Presence whenever he chose to do so, that reverence for G-d would be dulled and blurred as a result of his sense of familiarity with Him. Therefore the High Priests’ entry into the Holy of Holies was limited *Yom Kippur*.



*Gemara* in Tractate *Yomah*: When one becomes accustomed and familiar with something, regardless of its special dimension of value, he will no longer see it in its true light. During the Second Temple period there were more than 300 High Priests who officiated over a 420-year period. In contrast, during the First Temple period, there were only 11 High Priests who spanned the 410 years.

During the Second Temple period, every year a High Priest would enter into the Holy of Holies on *Yom Kippur* and would die there. Rather than these individuals being sufficiently qualified for the position, they paid for the right to assume the office of High Priest. One must say that these individuals who died in the Holy of Holies, were not evil people. It is logical to assume that if one understood that death would be the inevitable result of entering into the Holy of Holies, one would not choose to enter. Evidently, these Priests believed that they were sufficiently devout and thus qualified to assume this auspicious position. Although they may have been righteous and pious, they did not have a sufficient level of reverence for G-d. They were no different then the one who develops a familiarity with the one who is truly special.

*Gemara* in Tractate *Bava Basra*: "That individual should be remembered for good and his name was *Yehoshua Ben Gamla*. Had it not been for him, *Torah* would have been forgotten by the Jewish people." *Yehoshua Ben Gamla* was the one who structured and established the elementary Jewish education system. *Yehoshua Ben Gamla* was a High Priest.

*Tosfos*: Although his wife had paid to have him installed to be the High Priest, *Yehoshua Ben Gamla* was nevertheless a *tzaddik* (righteous) and did not die upon entering into the Holy of Holies. It was because of his special level of devoutness that he had sufficient reverence for the Divine Presence.

King David in *Psalms*: "G-d is continuously before me."

*Ramah* in his glosses on the *Shulchan Aruch*: This is the behavior pattern of the righteous. The righteous

person continuously senses the Presence of G-d and thus behaves and acts accordingly. One behaves differently when he is in the presence of a king then when he is no longer in his presence. It is not attributed only to an intellectual understanding but rather it is an internalization and sense of His Being.

In the morning blessings: "G-d...accustom (*targileinu*) us to Your *Torah* and attach us to Your *mitzvos*..." Developing a familiarity to anything causes one to undervalue it. If *Torah* is the most precious commodity and is the ultimate in spirituality because it is the Wisdom of G-d, why do we request that G-d should accustom us to it?

*Torah*: When one studies the *Torah* he must relate to it and experience it as if it were given on that day at Sinai. It must be continuously experienced with a newness and excitement that can only be had when one does not become familiar with it. If this is so, then why do we pray to G-d to give us a familiarity with *Torah*, when this will cause us to experience it at a lesser level?

*Talmud*: "I created the Evil Inclination and the *Torah* as its antidote." Since *Torah* has the innate ability to illuminate the individual and incapacitate the evil inclination, the more one becomes involved and familiar with it, the greater will the illumination increase. Thus allowing the person to fully comprehend and internalize its true value, which will result in the greatest level of reverence for G-d.

When one beseeches G-d to answer his prayers and He does not respond, one should understand that Divine Assistance comes only when as a result of one's worthiness Based on the sanctity of one's actions G-d provides His Assistance, as King David writes in *Psalms*, "May He dispatch your help from holiness..." In addition, one's *mitzvah* performance must be of the most meticulous and pure level as it states "...and from Zion shall you be supported." There is a principle, "The righteous (*tzaddik*) decrees and G-d fulfills." This is because every aspect of behavior the *tzaddik* is infused with the most advanced level of holiness and purity. Thus he is worthy of G-d responding to his decrees.



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