

Agudas Yisroel Anshei Kielce



Zmanim

Candle Lighting: 8:24 pm

Mincha/Kabbalas Shabbos: 6:50 pm & 8:25 pm

Shacharis: 8:45 am

Sof Zman Kriyas Shema: 9:29 am

Pirkei Avos Shiur: 7:25 pm

Mincha/SEUDAS SHLISHIS: 8:15 pm

Maariv/Motzei Shabbos: 9:28 pm

Motzei Shabbos Rabbeinu Tam: 9:55 pm

Sunday Shacharis: 8:00 am & 9:00 am

Parshas Emor

Adapted from Rabbi Yitzhok Adlerstein [www.torah.org]

Divine Service With a Smile [1]

They shall not make a bald spot on their heads, and they shall not shave a corner of their beard. In their flesh they shall not cut a cutting. They shall be holy to their G-d...for the fire-offerings of Hashem...they offer, so they must remain holy[2].

There is not much new here. All of these prohibitions have been stated before, and apply to everyone, including the vast majority of people who are not kohanim[3]. Why does the Torah need to carve out a special place for these laws in regard to kohanim?

Two of the three prohibitions deal with our reaction to death. Many religions, old as well as new, have a special relationship with death. Death is where G-d takes over. G-d asserts His power specifically in overcoming life, which He abandons to the whims of Man. By dealing illness, death and destruction, G-d forces Man to recognize Him and fear Him. He remains, however, foreign to life, from which He is excluded as an active force.

Even faiths that theoretically involve G-d in all matters of life are often unsuccessful in having adherents pay much attention to anything but the finality of death. Priests are called upon by people to minister to the dead

or dying who had no use for them in the bloom of life. The most impressive ceremonies address the aftermath of life rather than life itself; places of worship are often literally juxtaposed to graveyards. Sometimes, the ceremonies for the dead will compel the faithful to think of their mortality while they are still living, and concern themselves with their hope for immortality – of life after death.

The Torah wants us to preoccupy ourselves with life, not with death. The kohen must serve as representative of the values of a full, rich life, enjoying its myriad blessings in the context of service of Hashem while elevating them towards His values. The kohen is the symbol of living to our fullest capacity, of avoiding the countless half-deaths we inflict upon ourselves when we remain limited and bound by our physical urges and flaws of character. The Torah insists that the kohen remove himself from the entire arena of death.

When the living gather to perform the final acts of chesed to a lifeless body whose soul had departed for the next world, the kohen does not preside. Moreover, he stays away entirely. He makes only two exceptions. When a close relative dies, the bonds and responsibilities of family trump those of responsibility to the rest of the community. He therefore participates in the burial of parents, siblings, children and spouse. If he should chance

upon lifeless remains that no one else attends to – a meis mitzvah – he foregoes his priestly role and takes up the primary role of fellow human being, responding to the image of G-d that would otherwise be desecrated.

Others reacted to death by proclaiming that they were irrevocably diminished through their loss. They did this by tearing out hair and creating bald spots, or by cutting into their flesh. Both of these practices are forbidden to ordinary Jews. Our pasuk tells us that they are doubly forbidden to the kohen. He can never wear messages about death upon his body. Whatever he broadcasts has to be a message about life.

Ancient religions also paid homage to the very human foibles of their gods, who often lost themselves in hedonic abandon to their sensuality. Glorifying the sensual thus celebrated the various gods. Some of this preoccupation with the sensual has survived thousands of years of history and remains part of some modern faiths.

Here, too, the Torah wants the kohen to have nothing to do with such mistaken deviance. It is forbidden for all Jewish men to shave the "corners of the head," the boundaries that separate between the various bones of the head. The upper bones encase the more cerebral and intellectual functions; the lower ones participate in eating, the most common form of sensual gratification. The prohibiting against shaving keeps the lower bone, symbol of more animal-like behavior, modestly concealed and covered. Here too, the Torah wishes this emphasized in the appearance of the kohen. He must remain a symbol of devotion to higher concerns that generate elevation rather than capitulation, and life rather than death.

1. Based on the Hirsch Chumash, Vayikra 21:5

2. Vayikra 21:5-6

3. In the case of two of them, Makos 20A-21A derives certain details in which the prohibition to kohanim varies slightly. The basic prohibitions, however, apply to all

Good Shabbos

Mazal Tov to Dr. Ed & Diane Zeligman on the engagement of their son, Noah to Elana Sassover, daughter of Moishe and Helen Sassover of Los Angeles.

This week's kiddush is sponsored by Benny & Penina Feintuch in honour of a yahrzeit.

The kids' program will take place downstairs beginning at 9:30 am.

The guest speaker for Seudas Shlishis is Rabbi Avraham Rudner. Seudas Shlishis is sponsored by the shul.

The cholim list is being updated for Chodesh Iyar. If you would like to submit a name to the cholim list please email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one of the gabbaim.

Shacharis	Weekday Schedule	Mincha
Sunday: 8:00 am & 9:00 am		8:30 pm
Monday & Thursday: 7:00 am & 7:55 am		Maariv
Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday: 7:00 am & 8:00 am		8:55 pm
Daf Yomi with Rabbi Kaufman: 8:00 am (Shabbos), 7:15 am (Sun), 7:40 am (Mon-Fri)		
Amud Yomi with Rabbi Rafi Greenspan: 7:20 am (Mon-Fri)		

To sponsor Kiddush/Seudas Shlishis contact Baruch Klein (kiddush@agudahsouth.com.)

All those wish to submit names to the cholim list can email gabbai@agudahsouth.com or contact one the gabbaim.

Have a Simcha to announce? Email announcements to mailings@agudahsouth.com.

To subscribe or unsubscribe to the email bulletin please email mailings@agudahsouth.com.

Contributions to or suggestions for this bulletin are welcome.

For more information please email mailings@agudahsouth.com.

Pirkei Avos Shiur

The Rav's Pirkei Avos Shiur will take place every Shabbos 50 minutes before Mincha.

This week's shiur is at 7:25 pm.

Minchas Chinuch Chaburah

The Rav is starting a new Minchas Chinuch Chaburah on Sundays following Maariv.

For more information contact Chaim Rivlin or Akiva Jakubovic.