



CONGREGATION AGUDATH ACHIM
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Parshat Achrei Mot-Kedoshim **May 2, 2020 – 8 Iyar 5780**

We have now traversed another week in quarantine and self-isolation. Social distancing has become a new norm, one that has both positive and negative effects, and each person will determine what the effects are for them.

In these parshiot (chapters) we find what may be thought of as cause and effect from certain types of behaviors. Whether one agrees or disagrees is a discussion for another time. Safe to say that Achrei Mot-Kedoshim teaches us moral codes and holiness.

Much of these chapters are read on Yom Kippur. The content of it has to do with coming to terms with your neighbor and with G-d. The human condition requires relationships with one another, and a relationship with “The Almighty”.

Our Sages teach us that Yom Kippur atones for transgressions between a person and G-d, but for a transgression against one’s neighbor, Yom Kippur cannot atone until he appeases his neighbor. One must request forgiveness from their neighbor if they have wronged them. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah teaches us from the text (VaYikra 16:30), “From all your sins before G-d you shall be clean”.

When each one of us begins to learn “the holiness code” we recognize the need for social distancing (at times), and the need for closeness (appropriately). Spiritual elevation comes not from the understanding that “just because something feels good it is acceptable or right”, spiritual elevation comes from understanding the holiness code which drives the cause and effect theory. These lessons in behavior are what separate us from the evil inclination and drive us to do “the right things” for we are created in the Image of G-d.

Good Shabbos!

Rabbi Nathan W. Langer

