

קריאת התורה של מנחה של יום הכיפורים
TORAH READING FOR MINCHAH OF YOM KIPPUR

***The Torah Reading is taken from Sefer Vayikroh and is the whole Chapter 18.
 Three people are called up to this Reading, the third reads also the Haftorah.***

1. The subject matter of this Torah reading is the list of forbidden marriages and relationships, including also some which are quite perverted and depraved. Various reasons are given for this rather curious choice of Torah reading on Yom Kippur afternoon and the following, too, might help to explain this choice of subject matter.
2. The Torah prefaces this chapter with the warning that we are not to follow the immoral behaviour that we saw in Egypt and neither are we to imitate the bizarre, evil practices of the Kenaanites with whom we were about to come into contact when we took possession of our Land. Our Chachommim tell us that the customs and practices of both these peoples, the Egyptians and the Kenaanites, were exceptionally vulgar and perverted and imitating these customs is forbidden in the strongest terms.
3. But however gross and vulgar these practices are, there is obviously some attraction to imitate them. We must be constantly aware that the *Yetzer HoRa* will try to tempt us to transgression, dressing up even the most horrid and coarse behaviour into something quite acceptable. This usually comes about by creeping, incremental steps. It's all a matter of thin edges of wedges. Today the *Yetzer HoRa* tells us to give in to this small infringement; tomorrow, do this little misdemeanour; the day after it tells us to commit this or that transgression. Many times, the wrongdoing is habit-forming and often it can turn out to be quite addictive. Before long, we are shocked to find that we have fallen into his clutches and that it is difficult to extricate ourselves from his power.
4. These obnoxious practices might seem attractive — but only if we have started to slip from our high spiritual standard. Slip leads to fall and fall leads to tumble and once a person starts to fall into the muck and the mire down there, going the whole hog is not so far-fetched and can happen quite easily. But today is Yom Kippur. Even just reading of such practices is repugnant to us. The very idea of committing such sins is revolting to us for we are way up there in a world of noble aspirations, we are in the refined atmosphere of abstention and restraint and holiness and sanctity. In our present frame of mind, on this holy day, we wonder at these perversions and ask with disgust, “How **could** they!?”
5. Yom Kippur is not to be something extraordinary, after which we will come down “back to earth.” Not at all! The spiritual level that we have reached on this day has revealed our true potential. This is the new reality of who we are. At this, our Yom Kippur level, it is totally out of the question to commit any of these offences. But it mustn't stop there. Indeed, the high spiritual level that we have reached on Yom Kippur should become for us our norm, and, being at this spiritual level, we will also now regret our past transgressions and firmly resolve that in the same way that it is inconceivable that being on this high level we would ever stoop to these despicable practices, so too any offences against the Torah is from now on, at all times and always, to be for us similarly out of the question.