

SHABBAT GUIDE

ACHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM

ABOUT THE STORY OF ACHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM

Acharei Mot is read twice: once on Yom Kippur (which offers the highest possible connection during the year to the Light of the Creator), and once on a Shabbat in the month of *Iyar* (Taurus). Because of this, when we listen to or connect with the reading on Shabbat, we are also connecting with the Light of Yom Kippur. As it does on Yom Kippur, however, this gift carries the responsibility for us to do some deep introspection and to awaken a desire to spiritually cleanse ourselves. On this Shabbat we also read the portion Kedoshim, unless there is a Leap Year in the kabbalistic calendar. Kedoshim's energy is so bright that it automatically fills our vessel, helping us truly open ourselves up to receive the unique Light available in both portions.

MICHAEL BERG ON ACHAREI MOT-KEDOSHIM

The Shabbat of Acharei Mot-Kedoshim is a Shabbat of overwhelming Light and joy. The Zohar states that when the students of Rav Shimon bar Yochai came to the Shabbat of Kedoshim, they were filled with a joy unlike any other Shabbat of the year.

The secret power of the *ketoret*, incense is revealed on this Shabbat. We are told by the Talmud that when Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the gift of the Torah, all the angels also gave him a gift, including the Angel of Death, who gave him the secret of the *ketoret*. The Zohar explains that the word *ketoret* comes from the word *hitkashrut*—bonding, *devekut*—and has the power to remove plagues from the world.

Why is this secret revealed on this Shabbat? Because it is the Light of complete unification with the Creator. When we become completely unified with the Light of the Creator, there is no death. The Angel of Death told Moses that through the power of the *ketoret* he could awaken a connection for the

entire world to the ultimate level of unification—the Removal of Death. The Ramban also tells us that ultimately, this is the Shabbat where we can achieve physical immortality. Think about it: this is the only Shabbat of the year with the name Acharei-Mot, "after death." So through our elevation in the Supernal Worlds this Shabbat, we achieve the level of Acharei-Mot, of being "after death," of working toward achieving physical immortality.

We have a tremendous responsibility on this Shabbat, therefore, to reawaken the secret power of the *ketoret*, the secret of Acharei-Mot, and to bring the consciousness of being beyond death to the world. But at the same time, Shabbat Acharei Mot-Kedoshim is also not so much about an understanding; it is, rather, a Shabbat that is overwhelmed...overwhelmed with love, overwhelmed with joy, and overwhelmed with a desire to be one with the Light.



CONSCIOUSNESS FOR NEXT WEEK

The next portion of the Zohar, Emor, connects us to a unifying energy. As we focus on our connection to the Light, we draw Emor's strength. This is a time to push ourselves to consistently bring the world around us into a state of unity.

CANDLE LIGHTING

We light candles at specific times and with pure intentions in order to establish a connection to the energy available. Like flipping the light switch upon entering a dark room, the simple act of lighting candles initiates a flow of energy.

EVENING CONNECTION (KABBALAT SHABBAT)

On Friday nights, we sing songs, recite kabbalistic prayers, and consume blessed wine and bread. These acts invite the energy of Shabbat into our lives and enhance our connection to the Light.

SHABBAT DINNER

The first of three meals, we bless the wine and bread before enjoying our Shabbat dinner. These kabbalistic blessings help us connect with our inner desire to share.

BIRKAT HAMAZON (PRAYERS AFTER EATING)

After eating the first meal, we engage in the Birkat Hamazon prayer. Reciting this prayer shows our appreciation for the food and our connection to the Light.

MORNING CONNECTION (SHACHARIT)

On Saturday mornings, we gather to recite prayers and meditate on our relationship with the Light. The energy awakened by the Morning Connection awakens the spiritual force of mercy, which helps keep chaos and judgment from our lives.

CONSCIOUSNESS LECTURE

In the Consciousness Lecture, we learn about the portion of the week that will be read during the Torah reading. This lecture helps us truly understand the forthcoming teachings and explains in detail the kabbalistic principles behind the stories.

TORAH READING

The Torah is read aloud, in Hebrew, by a Kabbalah Centre teacher. The stories of the Torah are actually codes that, when decoded, transmit energy and repel negativity for the week to come.

AFTERNOON CONNECTION

In the Afternoon Connection, we engage in prayers that strengthen our connection following the reading of the Torah.

SHABBAT LUNCH

During Shabbat Lunch, we sing a number of songs in Aramaic and Hebrew, many of which were written by history's greatest kabbalists. They help us manifest the Desire to Share aspect of the Morning Connection.

THIRD MEAL

The third meal is the highest point of Shabbat, known for its tremendous healing properties. This includes a blessing for hand washing, a connection with bread, and special prayers and meditations for creating positive change within ourselves and all of humanity.

EVENING CONNECTION

The Evening Connection consists of unique kabbalistic prayer and song. These recitations bring Shabbat to a close and help us determine our energy for the new week to come.

HAVDALAH

Havdalah refers to the verbal declaration made at the end of Shabbat that is recited once the sun sets on Saturday night. We say the Havdalah to demonstrate our appreciation for the Light, and to ask it for spiritual sustenance in the upcoming week.