

PARASHAT ACHAREI-MOT- 2014, 5774
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Towards the end of the parasha, the Torah provides us with an example of two prohibitions in sequence: (a) “Do not approach a woman during her menses...”, “Do not lie with your neighbor’s wife to contaminate yourself with her” (18:19-20). This is followed immediately with (b): “You shall not present any of your children to pass through for Molech, and do not profane the name of your G-d- I am HaShem” (18:21). T

The first part relates to sexual morality and therefore falls into the category of *chukim*. The second pertains to the ritual murder of children, which clearly is in the category of *Mishpatim*. What is the connection between these two categories that the Torah finds their juxtaposition necessary? And how is the prohibition of Molech understood in our day and age? Rav Soloveitchik described an actual case in which parents were willing to place their own child up for adoption rather than compromise their present lifestyle, and he declared that this was a modern-day example of giving one’s child to Molech.

The Rav further explained the conceptual connection between *chukim* and *Mishpatim*. He declared that people who observe the *chukim* laws of family purity will also love their children. If they do not preserve sexual morality in their lives, will likely lead to Molech- disdain for children. Sexual morality from a Torah perspective is definitely a *chok*; difficult to understand and accept. It calls for strong discipline and sacrifice. Often, when couples wish to live as observant Jews, they have no objection to Shabbat, or kashrut. Their greatest challenge is accepting the laws of Taharat HaMishpacha (family purity) as proscribed by the Torah and by our sages. Those who observe *chukim* out of surrender to the will of G-d will always observe *Mishpatim*. However, those who reject the *chukim* will one day abandon the *Mishpatim* as well.

A true story comes to mind. In a small mid-western Jewish community in the United States lived an elderly couple from Russia. Having no children they mostly kept to themselves and rarely mingled with the others. After several years, the husband died. The wife had to plead with people to assist and attend the funeral. At the cemetery she begged someone to say a few kind words about her husband, but, no one came forth. She then said, “In that case I will speak about him. We were a young religious couple, very much in love when we married in Russia. But being there was no Mikveh available, my husband controlled himself and we had no marital relations during all those years. When we came to America we were too old to have children.” That was her eulogy; there was not a dry eye among those present. Without doubt, this couple observed all the *Mishpatim* as well.