BS"D
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Potomac Torah Study Center
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NOTE: Devrei Torah presented weekly in Loving Memory of Rabbi Leonard S. Cahan z"l, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation Har Shalom, who started me on my road to learning almost 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his recent untimely death.

Devrei Torah are now Available for Download (normally by noon on Fridays) from www.PotomacTorah.org. Thanks to Bill Landau for hosting the Devrei Torah.

Among the gifts we receive from God, one of the most special is the gift of time. While most of us probably wish that we could extend our time in this world, the fact of living and enjoying the world that God has created for humans is very special. Losing a beloved friend or family member shows vividly how much we lose when anyone close to us passes away. For members of Beth Sholom in Potomac, MD, this week was especially difficult, with three deaths in member families within a space of only two days. We personally lost Bayda Manison, beloved wife of Warren Manison, mother of Stephanie Sporkin and Allen Manison, and a beloved grandmother and close friend. The next day, our shul lost Frances Feldman, wife of Ed Feldman, a past president of the shul and active officer for many years. Hannah and I have many fond memories of these fine women, and our hearts are with the families.

As we begin reading Sefer Vayikra this week, dealing with losses is a poignant way to consider the meaning of this middle section of the Torah. Sefer Vayikra takes place entirely at the foot of Har Sinai, where B'Nai Yisrael have been encamped since arriving a few days before the Revelation, and where they stay even after the dedication of the Mishkan, until chapter 10 of Bamidbar. Considering that B'Nai Yisrael do not leave the foot of Har Sinai for this extended time, a profound implication of Sefer Vayikra is that its foremost raison d'etre is to provide rules for humans living in close proximity to God's presence. Once God returned His presence to the Mishkan, our ancestors needed to know and observe special rules of purity and holiness required to survive near God's presence. The death of Aharon's sons Nadav and Avihu at the dedication of the Mishkan (for improvising and bringing fire and incense that God had not commanded) demonstrates that the people need to know detailed rules for surviving while God resides in their midst.

This week we read about the types of korbanot (sacrifices) that a person would bring to the Mishkan or Temple for various situations. One part of each korban involving an animal was burning some or all of the animal on the alter. The burnt parts would release smoke that would rise vertically from the Altar, "as a satisfying aroma to Hashem" and as a sign that God had accepted the person's offering.

Rabbi David Fohrman identifies three basic types of korbanot. An **olah,** or burnt offering, is entirely burned on the Altar, so the person bringing the korban is turning over his entire gift to Hashem. Rabbi Fohrman characterizes an olah as a gift out of awe, based on the paradigm of the Akeidah – in which Avraham was ready to give his only, beloved son Yitzhak back entirely to God. A **Shelamim,** or peace offering, represents a celebration of a covenant or simcha. A Shelamim consisted of a large animal (cow, bull, sheep, or goat). Some parts were burnt (gift to Hashem), some parts were reserved for the Kohenim, and the remaining parts were food for that day for the person bringing the korban and his family and friends. A **chatat,** or sin offering, was a mandatory korban to atone for an inadvertent sin (committed without intending to sin). For a chatat, some parts of the animal would be burned (gift to Hashem) and designated parts would be reserved for the Kohenim. (The owner would not participate in eating any part of a chatat.) For a somewhat more detailed differentiation of the various types of korbanot, see the very clear explication by Rabbi Marc Angel (below).

While sacrificing animals and throwing some of their blood on the people involved in the ceremony seems strange and perhaps gross to many people in our time, Jews of the time found the experience very moving and spiritual. Because our religion permitted korbanot only at the Mishkan or Temple, Jews who lived too far away to go to the one permitted location could not sacrifice animals. The korban system, with all sacrifices taking place in one location, probably reduced the

number of sacrifices compared to the number that would have taken place without the centralization of the ceremony. My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, cherished teaching legal sections of the Torah, such as Sefer Vayikra. The more that I delve into the depths of meanings of the central part of the Torah, the more fascinating it becomes for me personally. Hopefully learning more about the meaning of korbanot will help more of us become comfortable with this part of our shared history.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah & Alan

Much of the inspiration for my weekly Dvar Torah message comes from the insights of Rabbi David Fohrman and his team of scholars at www.alephbeta.org. Please join me in supporting this wonderful organization, which has increased its scholarly work during the pandemic, despite many of its supporters having to cut back on their donations.

Please daven for a Refuah Shlemah for Menachem Mendel ben Chana, Eli ben Hanina, Yoram HaKohen ben Shoshana, Gedalya ben Sarah, Mordechai ben Chaya, Baruch Yitzhak ben Perl, David Leib HaKohen ben Sheina Reizel, Zev ben Sara Chaya, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, HaRav Dovid Meir ben Chaya Tzippa; Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Amoz ben Tziviah, Reuven ben Masha, Moshe David ben Hannah, Meir ben Sara, Yitzhok Tzvi ben Yehudit Miriam, Yaakov Naphtali ben Michal Leah, Ramesh bat Heshmat, Rivka Chaya bat Leah, Zissel Bat Mazal, Chana Bracha bas Rochel Leah, Leah Fruma bat Musa Devorah, Hinda Behla bat Chaya Leah, Nechama bas Tikva Rachel, Miriam Chava bat Yachid, and Ruth bat Sarah, all of whom greatly need our prayers.

Hannah & Alan

Drasha: Vayikra: Give It While It's Hot

by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky © 1998

[Please remember Mordechai ben Chaya for a Mishebarach!]

This week the Torah tells us of a mitzvah that the Chofetz Chaim is alleged to have prayed never to have to perform. Difficult as it may be, it is a positive commandment.

But as the Chofetz Chaim wished, may we all be spared from it. The Torah tells us that if an individual succumbed and stole property, or deceitfully held an item entrusted to him, there is a mitzvah to make amends. "And he shall return the stolen object that he stole, the fraudulent gains that he defrauded, the pledge that was secured with him" (Leviticus 5:23). The redundancy is glaring. Of course the stolen item is what you stole. Surely the pledge was secured with you. And the fraudulent gains are those that you swindled. Why does the Torah repeat the action words, "that he stole, that he defrauded, that was secured with him" ?

On a Talmudic level, the Gemarah derives from the extra words the technical laws that determine when monetary restitution takes precedence over reparations of real property. If a person steals a piece of wood, for example, and builds a boat with it, must he return the newly formed item to the original owner of the wood, or would monetary compensation suffice? After all, the wood in the thief's possession is no longer the "the stolen object that he stole." The man stole wood. It is now a boat. On those issues and ideas there are tomes of analysis that translate into centuries of Torah observance. I'd like to explain the illusory redundancies on a simple, homiletic level.

Rabbi Moshe Sofer, beloved Rabbi of Pressburg and author of the noted work Chasam Sofer, was about to preside as a judge in a difficult lawsuit. A few days before trial was to begin he received a package from one of the litigants. It was a beautiful sterling kiddush cup. That Friday night the Chasam Sofer took the cup out of its velvet pouch, and raised it for his entire family to see.
"Look how beautiful this becher is. Do you notice the intricate etchings? It must be worth a fortune!"

The family looked on in horror. They knew that the gift was sent as a form of a bribe. They could not imagine why the Chasam Sofer had removed it and was seemingly admiring it. Abruptly, the Chasam Sofer stopped talking. His eyes became sternly focused on the cup. He began, once again, to speak. "But, my children, the Torah tells us we may not take a bribe! Therefore I will put this beautiful cup away and never use it. It must be returned to the sender immediately! He must be chastised for this terrible breach."

Then he continued. "You must be wondering why I even looked at the cup. You certainly must be bewildered why I even admired it openly. I will explain. How often is it that I am offered a bribe? Never! I never felt the passion or desire to accept a bribe, as it was never offered! When I had the opportunity to observe the Torah's prohibition against corruption, I wanted to make sure that I did it from a vantage of passion. I wanted to realize what I was turning down. I wanted to value the Torah's command over an exquisite and ornate silver goblet. I felt that by working up our appetite for the item we surely would appreciate its refusal."

Perhaps the Torah is hinting at the most proper aspect of restitution. There are two reasons to return a stolen item. First, you are in possession of an item that is not yours. Simple. But there is another reason. Every one of our actions helps mold us. By returning an item that we once desired enough to have stolen, we train ourselves to break the covetous constitution of our nature. We learn that even though we want something, we may not take it.

That redemption is much more effective when the attachment for the item is still active. A stolen item that one may have forgotten about or lost desire for may be much easier to return. After all, ten years after you stole a bicycle you probably would be driving a car. The desire for the bike is no longer there. Maimonides teaches us that the greatest act of teshuva (repentance) is when the passion for the crime still exists. Repentance is always accepted, but if the item is still categorized in your mind with the expression "the stolen item that you stole, the fraudulent gains that you defrauded, the pledge that was secured with you," then the repentance is more meaningful. When desires conflict with conscience – and conscience prevails — that is true teshuvah. 50 years after a crime, there are those who may issue statements of apologies and excuses. However a lingering question remains. Are the "stolen items ones that they stole" or are they just relegated to black and white memories of an almost forgotten crime? The words "I am sorry" should not be sorry excuses, but rather true regret with a commitment never to sin again. That can best happen while the iron (or steal) is still hot.

Good Shabbos!

A Thought on the Parsha (Vayikra)
Sacrifices? What Sense Does that Make?

by Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2016

The second half of the book of Shemot focused on creating the Mishkan as a Sanctuary in which God Godself could dwell among the Children of Israel. In contrast, the book of Vayikra focuses on what is done in that Sanctuary: first and foremost, the bringing of sacrifices. What is the connection between sacrifices and the Temple? The Torah seems to be telling us that sacrifices are the primary means to serve and connect to God, and that this connecting is best done in the Temple, where God's presence dwells. But how are we to understand animal and grain sacrifices as a means of connecting to God, let alone as the primary means?

As modern people, it seems to us like a very bizarre way to worship an infinite God. What does God need with our sacrifices? Isn't such a messy and bloody act, one that takes an animal's life no less, the furthest thing possible from an elevated religious act of worship? At the same time, we must acknowledge that it was the primary form of worship in the ancient world. Did it answer a universal human need, something relevant even for us today, or was it part of a primitive, less intellectually and spiritually developed society.

Given that the Torah commands obligatory communal and individual sacrifices (and allows for non-obligatory, free will sacrifices), it stands to reason that a traditional Jewish approach would seek to find intrinsic value in these animal sacrifices. Rambam (Maimonides), however, coming from a strong rationalist perspective, says otherwise in his Guide to the Perplexed (section III, chapters 31 and 46). He states that worshiping God through animal sacrifices is not ideal, but the people at the time of the Giving of the Torah could not conceive of any other form of worship. If they would have been forced to choose between worshiping God with prayer and worshiping pagan gods with sacrifices, they would have chosen the latter. Thus God conceded to them their need to use sacrifices but demanded that they be brought to God in a way that did not lead to idolatry.

This approach, which resonates with most modern people, still raises some questions. First, as a traditional Jew who believed in the eternal bindingness of the mitzvot, how could Rambam suggest that sacrifices had outlived their purpose? If he did not believe that they would continue to be binding in the future, why did he write all the laws of sacrifices in his Yad Hachazaka? And doesn't this take away from the concept of the perfection of the Torah? Rambam himself answers the latter question, saying that God does not change the nature of people, and a perfect Torah is one that is perfectly suited for the realities of where people are. Sometimes, says Rambam, we have to consider where the mitzvot are pointing us rather than seeing them as describing an ideal, final state. This is quite provocative, and we have discussed it at greater length elsewhere.

Ramban (Nahmanides), in his Commentary to the Torah (Vayikra, 1:9) takes great issue with Rambam's approach and, besides arguing the specifics and bringing proof texts to contradict Rambam, argues against the idea that sacrifices, so central to worship in the Torah and already practiced by Adam and Noach, should not have intrinsic value. He states that the significance of the sacrifices can be understood as symbolic and psychological, and he sees the sin-offering as the primary sacrifice. Accordingly, he states that when a person sees the animal slaughtered, the blood thrown on the altar, and the entrails burned up, he reflects and takes to heart the greatness of his sin, how he has sinned both in thought and deed, and how he deserves to die. Ramban also gives a kabbalistic explanation, seeming to indicate that the sacrifices have a theurgic and metaphysical impact on God's relationship to the world.

It should be noted that Ramban's emphasis on the sin-offering seems misplaced, given that the olah, the burnt offering, seems to be the primary form of worship. It was the sacrifice of Kayin and Hevel and of Noach, and in the Temple the olah is the twice-daily communal sacrifice and the core of the musaf sacrifices brought on Shabbat and Yom Tov. The Chinukh (Mitzvah 95) addresses this problem, and extends Ramban's symbolic and psychological approach to non-sin offering sacrifices and other details and rituals of the sacrifices.

There seems to be one thing missing from all these explanations, a point implicit in Rambam and hinted at in the Chinukh. The religious value of sacrifices would seem, at its core, to be that indicated in the first sacrifice of the Torah, that of Kayin and Hevel. The verse states: "Kayin brought of the fruit of the ground an offering to the Lord. And Hevel also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat of it" (Breishit, 4:3-4). That is, the primary sacrifice is the olah, the burnt offering, the giving of something fully to God. It is taking the fruit of one's labor, what one values highly and feels deeply connected to, recognizing that this comes from God and giving it back to God to demonstrate and internalize this mindset. This is why the idea of sacrificing one's children - or the command of akeidat Yitzchak - fits into this model. It is taking the "giving of what is most dear" to the ultimate extreme.

Understood this way, the sin offering uses this principle to achieve forgiveness and expiation. We say in the u'Netaneh Tokef prayer that "u'teshuva u'tefillah u'tzedakah ma'avirin et ro'ah ha'gezeirah," that repentance, prayer, and charity eliminate the stern decree. In the same way, a korban - which is an intense and personal form of charity, of giving of oneself, of giving what is most dear -accompanied by the verbal confession of the sin-offering can achieve atonement.

It may be that this is most hard for us to relate not because of the concept of giving things that we treasure to God, but because 1) we don't relate this way to animals. Ethical issues aside, given how little most of us have to do with livestock and slaughtering, we are aesthetically repulsed by the idea of slaughtering animals. And 2) we would like our donations to religious causes to be used more practically, not in a merely symbolic way. While both of these are true and reflect different sensibilities from those of the past, we can still understand the core human need that sacrifices addressed in the time of the Temple.

The importance of using something physical in our worship is a related point. As physical beings, it is often hard for us to connect to an infinite, non-physical God. Just as Rambam explains that we need to use anthropomorphic and anthropopathic terms as a means of describing or relating to God, most of us need a form of worship that has a physical

component. Sacrifices gave this to people. The reason this physical mode took the form of sacrifice was discussed above, but this framing helps us understand Rambam's point of saying that sacrifice is to prayer what prayer is to intellectually connecting to God. The ultimate form of worship for Rambam is a purely non-physical, intellectual connection. Most people, however, can't handle that. They need something more connected to human concerns and actions: petitionary prayer, fasting, and the very act of praying. While necessary for most, says Rambam, this is not the ideal.

The question that persists, though, is, given that we are human, why describe what we need as less than ideal? We are not angels or pure intellects, so for us, as physical beings, prayer might be the best way to connect to God. And when praying, how many of us have not felt that we could connect more strongly if there was a more physical component? Wearing a tallit or tefillin can help, as can shokeling; it feels like we are connecting more if we are doing more.

The need to find meaningful ways to connect and the importance of the physical remain as true today as they did in the time of the Temple. If for us, animal sacrifice is not the way, we should still be honest about our deep human need to find a way to connect to God, and we should work at developing those paths in the absence of sacrifices.

Shabbat Shalom!

https://library.yctorah.org/2016/03/sacrifices-what-sense-does-that-make/. NOTE: Rabbi Linzer's Dvar Torah was too late for my schedule this week, so I am sending a var Torah from his archives. His new Dvar Torah for this Shabbat should be available at www.yctorah.org by Friday noon.

Parshas Vayikra -- Unmasking the Mask

by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine* © 2021 Teach 613

Pesach 2448. Moshe had given Paroh his final warning. If Paroh did not send the Jewish people out, there would be a tenth plague that would put an end to this game. On that fateful night—the night that would be known for generations as the night of the Seder -- the plague of the firstborn would be brought upon the Mitzriyim.

To the Jews Moshe gave clear instructions. "Eat the Korban Pesach indoors as a family. Do not leave your homes until you are instructed."

Interestingly, the meal of the Korban Pesach was given with a special commandment: That the Jews should be dressed for the Exodus. "You shall be wearing your travel shoes, your walking sticks in hand." If not for this directive, the impression of this meal to a bystander is that of a simple, serene, family meal. The underlying energy of the Exodus, the mandate of imminent travel, and the sacred journey to Sinai, would not be known to the observer. By requiring that the Jews be dressed for travel, the Torah provides a gift of clarity that enables us to appreciate that snapshot look with all of its depth.

Seeing beyond the surface is not always as easy as the Torah made it by the meal of the Exodus. Sometimes we see one thing, and it takes extraordinary effort to realize the depth of what is really going on. Take for example the statement we encountered about the master-builder of the Mishkan. The Torah describes him as, "Bitzalel, the son of Uri, the son of Chur." People are usually described in the Torah using only their father's name. Why is Bitzalel's grandfather's name listed? Also, who was Chur?

Chur, the grandfather of Bitzalel, was appointed to lead the Jewish people while Moshe ascended the mountain to receive the Torah. When the people approached him with their idea of making the golden calf, he firmly objected. He was so uncooperative that eventually the mob killed him.

On a superficial level an observer might think that Chur was simply an uncooperative person. He refused to join the progressive movement to build the golden calf. He probably was just not a collaborator. By informing us that Bitzalel was a grandson of Chur the Torah is identifying the significant quality of Bitzalel's lineage that made his success possible. Although Chur seems to be in a snapshot view; an uncooperative person who will not collaborate; the reality is that he was motivated by closeness to Hashem and preserving authentic Judaism. The talent and success of Bitzalel to facilitate the greatest fundraiser and collaboration effort, is attributed to Chur who created that energy of closeness with Hashem and enabled the Mishkan relationship to occur.

Pinchas is another example. He slays two people who defiantly tried to introduce immorality to the Jewish people. His act is described as zealousness. The snapshot view of his behavior looks like violence. But the Torah identifies him as a grandson of Ahron, the famous peace maker. The Torah grants him the appropriate blessing: Peace. Although on a superficial level Pinchas looked like he was acting in violence, the deeper understanding was that he was preserving peace, and saving the Jewish people.

We see this perspective in the holiday of Chanuka as well. The Maccabees fought valiantly and eventually defeated the Syrian Greeks. But the Rabbis of the time did not legislate that we should wear army uniforms on Chanuka. Nor did they legislate that we shoot spears into elephants to commemorate the dramatic victory against the enemy's tank-like herds. Instead, they said that we should light the Menorah. In doing so they guided us to see beyond the snapshot view of what happened and focus on the motivator that caused the Maccabees to act. The Maccabees fought their battle with an end goal in mind: To light the Menorah of the Jewish people, literally and figuratively. It is that deeper appreciation that guides the appropriate commemoration of the Chanuka miracle.

This idea of the snapshot view not necessarily being the accurate view can be applied to Halacha as well. There is a rule that in the case of life endangerment we are obligated to "violate" Shabbos to save a life. Interestingly, the Talmud (Yoma 85a) does not want us to simply see the life saving act on Shabbos as a permitted "violation." The Talmud invites us to see the deeper essence of the life saving "violation" as an act which affirms the holiness of Shabbos. "Violate a single Shabbos, so that you can live and fulfill many Shabbosos." Thus, the energy at the time of the life saving act is not seen as a violation. Rather it is an expression of how much Shabbos observance means to us.

Which brings us to masks.

Just one year ago we were plunged into a new reality, the reality of masks and social distancing. Within days we closed down shuls, yeshivos, and conventional hospitality. Certainly, we made valiant efforts to continue providing food in creative ways, and to learn and daven. But the pillars of Torah, prayer, and kindness were no longer observed in closeness, but rather with distance.

Yet, beyond the superficial snapshot view, we are aware that on the deepest level, masks and social distancing have been an expression of closeness, an expression of "Love your fellow." The more carefully we observe the distancing, the more energetically we proclaim that we care for the welfare of another. These acts look like distancing, but they are really expressions of caring.

As we experience the one- year mark of our experience with COVID; we are grateful for the news that we are starting to turn the corner. With vaccines reaching more and more people each day, and a greater awareness of what causes spread and what does not, it does appear that we will steadily be able to move forward (cautiously and responsibly) with reopening.

We look forward to the day — not quite yet -- that we will be able to take our masks off and smile openly to one another. When we do take it off, we will recognize that it was really an expression of closeness, as we cared with great fortitude for the health of one another.

Chur is not aloof. His is the energy that creates a Mishkan.

Pinchas is not violent. He stood up when needed and was blessed with peace.

Chanuka is not about battles against the regime. It is about lighting the Menorah.

Saving a life on Shabbos is not a desecration of Shabbos. It is an expression of how dear Shabbos is to us.

And masks are not about distancing. Masks are about our loyalty to each other's welfare.

May we too be blessed with a Pesach of wearing travel shoes and holding our walking sticks, traveling out of a difficult time period, to a place of redemption, blessing, good health, and serenity.

With heartfelt blessings for a good Shabbos and a wonderful Pesach!

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Hiring and Firing: Thoughts for Parashat Vayikra

by Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

Mark Zuckerberg, head of Facebook, was asked what he looks for in a prospective employee. He replied: "I will only hire someone to work directly for me if I would work for that person." I assume he was referring to top echelon employees, people who would have major executive responsibilities. If these people shared the values and work ethic of Mark Zuckerberg, then he would be ready to work for them. If they lacked those qualities, he would not hire them because he would not want to work for them either.

Mark Zuckerberg was offering some very important advice. In our own businesses, organizations, synagogues etc., we should only want to hire top people who we ourselves would want to work for. We should look for people who share our values and work ethic, who have a genuine sense of responsibility and commitment.

We would not want to work for an egotist, a social climber, a shirker of responsibility, or a control freak. We would not want to work for someone who creates dissension, who lacks respect for fellow employees, who takes off work on a regular basis. So we shouldn't hire such a person! Although this seems so obvious, it often happens that people ignore the "Zuckerberg rule" and hire employees who they themselves would never want to work for.

This week's Parasha includes descriptions of offerings which were to be brought in the Mishkan. These offerings shed light on what it takes to be a good, responsible person.

The burnt-offering was to be dedicated entirely to God. A lesson: a good person is ready and willing to sacrifice without expectation of personal reward. An idealistic commitment stems from a pious heart.

The peace-offering was brought as an expression of gratitude to the Almighty. A lesson: good people are grateful. They don't take their blessings for granted. They say thank you.

The sin-offering was brought to atone for sins that one committed accidentally, without intention to do the wrong thing. A lesson: good people admit their mistakes. They don't pretend to be perfect. They are humble and honest. They don't look for excuses to justify their mistakes and they don't try to pin blame on others. They take responsibility.

The guilt-offering was brought by those who unintentionally caused a loss to the Sanctuary by appropriating sacred property for personal use. A lesson: good people try not to desecrate that which is holy. They have reverence for the Sanctuary. They conduct themselves with respectfulness and gravitas, especially when in the presence of the Sacred.

The guilt-offering for breach of trust was brought by those who have dealt dishonestly with their fellow human beings. Aside from making restitution to those whom one has cheated, the sinner must also atone before the Almighty. A sin against a human being is also a sin against God. A lesson: good people are scrupulously honest. They avoid cheating or hurting others. They do not betray the trust of others. They do not renege on agreements.

A highly successful financier once told me: if you trust people at their word, you can do business with them. You don't need written agreements. Their word is their bond. But if you don't trust people, written contracts will not be a panacea. Untrustworthy people will find lawyers to re-interpret the contract; they will drag you into court; they will waste your time and money.

In short, good and trustworthy people are a blessing. They are reliable, honest and caring. Untrustworthy people are the bane of humanity. They are unreliable, dishonest, and unscrupulous.

Who would you hire? Who should you hire? Who would you work for?

And, most importantly, in which category do we ourselves belong? Would Mark Zuckerberg hire us?

* jewishideas.org, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, https://www.jewishideas.org/hiring-and-firing-thoughts-parashat-vayikra **The Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals has experienced a significant drop in donations during the pandemic. The Institute needs our help to maintain and strengthen our Institute. Each gift, large or small, is a vote for an intellectually vibrant, compassionate, inclusive Orthodox Judaism. You may contribute on our website jewishideas.org or you may send your check to Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals, 2 West 70th Street, New York, NY 10023. Ed.: Please join me in helping the Instutite for Jewish Ideas and Ideals at this time**.

Hag Kasher veSameah? or Moadim leSimha? ... a blog by Rabbi Marc D. Angel

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel

Many years ago, when I was still a young boy growing up in Seattle, a fund-raiser from Israel visited our home shortly before the Pessah festival. After receiving his donation, he wished us a "hag kasher ve-sameah"—a happy and kosher Pessah. My mother was deeply offended!

"How dare he imply that we don't keep kasher!" she fumed.

We later learned that the fund-raiser was simply using a phrase common in the Ashkenazic world. It is not meant as an insult, but as a blessing. Since it is so difficult to observe the hametz laws on Pessah, the phrase offers encouragement: I hope you'll succeed in having a fully happy Pessah, free of any hametz.

Yet, after all these years, I still rankle when someone wishes me a "hag kasher ve-sameah." I carry on my mother's displeasure with the phrase. I know that the phrase is not meant to be insulting or rude. I know that people say it with good intentions. But it still bothers me! [emphasis added]

Why?

People wish each other a Shabbat Shalom, a peaceful Sabbath. They don't say: we wish you a peaceful and kosher Sabbath, or a peaceful Sabbath free of transgressions. People wish each other "hag sameah" or "moadim lesimha"—have a happy festival. They don't say: we wish you a happy festival free of sin. It seems that only relating to Pessah do people go out of their way to insert kosher—a happy and kosher Pessah. Yes, it is challenging to observe all the rules of the Passover festival; but it's also challenging to fulfill all the details of Sabbath or festival observance. By singling out Pessah, there seems to be a subtle (not so subtle!) implication that many people will fail even if they try. The phrase—meant to be an encouragement—can be understood to be a hint at mistrust: we're not sure you'll manage to keep a kosher Pessah, but we hope you do!

Why not simply wish people: moadim lesimha, or hag sameah? Why not let them worry about their hametz rather than insert ourselves into the process? Why not just work on our own happy and kasher Passover, and not imply anything about how other people will manage their Pessah observance?

Okay, I admit this may sound a bit too touchy and overstated. Fine. If you want to wish each other a "hag kasher ve-sameah" that's your prerogative. But as for me, please just say: moadim lesimha…and I'll gladly reciprocate: hagim uzmanim lesasson..

https://www.jewishideas.org/article/rabbi-chaim-amsalem-discusses-conversion-judaism

Parshas Vayikra – Rewriting Creation

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer *

The Ba'al HaTurim quotes a Medrash Osiyos Ketanos, which notes that in the Torah the Aleph in the first word of the Book of Vayikra is written smaller than the other letters in the Torah. This was a result of a compromise between G-d and Moshe. After the completion of the Tabernacle at the end of last week's parsha, G-d's Presence was sensed within the Jewish camp, centered in the Tabernacle. When G-d would speak to Moshe, He would call Moshe into the Tabernacle to prepare Moshe, mirroring the way the ministering angels prepare to serve and to praise G-d, as we say in *Kedusha* "and they call one to the other and proclaim 'Holy, Holy, Holy, etc.'" This calling, indicated by the word "Vayikra" – "ויקרא," was an expression of G-d's respect and love for Moshe. In contrast, when G-d speaks with Bilaam the Torah uses the word "ויקר" -- "And He happened upon" meaning that G-d's meeting with Bilaam came without preparation, indicating that the meeting with Bilaam was not worthy of note in G-d's eyes

When Hashem instructed Moshe to write the word "ויקרא" – "And He called," Moshe understood the implication. In his great humility, Moshe was uncomfortable writing such an expression regarding himself. He therefore asked G-d if he could leave off the Aleph, thereby changing the word to "ויקר" – "And He happened." G-d did not allow this. Moshe then asked if he could at least write the Aleph small, so as to at least avoid drawing attention to the accolade, and this G-d allowed.

This Medrash at face value is simply shocking. Our rabbis teach us that the Torah is the blueprint of creation. There are laws and concepts hidden in the crowns decorating the letters, from the shapes and placement of the letters and from every letter that is added or removed. How could Moshe possibly have asked G-d to remove an entire letter from the Torah?! Furthermore, although G-d did not allow the removal of the letter, G-d did allow Moshe to forever alter the size of the letter. If there are lessons in the crowns decorating the letters, certainly there are lessons to learn from the letters themselves. Why was Moshe allowed to change the size of a letter and forever alter the blueprint of the world?!

Perhaps, we can understand this Medrash based on a Mishna in Sanhedrin. The Mishna famously teaches us that every individual is obligated to recognize and to say that "the world was created for me." G-d does not require the sum of humanity to make creation worthwhile. Rather, G-d seeks an individual relationship with each of us and cherishes that relationship. In G-d's infinite love for every human being, He creates the entire universe for the sake of each and every one of us.

Relationships are built on mutual understanding and respect. While, G-d knows us better than we know ourselves, for us to know and understand G-d is beyond our capacity. The only way in which human beings can possibly engage in a relationship with G-d is by learning to emulate G-d's traits and to follow G-d's ways.

From this perspective, perhaps we can begin to understand this Medrash. Moshe's highly developed humility was of great significance to G-d. It was an expression of Moshe's devotion and connection to G-d, and was a fulfillment of the very purpose of creation. The lesson and inspiration from Moshe's humility is apparently greater than the lessons that would have been in the larger Aleph. Moshe's personal development and growth was of paramount importance to G-d.

We often seek to encourage ourselves in our lives by reminding ourselves that our efforts and achievements are important, and that we can make a difference in the world. This Medrash teaches us that our value is even more intrinsic. The personal development and growth which we achieve in life is already significant. It is so important to G-d, that sometimes it can even merit rewriting creation itself.

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How to Fix Theoretical Physics with the Haggadah

by Rabbi Moshe Rube*

My dreams of becoming a theoretical physicist were dashed when I realized I had no taste for calculus. (Granted, I was in highschool and only just beginning to narrow down dreams and life paths.) But now that I've read "Lost in Math: How Beauty Leads Physics Astray" by Sabine Hossenfelder, I think I made a wise decision.

Hossenfelder makes the point throughout that theoretical physicists can spend all of their careers making mathematical equations that look pretty and speculating on the existence of particles without ever having to be accountable to evidence.

Just like there are many ways to calculate the number 40 (1+39, 2+38, 25.6+14.4 etc.), there exist multiple ways to mathematically understand how our universe works. That's why we need real-life evidence based on observation.

But because it takes fancy and expensive gadgets like hadron colliders to study the universe at the smallest level, we cannot run experiments without tremendous resources. (It's way more expensive than dropping eggs off a roof.)

The field of physics has been starved for data for decades. So researchers can spend their careers inventing theories they never prove. (String theory and the multiverse have not been proven, so we should not treat them as factual claims.)

Theoretical physicists spend a lot of time and get a lot of money just for explaining why there's no evidence for their beautiful theory. Hossenfelder exclaims on p. 108, "I can't believe what this once venerable profession has become. Theoretical physicists used to explain what was observed. Now they try to explain why they can't explain what was not observed."

At the end, she gives advice to those in her profession on how to cure this phenomenon and bring us back to only asserting observable evidence as scientifically true.

I can't help but think that the same phenomenon occurs in the field of Biblical studies.

We've been reading (in our book club) Rabbi Dr. Joshua Berman's book "Ani Maamin: Biblical Criticism, Historical Truth, and the Thirteen Principles of Faith." Rabbi Dr. Berman is both a Ph. D. in Biblical studies and an Orthodox rabbi, and we will be meeting him in person on Sunday. Throughout the book, he makes the case that the idea that the Bible had many different editions written by different human authors over centuries that were then redacted into the Bible we have today, has no evidence to back it up.

Some theories that can be said about the inconsistencies in the Biblical text can look pretty. As a rabbi, I'm no stranger to quoting many beautiful interpretations on a difficult passage. But there are infinite ways to explain something just like there's an infinite number of equations to explain the universe. Anyone who wants to make a claim about historical truth needs observable evidence.

What kind of evidence would we need to prove the idea of multiple authors and a redacting process in Biblical studies?

We'd need to find many editions of the Torah scroll with vast differences between them in different archaeological periods. We'd also have to find records of arguments over the Torah text and evidence of a redactor's efforts to combine them into a single interwoven Biblical text. If such evidence were to come up, we'd have to deal with it. Maimonides said that if Aristotle's assertion that the universe has existed eternally would ever be scientifically proven, we would accept it and deal with it . But we don't have that evidence in Biblical studies. No such things have ever been found.

As Rabbi Dr. Berman argues in the book, the evidence we do have points to the idea that the supposed legal and narrative inconsistencies in the Bible are not an issue at all and do not prove multiple authors because there are many parallels between how the Bible was written and how other people wrote at the time.

He states on p.127 that the literature found from that period "highlight[s] the necessity of examining the literal conventions of the Torah in light of those in the Ancient Near East. The 18th and 19th century scholars who invented source criticism did so with no recourse to the writing of the Ancient Near East because these were unknown until the late 19th century. Perforce, they examined the text of Tanach with the only notions of literary unity they knew - their own."

But if anyone is looking for a fundational Jewish book for which we do have evidence that it had many versions before being redacted into our current version, I have something for you. It's called the Passover Haggadah.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kasher (1895-1983), a Polish-Israeli Rabbi, scholar and Israel Prize recipient, did much work uncovering all the different editions of the Passover Haggadah that we have in his book Haggadah Shleimah (The Complete Haggadah). Currently we use the text compiled by Rabbi Amram Gaon (810-875) while the text used by Rabbi

Saadia Gaon (882-942) was much shorter. (For instance, his version did not include the story of Rabbi Eliezer or Dayenu.) Maimonides also had his own text, and Rabbi Kasher found other editions in old libraries.

Even in the Talmud we find arguments about what we should say Seder Night. In Tractate Pesachim 116a, Rav and Shmuel argue about whether we start the story from our Egyptian slavery or from describing Avraham Avinu's idol worshiping family background. Clearly, the Haggadah text was not finalized yet. Rabbi Kasher quotes Rabbi David Abirdaham (fl. 1340), commonly known as the Avudraham, who asserts that the Haggadah as we have it was grafted from these two opinions and reached its final form in our day. (As a fun side note, the songs Chad Gadya and "Who Knows One" appeared circa 400 A.D.)

So we can assume based on the historical evidence that the text we use to tell the story of the Exodus had different versions but became redacted in the text we use today, through a historical process. (Of course, this does not make it exactly analogous to the process described by biblical critics. I'm only saying that the Haggadah's text did evolve.) We use the Haggadah as we have it as our base text for the Seder, but that doesn't mean we need to blind ourselves to this historical fact.

So let's invite a Biblical studies professor and a theoretical physicist to our Seder this year. I'm sure if we start talking about this, it will lead to some fun discussion. Maybe so much that our students will have to fetch us for the morning Shema.

Shabbat Shalom!

P.S. If you wish to meet and discuss these topics with Rabbi Berman, you're invited on Sunday at 2pm (Central time; 3 p.m. Eastern time) for a discussion with him. Here are the zoom link and password.

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81766810449?pwd=UmsvK2VLS3Y1YWhPTWpyRlFYTHlldz09 Password: 093811

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Rav Kook Torah
Vayikra: Black Fire on White Fire

With the construction of the Tabernacle complete, the holy structure began to fulfill its primary purpose: a conduit for communication between God and Moses. “I will commune with you there, speaking to you above the ark-cover” (Exod. 25:22). Before each actual communication, God would first summon Moses to the tent, with a Voice that only Moses could hear:

“God called to Moses, speaking to him from the Communion Tent” (Lev. 1:1).

What was the nature of this Divine call?

The Miniature Aleph and the Four-Pronged Shin

The word vayikra (“He called”) is written in an unusual fashion. The last letter, the aleph, is written in miniature in the Torah. Did God command Moses to write it that way? Or was this an expression of Moses’ extraordinary humility — an attempt to “hide” the aleph, so to speak, so that it would appear that God only “happened” (vayikar) to speak with Moses, similar to the chance prophetic experiences of evil Balaam?

We find a second unusual letter in the tefillin (phylacteries) worn on the head. Usually, the letter shin is written with three upward strokes, but the shin embossed on the left side of the tefillin has four. Some commentaries connect this peculiar shin to the Midrashic description of the Torah’s transmission to Israel via black fire engraved on white fire. What does this mean? What are these black and white fires?

Black Ink on White Parchment

When we think about a Torah scroll, we usually only consider the letters themselves, written in black ink. Yet, the Talmud (Menachot 29a) rules that every letter in a Torah scroll must be completely surrounded by parchment. This requirement is called mukaf gevil. In other words, the white parchment around the letters is an integral part of the Torah; without it, the Torah scroll is disqualified. In fact, the white space is a higher form of Torah. It is analogous to the white fire of Sinai — a sublime, hidden Torah that cannot be read in the usual manner.

There is a delicate balance between black and white in the Torah. The shirot, the poetic portions in the Torah, are written in a special fashion, like a wall constructed from layers of black and white bricks. These poetic sections are the loftiest parts of the Torah. Consequently, they have more white space, as they contain a greater measure of the esoteric white fire. If a scribe were to write other sections of the Torah in this special layout, the Torah scroll would be rendered invalid. After the Torah was revealed and restricted to our limited world, it must be written with the appropriate ratio of black to white.

What about the four-pronged shin on tefillin? The mitzvah of tefillin is closely connected to the manifestation of Torah after its revelation into the finite world. “All of the peoples of the land shall see that the name of God is called upon you, and they shall be in awe of you” (Deut. 28:10; see Menachot 35b). Thus, tefillin correspond to the lower realm of black fire, and are marked with a shin bearing an extra measure of black.

We can deepen our understanding of the white and black fires by considering another example of white space in the Torah. Extra space is left blank to separate sections of the Torah. The Sages explained that these separations allowed Moses to reflect upon and absorb the previous lesson. In other words, the white fire corresponds to the loftier realm of thought and contemplation. The black fire of the letters, on the other hand, is the revelation of intellect into the realm of language — a contraction and limitation of abstract thought into the more concrete level of speech.

The Divine Call Before Revelation

The distinction between white and black fire also sheds light on God’s call to Moses before speaking with him. The Voice summoning Moses to enter the tent was in fact the divine call from Sinai, an infinite call that never ceased (Deut. 5:19). The summons would reach Moses as he stood outside the tent, before being constrained within the four walls of the Tabernacle. This Voice was not a revelation of Torah, but an overture to its revelation. It belonged to the esoteric white fire of Torah, before its constriction and revelation into the physical world.

This is the reason that Moses made the aleph of the divine call smaller. Since it belonged to the realm of white fire, the summons required an extra measure of white space over black ink. Superficially, Moses’ miniature aleph humbly implies a diminished state of the revealed Torah of black fire, but on a deeper level, it reflects an increase in the esoteric Torah of white fire.

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 179-181. Adapted from Shemuot HaRe’iyah IV.)

http://www.ravkooktorah.org/VAYIK64.htm

The Sin Offering (Vayikra 5777)

By Lord Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z”l, Former Chief Rabbi of the U.K.*

Vayikra is about sacrifices, and though these laws have been inoperative for almost 2000 years since the destruction of the Temple, the moral principles they embody are still challenging.

One set of sacrifices, set out in detail in this week’s sedra, warrants particular attention: chattat, the ‘sin offering.’ Four different cases are considered: the anointed priest (the High Priest), the assembly (the Sanhedrin or supreme court), the Prince (the King), and an ordinary individual. Because their roles in the community were different, so too was the form of their atonement.

The sin offering was to be brought only for major sins, those that carried the penalty of karet, ‘being cut off’; and only if they were committed unintentionally or inadvertently (be-shogeg). This could happen in one of two ways, either [a]

because the person concerned did not know the law (for example, that cooking is forbidden on the Sabbath) or [b] he or she did not know the facts (for instance, that today is the Sabbath).

Unintentional sins stand midway between intentional sins (where you knew what you were doing was wrong) and involuntary action (ones, where you were not acting freely at all: it was a reflex action, or someone was pointing a gun at your head). Intentional sins cannot be atoned for by sacrifice. Involuntary actions do not need atonement. Thus, the sin offering is confined to a middle range of cases, where you did wrong, but you didn't know you were doing wrong.

The question is obvious: Why should unintentional sins require atonement at all? What guilt is involved? The sinner did not mean to sin. The requisite intent (mens rea) was lacking. Had the offender known the facts and the law at the time, he would not have done what he did. Why then does he have to undergo a process of atonement? To this, the commentators gave a variety of answers.

R. Samson Raphael Hirsch and R. David Zvi Hoffman give the most straightforward explanation. Ignorance – whether of the facts or the law – is a form of negligence. We should know the law, especially in the most serious cases. We should also exercise vigilance: we should know what we are doing. That is a fundamental obligation, especially in relation to the most serious areas of conduct.

The Abarbanel argues that the sin offering was less a punishment for what had been done, than a solemn warning against sin in the future. The bringing of a sacrifice, involving considerable effort and expense, was a vivid reminder to the individual to be more careful in the future.

Nahmanides suggests that the sin offering was brought not because of what led to the act, but rather because of what followed from it. Sin, even without intention, defiles. 'The reason for the offerings for the erring soul is that all sins [even if committed unwittingly] produce a "stain" on the soul and constitute a blemish in it, and the soul is only worthy to be received by its Creator when it is pure of all sin.'

The late Lubavitcher Rebbe, following midrashic tradition, offered a fourth interpretation. Even inadvertent sins testify to something wrong on the part of the person concerned. Bad things do not come about through good people. The Sages said that God does not allow even the animals of the righteous to do wrong; how much more so does He protect the righteous themselves from error and mishap (see Yevamot 99b; Ketubot 28b). There must therefore have been something wrong with the individual for the mishap to have taken place.

This view – characteristic of the Chabad approach, with its emphasis on the psychology of the religious life – shares more than a passing similarity with Sigmund Freud's analysis of the unconscious, which gave rise to the phrase, 'a Freudian slip.' Remarks or acts that seem unintentional often betray unconscious desires or motives. Indeed, we can often glimpse the unconscious more readily at such moments than when the person is acting in full knowledge and deliberation. Inadvertent sins suggest something amiss in the soul of the sinner. It is this fault which may lie beneath the threshold of consciousness, which is atoned for by the chattat.

Whichever explanation we follow, the chattat represents an idea familiar in law but strangely unfamiliar in Western ethics. Our acts make a difference to the world.

Under the influence of Immanuel Kant, we have come to think that all that matters as far as morality is concerned is the will. If our will is good, then we are good, regardless of what we actually do. We are judged by our intentions, not our deeds. Judaism does recognise the difference between good will and bad. That is why deliberate sins cannot be atoned for by a sacrifice, whereas unintentional ones can.

Yet the very fact that unintentional sins require atonement tells us that we cannot dissociate ourselves from our actions by saying: 'I didn't mean to do it.' Wrong was done – and it was done by us. Therefore we must perform an act that signals our contrition. We cannot just walk away as if the act had nothing to do with us.

Many years ago a secular Jewish novelist said to me: 'Isn't Judaism full of guilt?' To which I replied, 'Yes, but it is also full of forgiveness.' The entire institution of the sin offering is about forgiveness. However, Judaism makes a serious moral statement when it refuses to split the human person into two entities – body and soul, act and intention, objective and subjective, the world 'out there' and the world 'in here'. Kant did just that. All that matters morally, he argued, is what happens 'in here', in the soul.

Is it entirely accidental that the culture most influenced by Kant was also the one that gave rise to the Holocaust? I do not mean – Heaven forbid – that the sage of Konigsberg was in any way responsible for that tragedy. Yet it remains the case that many good and decent people did nothing to protest the single greatest crime of man against man while it was taking place. Many of them surely thought that it had nothing to do with them. If they bore the Jews no particular ill will, why should they feel guilty? Yet the result of their action or inaction had real consequences in the physical world. A culture that confines morality to the mind is one that lacks an adequate defence against harmful behaviour.

The sin offering reminds us that the wrong we do, or let happen, even if we did not intend it, still requires atonement. Unfashionable though this is, a morality that speaks about action, not just intention – about what happens through us even if we didn't mean to do it – is more compelling, more true to the human situation, than one that speaks of intention alone.

* Note: because Likutei Torah and the Internet Parsha Sheet, both attached by E-mail, normally include the two most recent Devrei Torah by Rabbi Sacks, I have selected an earlier Dvar. *See* https://rabbisacks.org/sin-offering-vayikra-5777/

What is the Point of Animal Sacrifices?

By Yossi Ives* © Chabad 2021

The issue of animal sacrifices has been a sensitive and controversial one for millennia. Why would an infinite, all-knowing, omnipotent G d wish for people to offer up animal sacrifices? It seems to be a pointless waste of resources and needless dispensing of life. Scripture makes it clear that faith, integrity, and devotion to the ways of the L rd are most prized. Piety, righteousness, and strict observance of the commandments are what characterize the life of a servant to the Almighty.

It seems like a needless dispensing of life

Great scholars throughout Jewish history have therefore taken great pains to explain the relevance and importance of sacrifices. We are told that they serve as a symbol of our own inadequacy—in the offering we are symbolically offering up ourselves. We are also told that the offerings also represent our broader efforts to elevate the natural world and offer it up for a higher purpose. Some even argue that the sacrifices were a necessary route away from the pervasive idolatry of the times.

Without question, the topic is weighty and most deserving of attention. Which makes it all the more remarkable that Rashi, the foremost biblical commentator, is silent. While of course Rashi is not obligated to explain or gives reasons for every commandment that appears in the Torah, animal sacrifices dominate much of the text of the Five Books of Moses and pose such an immense challenge to decency and common sense that it is unfathomable he would allow this huge topic to go unaddressed.

And that's not all. The few observations Rashi does make about animal sacrifices only deepen our curiosity. The Torah often refers to sacrifices as "a pleasant aroma for the L rd." Naturally, Rashi finds this phrase problematic. G d does not smell and is unlikely to find our offering to have a pleasing aroma. Moreover, as commentators have long observed, the smell of burning carcasses is hardly what one would describe as "a pleasant aroma!" Thus Rashi notes on more than one occasion that this phrase really means, "It gives Me satisfaction that I spoke and My will was fulfilled." Let us ignore the uniquely passive wording for a moment and focus on the point: the pleasant aroma actually means that G d is pleased. And this is supposed to clear things up?

How so? We are left just as unclear as to what would be pleasing about a sacrifice. We know it is not the aroma, but what then? We are back to the beginning: what is the point and how could it possibly bring pleasure On High?

One final twist: Noah brought a sacrifice and the wording "a pleasant aroma" appears there too. Rashi says nothing there, and assumes it is clear that both Noah and G d were pleased. It would be hard to miss that impression as the tale there goes on to record G d's promise never to bring a flood again. It seems Rashi sees absolutely no problem with the words "pleasant aroma," so why are we hearing about it now in the Book of Leviticus?

These complex questions deserve a worthy resolution. The Rebbe, as usual, turns the whole matter on its head. “You are assuming,” says the Rebbe, “that there is a reason for sacrifices and that what we should be doing is searching for the most rewarding or convincing reason. What if the opposite is true? What if there is no reason whatsoever for animal sacrifices? What if that – the complete lack of any reason – is the whole point of sacrifices?” In short, what if we have to completely rethink the whole matter in order to get back to basics?

For thousands of years scholars have focused on finding an explanation, but the Rebbe calls in Rashi as an ally to argue that there is no explanation. The entire point of sacrifices is to do something for G d without the satisfaction of any reasonable justification, simply because He let it be known that this would be pleasing to Him.

If you find an answer, you have completely missed the point

This – says the Rebbe – is in fact exactly what Rashi is saying with his explanation of “a pleasant aroma” – “It gives Me satisfaction that I spoke and My will was fulfilled.” It now seems blindingly obvious what Rashi is trying to say: bringing sacrifices indeed achieves nothing at all, in the sense that you will have trouble truly explaining how it is the best way to use animals. However, if you were to have found an answer, you will have completely missed the point. The point of sacrifices is that G d simply had us know that this is something he wants and, hey presto, it now becomes central to our lives and practice. Hence the passive tone in Rashi’s comment, as if to say the point is not that “I am demanding” it, but that “I have informed you that it would meet My wishes.”

There are plenty of commandments that do not come with explanations – they are called chukim (usually translated as “statutes”). While some suggest that these commandments, too, have explanations, they are just not revealed to us, Rashi states plainly that they have no explanation, period. So animal sacrifices are not the only practice in Judaism that lacks rational explanation, but there is one significant difference between animal sacrifice and everything else. The laws for which we have no reason do have a basic, obvious aim: to have us act in obedience to G d and to learn self-restraint in our choice-making. The specific act may not come with a reason, but everyone understands what the deal is. Animal sacrifices, in contrast, do not teach us obedience or restraint, they are purely an act of homage to G d. Yet we realize that He does need our sacrifices. This makes offering them a uniquely touching expression of our devotion to him.

Please do not give me a reason for sacrifices, for the moment you do you have killed the whole idea. Sacrifices are in the manner of a husband saying to his wife, “Whatever you want, dear!” Your request may make no sense to me, but since it comes from you, it is now the most important thing in my world. Almighty G d, we have no idea why You asked for sacrifices, but now that you did, all we want to do is please You.

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Vayikra: Getting Close

By Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky *

G-d said to Moses, “When someone brings a sacrifice” (Leviticus 1:2)

The very notion of sacrifices seems to run counter to the Jewish conception of G-d: G-d is not physical and therefore has no need to “consume” our sacrifices. Yet we see in this section of the Torah that G-d not only accepts sacrifices but explicitly sets down the procedures for them, giving every indication that He actually wants them!

The answer lies in the fact that the Hebrew word for “sacrifice” or “offering”—korban—carries neither of these meanings, but means “getting close.” Although we generally associate sacrifices with atonement for sin, the first sacrifices mentioned in this section are voluntary offerings, which an individual brings to G-d not to atone for sin but out of the desire to draw closer to Him.

Yet, some of the sacrifices are indeed sin-offerings. This indicates that G-d calls out to all of us to draw close to Him—not only to the guiltless among us, but to all of us, at all times.

Nowadays, in the absence of the Tabernacle (or its permanent successor, the holy Temple in Jerusalem), there are three ways that we draw close to G-d: (1) through studying the Torah—particularly its teachings about sacrifices; (2) through prayer, the liturgy of which is modeled after the sacrifices; and (3) through acts of charity and kindness.

– * from Daily Wisdom #1

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Likutei *Divrei* Torah

Gleanings of Divrei Torah on Parashat Hashavuah via the Internet

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Covenant and Conversation
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

As we have discussed so many times already this year, leaders make mistakes. That is inevitable. So, strikingly, our parsha of Vayikra implies. The real issue is how leaders respond to their mistakes.

The point is made by the Torah in a very subtle way. Our parsha deals with sin offerings to be brought when people have made mistakes. The technical term for this is sheggagah, meaning inadvertent wrongdoing (Lev. 4:1-35). You did something, not knowing it was forbidden, either because you forgot or did not know the law, or because you were unaware of certain facts. You may, for instance, have carried something in a public place on Shabbat, perhaps because you did not know it was forbidden to carry, or you forgot what was in your pocket, or because you forgot it was Shabbat.

The Torah prescribes different sin offerings depending on who made the mistake. It enumerates four categories. First is the High Priest, second is "the whole community" (understood to mean the Great Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court), a third is "the leader" (Nasi), and the fourth is an ordinary individual.

In three of the four cases, the law is introduced by the word im, "if" – if such a person commits a sin. In the case of the leader, however, the law is prefaced by the word asher, "when" (Lev. 4:22). It is possible that a High Priest, the Supreme Court or an individual may err. But in the case of a leader, it is probable or even certain. Leaders make mistakes. It is unavoidable, the occupational hazard of their role. Talking about the sin of a Nasi, the Torah uses the word "when," not "if."

Nasi is the generic word for a leader: a ruler, king, judge, elder or prince. Usually it refers to the holder of political power. In Mishnaic times, the Nasi, the most famous of whom were leaders from the family of Hillel, had a quasi-governmental role as representative of the Jewish people to the Roman government. Rabbi Moses Sofer (Bratislava, 1762-1839) in one of his responsa[1] examines the question of why, when positions of Torah leadership are never dynastic (never passed from father to son), the role of Nasi was an exception. Often this role did pass from father to son. The answer he gives, and it is historically insightful, is that with the decline of monarchy in the Second Temple period and thereafter, the Nasi took on many of the responsibilities of a king. His role, internally and externally, was as much political and diplomatic as religious. That in general is what is meant by the word Nasi.

Why does the Torah consider this type of leadership particularly prone to error? The commentators offer three possible explanations. R. Ovadiah Sforno (to Lev. 4:21–22) cites the phrase "But Yeshurun waxed fat, and kicked" (Deut. 32:15). Those who have advantages over others, whether of wealth or power, can lose their moral sense. Rabbeinu Bachya agrees, suggesting that rulers tend to become arrogant and haughty. Implicit in these comments – it is in fact a major theme of Tanach as a whole – is the idea later stated by Lord Acton in the aphorism, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."[2]

Elie Munk, citing the Zohar, offers a second explanation. The High Priest and the Sanhedrin were in constant contact with that which was holy. They lived in a world of ideals. The king or political ruler, by contrast, was involved in secular affairs: war and peace, the administration of government, and international relations. They were more likely to sin because their day-to-day concerns were not religious but pragmatic.[3]

Meir Simcha ha-Cohen of Dvinsk[4] points out that a King was especially vulnerable to being led astray by popular sentiment. Neither a Priest nor a Judge in the Sanhedrin were answerable to the people. The King, however, relied on popular support. Without that he could be deposed. But this is laden with risk. Doing what the people want is not always doing what God wants. That, R. Meir Simcha argues, is what led David to order a census (2 Sam. 24), and Zedekiah to ignore the advice of Jeremiah and rebel against the King of Babylon (2 Chr. 36). Thus, for a whole series of reasons, a political leader is more exposed to temptation and error than a Priest or Judge.

There are further reasons.[5] One is that politics is an arena of conflict. It deals in matters – specifically wealth and power – that are in the short-term, zero-sum games. 'The more I have, the less you have. Seeking to maximise the benefits to myself or my group, I come into conflict with others who seek to maximise benefits to themselves or their group.' The politics of free societies is always conflict-ridden. The only societies where there is no conflict are tyrannical or totalitarian ones in which dissenting voices are suppressed – and Judaism is a standing protest against tyranny. So in a free society, whatever course a politician takes will please some and anger others. From this, there is no escape.

Politics involves difficult judgements. A leader must balance competing claims and will sometimes get it wrong. One example – one of the most fateful in Jewish history – occurred after the death of King Solomon. People came to his son and successor, Rehoboam, complaining that Solomon had imposed unsustainable burdens on the population, particularly during the building of the Temple. Led by Jeroboam, they asked the new King to reduce the burden. Rehoboam asked his father's counsellors for advice. They told him to concede to the people's demand. Serve them, they said, and they will serve you. Rehoboam then turned to his own friends, who told him the opposite: Reject the request. Show the people you are a strong leader who cannot be intimidated (1 Kings 12:1-15).

It was disastrous advice, and the result was tragic. The kingdom split in two, the ten northern tribes following Jeroboam, leaving only the southern tribes, generically known as "Judah," loyal to the king. For Israel as a people in its own land, it was the beginning of the end. Always a small people surrounded by large and powerful empires, it needed unity, high morale and a strong sense of destiny to survive. Divided, it was only a matter of time before both nations, Israel in the north, Judah in the south, fell to other powers.

The reason leaders – as opposed to Judges and Priests – cannot avoid making mistakes is that there is no textbook that infallibly teaches you how to lead. Priests and Judges follow laws. For leadership there are no laws because every situation is unique. As Isaiah Berlin put it in his essay, 'Political Judgement,'[6] in the realm of political action, there are few laws and what is needed instead is skill in reading a situation. Successful statesmen "grasp the unique combination of characteristics that constitute this particular situation – this and no other." Berlin compares this to the gift possessed by great novelists like Tolstoy and Proust.[7] Applying inflexible rules to a

constantly shifting political landscape destroys societies. Communism was like that. In free societies, people change, culture changes, the world beyond a nation's borders does not stand still. So a politician will find that what worked a decade or a century ago does not work now. In politics it is easy to get it wrong, hard to get it right.

There is one more reason why leadership is so challenging. It is alluded to by the Mishnaic Sage, R. Nechemiah, commenting on the verse, "My son, if you have put up security for your neighbour, if you have struck your hand in pledge for another" (Prov. 6:1):

So long as a man is an associate [i.e. concerned only with personal piety], he need not be concerned with the community and is not punished on account of it. But once a man has been placed at the head and has donned the cloak of office, he may not say: 'I have to look after my welfare, I am not concerned with the community.' Instead, the whole burden of communal affairs rests on him. If he sees a man doing violence to his fellow, or committing a transgression, and does not seek to prevent him, he is punished on account of him… you are responsible for him. You have entered the gladiatorial arena, and he who enters the arena is either conquered or conquers.[8]

A private individual is responsible only for their own sins. A leader is held responsible for the sins of the people they lead: at least those they might have prevented.[9] With power comes responsibility: the greater the power, the greater the responsibility.

There are no universal rules, there is no failsafe textbook, for leadership. Every situation is different and each age brings its own challenges. A ruler, in the best interests of their people, may sometimes have to take decisions that a conscientious individual would shrink from doing in private life. They may have to decide to wage a war, knowing that some will die. They may have to levy taxes, knowing that this will leave some impoverished. Only after the event will the leader know whether the decision was justified, and it may depend on factors beyond their control.

The Jewish approach to leadership is thus an unusual combination of realism and idealism – realism in its acknowledgement that leaders inevitably make mistakes, idealism in its constant subordination of politics to ethics, power to responsibility, pragmatism to the demands of conscience. What matters is not that leaders never get it wrong – that is inevitable, given the nature of leadership – but that they are always exposed to prophetic critique and that they constantly study Torah to remind themselves of transcendent standards and ultimate aims. The most important thing from a Torah perspective is that a leader is sufficiently honest to admit their mistakes. Hence the significance of the sin offering.

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai summed it up with a brilliant double-entendre on the word asher, meaning "when" in the phrase "when a leader sins." He relates it to the word ashrei, "happy," and says: Happy is the generation whose leader is willing to bring a sin offering for their mistakes.[10]

Leadership demands two kinds of courage: the strength to take a risk, and the humility to admit when a risk fails.

[1] Responsa Chatam Sofer, Orach Chayyim, 12.
[2] This famous phrase comes from a letter written by Lord Acton in 1887. See Martin H. Manser, and Rosalind Fergusson, The Facts on File Dictionary of Proverbs, New York: Facts on File, 2002, 225.
[3] Elie Munk, The Call of the Torah, Vayikra, New York, Mesorah Publications, 1992, 33.
[4] Meshech Chochmah to Lev. 4:21-22.
[5] This, needless to say, is not the plain sense of the text. The sins for which leaders brought an offering were spiritual offences, not errors of political judgment.
[6] Isaiah Berlin, The Sense of Reality, Chatto and Windus, 1996, 40-53.
[7] Incidentally, this answers the point made by political philosopher Michael Walzer in his book on the politics of the Bible, In God's Shadow. He is undeniably right to point out that political theory, so significant in ancient Greece, is almost completely absent from the Hebrew Bible. I would argue, and so surely would Isaiah Berlin, that there is a reason for this. In politics there are few general laws, and the Hebrew Bible is interested in laws. But when it comes to politics – to Israel's Kings for example – it does not give laws but instead tells stories.
[8] Exodus Rabbah, 27:9.
[9] "Whoever can prevent the members of his household from sinning and does not, is seized for the sins of his household. If he can prevent his fellow citizens and does not, he is seized for the sins of his fellow citizens. If he can prevent the whole world from sinning, and does not, he is seized for the sins of the whole world" (Shabbat 54b).
[10] Tosefta Baba Kamma, 7:5.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"If the entire congregation of Israel commits an inadvertent violation as a result of (a mistaken legal decision of the Highest Court)….and they thereby violate one of the prohibitory commandments of God, they shall incur guilt" (Lev. 4:13)

If the Jewish state could be revived virtually from the ashes of destruction after two thousand years, then why hasn't the Sanhedrin, the great Jewish court of the First and Second Commonwealths, been revived?

During the centuries of its existence, this august body, comprised of seventy-one elders and sages who ruled on every aspect of life, brought unity to the land because their decisions were binding on the entire nation.

On the surface, reviving the Sanhedrin seems impossible because its members must be recipients of the classic Jewish ordination that traces itself back to Moses himself, and even to the Almighty, as it were, who ordained Moses, then Moses ordained Joshua, Joshua the elders, the elders the prophets, the prophets the Men of the Great Assembly. But this special ordination came to an end in the third century of the Common Era. And since intrinsic to the idea of the Sanhedrin is a living tradition of ordination, when ordination died out, so, it would seem, did the Sanhedrin and the possibility of its revival.

But a verse in this week's portion creates alternative possibilities. In his commentary to the Mishna, Maimonides writes, "if all the Jewish Sages and their disciples would agree on the choice of one person among those who dwell in Israel as their head [but this must be done in the land of Israel], and (that head) establishes a house of learning, he would be considered as having received the original ordination and he could then ordain anyone he desires." Maimonides adds that the Sanhedrin would return to its original function as it is written in Isaiah 1:26: "I will restore thy judges as at first and thy Sages as in the beginning." Such a selection would mean an election, a list of candidates, ballots. So who does the choosing? The sages and their disciples—everyone with a relationship to Torah sages, to Jewish law. In an alternate source, however, Maimonides extends the privilege of voting to all adult residents of Israel! (Interpretations of the Mishnah, Chapter 4 of tractate B'Khorot, on the words "one who slaughters a first born animal and shows its blemish").

This idea reappears in Maimonides' Mishna Torah, Laws of Sanhedrin, Ch. 4, Law, 11, except there he concludes with the phrase, "this matter requires decision."

In 1563, a significant attempt was made by a leading sage of Safed, Rabbi Yaakov BeRab to revive classic ordination using the Mainionidean formula; in an election held in Safed, Rabbi BeRab was declared officially ordained. He proceeded to ordain several others of his disciples along with his most important student, Rabbi Yosef Karo, author of the Shulchan Aruch.

In the meantime, the rabbis in Jerusalem, led by Rabbi Levi ibn Habib, strongly opposed the Safed decision. When the question was put before Rabbi David Ben Zimra (Ridbaz), the chief rabbi of Egypt, he ruled in favor of the Jerusalem rabbis because not only had the election been restricted to one city of Israel (Safed and not Jerusalem) but the acknowledgment that "this matter requires decision" opened up the possibility that Maimonides may have changed his mind, in effect leaving the issue unadjudicated.

Rabbi Yaakov BeRab, on the other hand, understood that the phrase "requires decision" referred to whether one sage was sufficient to ordain others, or three sages were required for ordination. But he was absolutely convinced

that Maimonides had no doubt whatsoever about the method and the inevitability of reviving classic ordination.

Three centuries later, the first minister of religion in the new government of the Jewish state, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Maimon, renewed this controversy when he tried to convince the political and religious establishments that along with creation of the State should come creation of a Sanhedrin.

In his work The Renewal of the Sanhedrin in Our Renewed State, he cites the existence of a copy of Maimonides' commentary to the Mishna published along with emendations and additions written by Maimonides himself after he wrote the Mishna Torah, where he specifically writes that ordination and the Sanhedrin will be renewed before the coming of the Messiah, which implies that it must be achieved through human efforts. A photocopy of these words, in Maimonides' own handwriting, is provided in the book by Rav Maimon.

What is the basis for his most democratic suggestion? I believe it stems from a verse which we find in this week's portion of Vayikra, quoted above, which deals with the issue of the sins of the entire congregation.

Commentators ask how can an "entire congregation" sin and Rashi identifies the "congregation of Israel" with the Sanhedrin. In other words, when it says "if the entire congregation of Israel errs" it really means that "if the Sanhedrin errs."

The Jewish people are a nation defined by commandments, precepts and laws. Therefore the institution that protects and defines the law is at the heart of the nation's existence. In fact, how the Jewish people behave, what they do, can become the law. ("A custom of Israel is Torah.")

Knowing all this, it should not come as a surprise that Maimonides wanted to revive the ordination, and found a method utterly democratic in its design. The "people" equals the Sanhedrin, the "people" can choose one leading Jew who will then have the right to pass on his ordination to others, to re-create the Sanhedrin!

And for Maimonides, it is the population living in the land of Israel which represents the historical congregation of Israel (B.T. Horayot 3b).

Apparently, Maimonides is saying that before the next stage of Jewish history unfolds, the nation will have to decide who shall be given the authority to recreate ordination and who will be the commander-in-chief of the rabbis. Will it happen in our lifetime?

The Person in the Parsha
Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Forgiving Fallibility

"I was wrong. I am sorry. Please forgive me." These are rare words indeed, but I heard them pronounced clearly by a woman I once worked for, and whom I still admire.

She was the superintendent of a small school district just outside of Washington, DC. Several of the school districts in that geographical area were under a federal court order to guarantee desegregation of the races in the public schools. Believe it or not, the court found that even as late as the early 1970s, proper integration of the races was still not achieved in many of these schools.

The superintendent, whom I will call Dr. Cassidy, had selected a group of school system employees to serve as part of a specially trained team to deal with the tensions in the community that were caused by the implementation of this court order.

I was then working as a school psychologist in this school district, and was one of those chosen to serve on this team. We had spent several weeks training for this sensitive human relations project. She had initially assured us that federal funding for our salaries was guaranteed, and that we could be confident that our jobs were secure once certain formalities were finalized.

One Monday morning we were summoned to an urgent meeting. She informed us that the funds were not available, and that we would be denied not only our future salaries, but even remuneration for the time we had already spent. It was then that she uttered the words, "I was wrong. Please forgive me."

I have subsequently witnessed many situations in which a leader made a terrible mistake impacting upon the lives of others. But, almost invariably, those leaders shirked responsibility, blamed others, or concocted ludicrous excuses for their failures. Very few had Dr. Cassidy's courage.

This week's Torah portion, Parshat Vayikra (Leviticus 1:1-5:26), describes an individual who demonstrated just such courage, and who indeed was expected to do so.

Chapter 4 of our Torah portion lists a number of individuals who occupied special roles in the ancient Jewish community. They included the High Priest; the judges of the central court or Sanhedrin; and the Nasi, or chieftain. Of the latter, we read:

"In case it is a chieftain who incurs guilt by doing unwittingly any of the things which by the commandment of the Lord his God ought not to be done, and he realizes his guilt… He shall bring as his sin offering a male goat without blemish… Thus the priest shall make expiation on his behalf for his sin, and he shall be forgiven." (Leviticus 4:22-26)

The Hebrew for the first phrase in the above quotation, "in case", is "asher". Rashi notes the similarity between the word "asher" and the word "ashrei," or "fortunate." Based on that similarity he comments: "Fortunate is the generation whose leader is concerned about achieving forgiveness for his unintentional transgressions. How much more so will he demonstrate remorse for his intentional misdeeds."

Fortunate indeed is the community which is blessed with leadership that can acknowledge error unambiguously. Even more fortunate is the community whose leaders ask for forgiveness.

Our commentators note that it is to be expected that leaders will commit moral errors. Rabbi Obadiah Sforno, the medieval Italian physician and Torah scholar, comments that it is unavoidable that men in positions of power will sin. He quotes the phrase in Deuteronomy 32:15 which reads, "Jeshurun grew fat and kicked," indicating that when one becomes "fat" with power he will "kick" sinfully. How similar is this insight to Lord Acton's famous quote: "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

If the Torah assumes that misdeeds by leaders are unavoidable, it also expects that those leaders will humbly acknowledge their misdeeds and beg forgiveness for them. That is the lesson of the passage in our Torah portion.

However, the process cannot end with the leader's apologies. His followers must accept his sincere regret, and, much more difficult, must bring themselves to forgive him. In the passage in our parsha, it would seem that it is the Almighty who forgives a leader, and not necessarily the people.

My personal experience has taught me that just as it is difficult for people, especially those in power, to confess their shortcomings and to appeal for forgiveness, so is it all the more difficult for people to grant forgiveness to those who have offended them.

Yet, our sages point out that the Almighty wants us to be as forgiving as He is. Thus, there is a verse in the book of the prophet Micah which reads, "Who is a God like You, forgiving iniquity and remitting transgression…?" Upon this verse, the Talmud comments: "Whose iniquities does God forgive? Those of he who remits the transgressions of others." (Talmud Bavli, Rosh Hashana 17a).

So, let's return to the story with which I began this column. Dr. Cassidy proved herself to be capable of confessing that she was mistaken, and of asking us to forgive her. But I also remember our reaction, the reaction of the small group of hard workers who learned that

they were not only out of a job, but would not even be getting paycheck that they earned.

Our reaction was one of great anger. I imagine that the feelings in the room were close to those of a lynch mob. We vented some of those feelings, but then moved on to feelings of frustration and impotence. We asked Dr. Cassidy to leave the room so that we could plan our next step rationally, which she did.

I won't report on the details of the long discussion which ensued. Suffice it to say that we moved from anger and frustration to acknowledging Dr. Cassidy's good intentions, to empathizing with her dilemma, and finally, as a group, deciding to express to her our understanding and forgiveness.

She reentered the room, and was visibly touched by our compassionate response

I must conclude by telling you dear reader, that although happy endings are generally confined to fairy tales, this particular story did have a happy ending.

Perhaps emboldened by the support she felt from our group, Dr. Cassidy renewed her efforts to obtain the grant from the federal agency, enlisted the assistance of several regional congressman, and obtained the funds available for this training program.

The lessons of ordinary life often parallel the lessons of the Torah. For a society to advance, its leaders must be self-aware and courageous enough to recognize and confess their failures, and to seek forgiveness from those whom they have affronted. Equally important, those who have been affronted most find it in their hearts to sincerely forgive.

Then, and only then, can problems be solved, and greater goals achieved.

Dvar Torah
Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Why do we add salt to our bread at the commencement of our meals?

In Parshat Vayikra the Torah tells us 'al kol korbancha takriv melach' – 'you must offer salt together with every one of your sacrifices'. Rabenu Bachya brings Tosfot in mesechet Pesachim, Daf 94a, who explains that there are three types of area in this world. We have inhabited places, deserts, and the seas and rivers.

The Torah was given to us in a dessert. Our Temple was built in an inhabited area. And Hashem gave recognition to the waters of the world by instructing us to use salt in our sacrifices because salt is ever present in the waters of the sea.

There is a further extraordinary dimension of salt. Salt is NaCl – sodium chloride. No one would think about placing sodium or chlorine on our tables. But remarkably the fusion of the two produces salt, a staple element of our diet and one of the great preservatives of food.

The salt that we have on our tables for our meals serves as an ongoing reminder that there are some things that we will never be able to work out. As clever and as advanced as we are within our sophisticated age, nonetheless, there are some things that will always be beyond our understanding. The mystery of salt sends us a reminder of Hashem's mastery over our world and our ongoing indebtedness to him for the world that he has created – the world that he maintains and food that is on our plates – each and everyday.

OTS Dvar Torah

Accepting God's Commandments, Especially when we don't Understand
Rabbi Reuven Spolter

Many years ago, in a discussion about the Passover Seder with a rabbinic colleague who happened to be a vegetarian, he explained that instead of a shank bone he would place a piece of sweet potato on his Seder plate. When he noticed my puzzled look he explained, "Instead of a Paschal Lamb, we have a Paschal Yam."

The vast majority of us will not hear the reading of Parashat Vayikra in shul this Shabbat. We will read the Torah reading in our homes, either alone, or with our close family members. I sometimes feel that the Torah reading in shul affords us the luxury of overlooking parts of the Torah we find challenging. If we listen and follow along in the Hebrew at the relatively quick pace of the Torah reading, we need not expend that much effort or energy on the content of the reading.

This week, in the confines of our own homes, we have the time and luxury to study the Torah reading in greater depth –forcing us to face an uncomfortable truth about Parashat Vayikra: It's all about animal sacrifice. In fact, much of the entire book of Vayikra describes the service in the Mishkan and the various animal and grain sacrifices offered.

Many people choose to overlook this strong focus on animal sacrifice in Jewish tradition. Truthfully, modern Jews lack a religious framework in which to place the slaughter of animals and the spilling or sprinkling of their blood on an altar. Animal sacrifice seems crude, primitive – even pagan. Yet, the truth is quite the opposite. Animal sacrifice and its myriad of laws and details comprise a significant portion both of the written as well as the Oral Jewish traditions.

Maimonides, in his Guide to the Perplexed (Section III, Chapter 32), famously described the sacrifices as a Divine method of weaning humanity off of idolatry. If we accept this explanation, we can relegate the many sections of the Torah proscribing animal sacrifice to an interesting, but no longer relevant point in our distant history. In this way, we can absolve ourselves of the need to struggle with a future which includes animal sacrifice.

Ramban (see his commentary on Vayikra 1:9), forcefully rejects Rambam's assertion. How can it be that the sum total of myriad sacrifices has no intrinsic value, but instead only served to prevent a more drastic type of sin? The Torah describes sacrifices as "a pleasing odor to God." (Vayikra 1:13) Noah offered animal sacrifices before we have any record of idolatrous behavior. Ramban then offers an explanation for a logic behind sacrifices, but also concludes, "In truth, there is in the sacrifices a hidden secret."

Personally, I find Rambam's argument unconvincing. In fact, I'm not convinced that Rambam believed it himself. Rambam himself offers a different reason for sacrifices in the Mishnah Torah (see Laws of Trespass, Chapter 8), explaining the difference between a law (mishpat) which has an explicit reason – like the prohibition against theft, and a statute, (chok), whose underlying reasoning eludes us.

One ought to consider the laws of the Torah and to penetrate into their ultimate significance as much as he can. If, however, he cannot discover the reason and is ignorant of the basic cause of a law, he should not regard it with contempt…The statutes are precepts the reason of which is not known — such as the prohibition against pork and that against meat-milk mixture, the laws concerning the heifer with the broken neck, the red cow, or the goat that is sent away to the wilderness…and all of the sacrifices are in this category of statutes…

Much of religious life is replete with prayers for not only the building of the Beit Hamikdash, but for the return of the ritual sacrifices to the Temple. Every Shabbat during Mussaf we pray that,

May it be Your will, LORD our God and God of our ancestors, to lead us back in joy to our land and to plant us within our borders. There we will prepare for You our obligatory offerings: the regular daily offerings in their order, and the additional offerings according to their laws…

We will soon sit together with our families around the Seder table and recount the story of the Exodus and from Egypt. At the very end of the Maggid section in which we give thanks to God for redeeming the Jewish people from bondage, we also add an additional prayer:

So too, Lord our God, and God of our ancestors, bring us to other appointed times and holidays that will come to greet us in peace, joyful in the building of Your city and happy in Your worship; that we shall eat there from the offerings and from the Pesach sacrifices, the blood of which shall reach the wall of Your altar for favor, and we shall thank You with a new song upon our redemption and

upon the restoration of our souls. Blessed are you, Lord, who redeemed Israel.

As the Coronavirus crisis forced us to turn inward and shelter in our homes, with only our immediate families for companionship, this world-wide plague also prompts us to reevaluate much of what we knew before. Great countries, even the entire world – were on the brink of collapse due an unseen force that cannot be seen or even detected until it is too late. As much as we believed that we had control over our lives and destinies, there will always be forces beyond our control which we must learn to contend with and accept.

Is this not the definition of a chok – a statute? The sacrifices in Vayikra remind us that in religious life we must submit to the will of God, even with regard to those commandments with which we struggle.

When my vegetarian rabbinic friend told me about his Pesach sweet potato, I asked him, "When the Temple is rebuilt and we offer the Korban Pesach in Jerusalem, what then will you have on your Seder plate? Will you still celebrate with the Paschal yam?"

He answered – without missing a beat: "When the Temple is rebuilt, I might not like it, but I will be a vegetarian except for one night of the year, in order to fulfill my religious requirement."

We need not understand every commandment, but our submission to God's commandments, both intellectually and physically, represents a powerful expression of our religious experience.

Dvar Torah: TorahWeb.Org

Rabbi Daniel Stein

Preparing for Pesach

At the beginning of Parshas Vayikra, Hashem called to Moshe before their conversation inside the Ohel Moed. Rashi explains that even though Hashem revealed himself to the prophets of the other nations abruptly and without warning in a manner which is described as "and Hashem happened to meet Balaam" (Bamidbar 23:4), Hashem called to Moshe prior to speaking with him as an expression of personal affection. The Sfas Emes explains further that Hashem announced his meeting with Moshe beforehand in order to give Moshe time to properly prepare himself for their encounter. Rav Tzadok Hakohen (Pri Tzaddik), derives from here that in order for any spiritual experience to be meaningful and leave a lasting impact upon us we must first ready ourselves sufficiently beforehand. Only if we make a concerted effort to appreciate the value and significance of what is about to occur can we internalize and assimilate the message and lesson that is being conveyed.

Whenever we experience a moment of genuine spiritual inspiration, if we are unprepared for it in advance, its effectiveness will be muted and its ability to serve as a catalyst for real change will invariably be diminished. At the time of keriyas Yam Suf the people present pointed at Hashem and unequivocally declared, "This is my God and I will glorify him" (Shemos 15:2). The Yalkut Shimoni (section 244) comments that even the maidservants at keriyas Yam Suf were granted a more intense divine revelation than that which was experienced by both Yechezkel and Yishayahu. Nonetheless, despite this awesome and overwhelming event the maidservants did not become prophetesses, they remained maidservants. Rav Chaim Shmuelevtiz (Sichas Mussar) suggests that this was because the maidservants entered into the moment unprepared, they invested nothing in advance, and therefore they received nothing in return. The degree to which a spiritual experience impacts upon us is directly dependent and contingent upon the amount of effort we expended preparing for it beforehand.

The Gemara (Gittin 77a) states that the three days prior to Shabbos, from Wednesday to Friday, are attributed to the following Shabbos, and the three days following Shabbos, from Sunday to Tuesday, are related to the previous Shabbos. The Shem Mishmuel explains that the holiness of Shabbos continues for an additional three days precisely because we invested three days beforehand. Since we prepared for three days in advance of Shabbos, the impact of the Shabbos can be felt for an additional three days after Shabbos, corresponding exactly to the measure of effort we invested beforehand. For this reason as well, the Gemara in Gittin claims that the influence of yom tov lasts for a period of thirty days following the conclusion of yom tov. This too is a function of the requirement mentioned in the Gemara (Pesachim 6a) to prepare before Pesach for a period of thirty days. Since we prepared for a period of thirty days before yom tov, the influence of the yom tov also continues for an additional thirty days.

However, according to some rishonim (see Biur Halacha 429:1) the obligation to prepare for thirty days prior to yom tov is limited to the yom tov of Pesach. This is supported by the Gemara (Megillah 32a) which implies that on every other yom tov it is sufficient to review the laws of that particular yom tov on the day of yom tov itself. Pragmatically, the yom tov of Pesach might demand extra preparation since it encompasses so many intricate and complicated laws. However, perhaps the yom tov of Pesach needs a greater investment of time beforehand since the impact of Pesach must endure well beyond the conclusion of the yom tov. It is during the yom tov of Pesach that we must cultivate and refortify our foundation of emunah and bitachon that will sustain us throughout the coming year, therefore, in order to create this effect, we must prepare well in advance of Pesach as well.

If we invest properly in preparing for Pesach, may the themes of Pesach define our home and our lives throughout the coming year, and may we be zoche to aa redemption as individuals and as a community, culminating with the ultimate geulah be'meheirah be'yameinu.

Yeshivat Har Etzion: Virtual Bet Midrash

The Place of the Sacrificial Service in Our Lives - Harav Yaakov Medan [*Adapted by Itai Weiss - Translated by David Strauss]*

Parashat Pekudei, which we read but a week ago, ends with an amazing set of verses: Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. And Moshe was not able to enter into the Tent of Meeting, because the cloud abode thereon, and the glory of the Lord filled the Tabernacle. And whenever the cloud was taken up from over the Tabernacle, the Israelites went onward, throughout all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they journeyed not till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord was upon the Tabernacle by day, and there was fire therein by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys. (Shemot 40:34-38)

These utopian verses state the purpose of the Mishkan as it is presented in the Book of Shemot: to serve as a seat for the Shekhina, the Divine Presence. The Tabernacle is the place that expresses more than anything else our constant and daily connection with God. This is the House of God for which we yearn.

At the beginning of the Book of Vayikra, on the other hand, we encounter a different Tabernacle: And the Lord called to Moshe, and spoke to him out of the Tent of Meeting, saying: Speak to the Israelites, and say to them: When any man of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of the cattle, even of the herd or of the flock. If his offering be a burnt-offering of the herd, he shall offer it a male without blemish; he shall bring it to the door of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. And he shall kill the bullock before the LORD; and Aaron's sons, the priests, shall present the blood, and dash the blood round about against the altar…

And the priest shall bring [the bird] to the altar, and pinch off its head, and make it smoke on the altar; and the blood thereof shall be drained out on the side of the altar. And he shall take away its crop with the feathers thereof, and cast it beside the altar on the east part, in the place of the ashes. And he shall rend it by the wings thereof…)Vayikra 1:1-5, 15-17)

The Mishkan of the Book of Vayikra is an abattoir of offerings, a slaughterhouse. It is much more difficult for us to connect to this Tabernacle: who among us has ever wanted to

kill an animal in order to atone for his or her actions?

Nevertheless, as we pray for the restoration of the Temple, we also ask for a renewal of the sacrificial service. It is impossible to separate between the two. While Rav David Kohen used Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Kohen Kook's essays to compose his "Vision of Vegetarianism and Peace," this conceptualization refers only to a much more advanced stage in history, the period of the resurrection, as Rav Kook himself makes clear in Iggerot Ha-Re'aya, No. 994, that the sacrificing of animals will be restored in the Third Temple: "For in the matter of the sacrifices, it is more correct to believe that everything shall be restored to its former state."

Therefore, I am convinced that a necessary condition for the rebuilding of the Temple is our ability to identify with these concepts and draw them closer to us.

The sacrificial service, then, presents us with a difficult challenge, a life mission, the complexity of which, of course, I cannot solve in a few sentences. Seeing, however, that we are not exempt from dealing with the issue, I wish to clarify two important principles relating to the sacrificial service, which may serve as an opening for engaging with this formidable question.

First, the sacrificial service is never the sole manner by way of which we serve God. The prophets are aware of the problems arising from a situation in which a person brings a sacrifice to the Temple and automatically that individual's sins are pardoned. Therefore, they repeatedly emphasize that a sacrifice is only part of a person's comprehensive personal service.

Here are several examples: Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings to your sacrifices, and eat you flesh. For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices; but this matter I commanded them, saying: Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people; and walk you in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you. (Yirmeyahu 7:21-23)

It is not Yirmeyahu's intention to abolish the sacrificial service, but rather to focus in God's service on doing His will, while the sacrifices accompany that performance of His will. [1]

Yeshayahu formulates this idea in similar language: To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? says the Lord; I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more vain oblations; it is an offering of abomination to Me; new moon and sabbath, the holding of convocations, I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed seasons My soul hates; they are a burden to Me; I am weary to bear them.
And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even, when you make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. (Yeshayahu 1:11-15)

It seems to me that the words "your hands are full of blood" refer not to human blood, but to the blood of the sacrifices. During the time of Chizkiyahu, the people's hands are not full of human blood, but of the blood of sacrifices which God does not want when they come alone — without prayer, repentance and introspection.

Having put the sacrificial service in its proper place as a means that does not stand alone, but rather accompanies one's own personal worship of God, let us try to invest it with some meaning.

In my opinion, the sacrificial service is not something pleasant, nor do I ever think it will be so. We must recognize that the sacrificial service is intended to be service of God in a manner which makes us uneasy. As a rule, the Divine service is certainly supposed to be pleasant and comfortable, but all this is true when our hands are clean of sin. It is possible to prove from the plain sense of the verses that all sacrifices come to atone for transgressions. When we sin, we are not worthy of the loftiest mode of service, and there is room in our lives for the element of Divine service that makes us uncomfortable.

The root of all sacrifices lies in the Akeida story, the Binding of Yitzchak. After the angel of God commands Avraham not to slaughter Yitzchak, it is stated as follows: And Avraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold behind him a ram caught in the thicket by it horns. And Avraham went and took the ram, and offered it up for a burnt-offering instead of his son. (Bereishit 22:13) The ram is thus sacrificed in place of Yitzchak.

Let us consider the matter: A person raises a lamb at home, feeds it, gives it a name, connects to it emotionally; and then all of a sudden, the owner must take it to Jerusalem. The lamb glances at the owner with an innocent look, not comprehending where they are going. When they reach the Temple, it falls upon the owner to slaughter the lamb personally (according to the plain sense of the text). The owner hears its final bleat and sees the last look in its eyes.

I confess my sins today. In my old age, I can say that I have inadvertently desecrated Shabbat on more than one occasion, if only for reasons of my advanced years. I believe with all my heart that had I been required to carry out the procedure that I have described, it is very possible that I would have been more careful the next time, and that I would not have had to bring another sacrifice in the future.

As we long for the rebuilding of the Temple, we need to address these questions and bring the concepts relating to the Temple closer to our mindsets. Only then will we merit the return of the Shekhina to within our midst, and a deepening of our timeless connection to God.
[This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat Parashat Vayikra 5778 (2018).]
[1] The verses should be understood as follows: "For I spoke not to your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices"—at the time of the exodus from Egypt I did not command only about burnt-offerings and sacrifices; "but" — at the same time that I ordained the sacrifical service — "this matter I commanded them, saying: Hearken to My voice, and I will be your God…."

BS"D

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A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.
This year [2001], Erev Pesach falls on Shabbos, a fairly infrequent occurrence. While our lack of familiarity with observing Erev Pesach on Shabbos causes some confusion and concern, still, with the proper planning and know-how, it need not be a di□cult Shabbos to keep. Indeed, it actually gives us an opportunity to be well-rested for the seder and to be able to fulfill the mitzvos of Pesach in a more alert and dignified manner. The following are some of the frequently asked questions that deal with the special halachos of this Shabbos:

QUESTION: Why do we burn and sell the chametz on Friday morning when it is actually permitted to eat chametz until Shabbos morning?
DISCUSSION: Although Friday is not really "Erev Pesach," in certain respects we act as if it really is "Erev Pesach." This is done in order to avoid confusion in subsequent years, when Erev Pesach does not fall on Shabbos. Thus any chametz which will not be consumed before Pesach is burned or sold(1) no later than 12:12 p.m.(2), (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city),the time that would have been the deadline had this day truly been Erev Pesach.(3) But concerning other halachos we do not treat Friday as Erev Pesach. Thus: The paragraphs usually omitted from Shacharis on Erev Pesach are recited on Friday. Kol Chamira, which is a statement that nullifies all of our chametz and is normally recited when the chametz is burned, is not recited this year on Friday. Instead, it is recited on Shabbos morning after the last remnants of chametz are gone. The special Erev Pesach restrictions that apply to taking a haircut and doing laundry after midday, do not apply on Friday(4). Dishes may be kashered until the onset of Shabbos.

QUESTION: When should the marror and the other seder items be prepared?
DISCUSSION: All seder preparations should be done on Friday, since it is prohibited to prepare anything(5) for the seder on Shabbos. While technically the preparations may be done after Shabbos ends and before the seder begins, this is not a good idea since it unnecessarily delays an already late start for the seder.(6) Thus the horseradish,(7) charoses, shank bone, roasted egg and salt water should all be prepared on Friday.(8) The romaine lettuce should also be washed and checked on Friday. Care must be taken, however, not to leave the lettuce soaking in water, as lettuce that was soaked in water for twenty-four hours can no longer be used for marror.

QUESTION: How do we discard the chametz crumbs on Shabbos?
DISCUSSION: Leftover crumbs on the table, dishes or floor should be swept,(9) gathered together and then flushed down the toilet. Larger pieces of bread may be crumbled(10) and then flushed down. If the Sanitation Department will not pick up the garbage before 12:00, (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city) do not place chametz in your trash can. The broom which is used to sweep the floor must be cleaned well. If it cannot be cleaned adequately, then it must be put away with the chametz utensils which have been sold to a non-Jew.

QUESTION: Many people use chametz rolls for lechem mishneh on this Shabbos, and then serve the rest of the meal with kosher for Passover foods. Which dishes should be used during those meals?
DISCUSSION: The recommended method is to use disposable (paper or plastic) dishes only as long as any chametz is being eaten. After the chametz is gone, the rest of the meal can be served on Pesach dishes.

QUESTION: In order to rid one's teeth of chametz, is it permitted to brush them on Shabbos, with or without toothpaste?
DISCUSSION: The consensus of contemporary poskim is that it is forbidden to use toothpaste on Shabbos.(11) Their main concern is that applying toothpaste to the teeth or the brush could result in a transgression of the prohibited Shabbos Labor of Memareiach, Smoothing. Brushing without toothpaste is permitted,(12) provided that the following conditions are met: Use a toothbrush that is designated for Shabbos use only.(13) Some poskim require that the Shabbos toothbrush also look different from the weekday one, e.g., be of a different color or style.(14) Use a soft brush so as not to irritate the gums and cause bleeding. [People with extremely sensitive gums who bleed whenever they brush their teeth may not use a toothbrush at all.] To avoid the prohibition of Sechitah, Squeezing, a dry toothbrush should be used. It is, however, permitted to rinse the mouth with cold water first and then use the toothbrush.(15) The toothbrush should not be rinsed off after it is used unless it is going to be used again on that same Shabbos.(16)

QUESTION: Many people do not want to have any chametz in their home on Shabbos. Instead, they use egg matzah(17) for lechem mishneh at both the Friday night and Shabbos morning meals and recite ha-motzi over the egg matzah. Is this permitted?
DISCUSSION: Yes, it is.(18) In fact, this is the preferred method for homes with little children who may scatter chametz crumbs around the house. This is also recommended for hotels, for large gatherings where Shabbos meals are being served, or for anyone who feels more secure with having no chametz in the house on Shabbos. Although usually the proper blessing over egg matzah is mezonos, when egg matzah is eaten during a full-course meal and substitutes for bread, ha-motzi is recited.(19) One should eat at least a k'zayis(20) (about 1 fl. oz.) of egg matzahfor each meal in addition to the

other foods served at the meal. Even those who use egg matzah for lechem mishneh, should take care to finish eating the egg matzah no later than 10:55. a.m.(21) (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city). The other foods served at the meal can be eaten later.

QUESTION: When is seudah shelishis, the third Shabbos meal, eaten on this Shabbos?

DISCUSSION: Eating the third meal on this Shabbos is dificult to do, since the third meal is supposed to be eaten after midday. At that time, we may no longer eat chametz, matzah or egg matzah. Thus, there is no perfect system for the third meal on this Shabbos.(22) Instead, the poskim offer two alternatives, neither of which is ideal:

1.Divide the morning meal into two parts – i.e., wash, recite ha-motzi, eat a meal(23), recite Birkas ha-Mazon, take a break (15-30 minutes)(24), wash again, recite ha-motzi, eat a meal and recite Birkas ha-Mazon. The chametz or egg matzah(25) which is used for lechem mishneh at the second meal, the seudah shelishis, must be consumed before 10:55 a.m. (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city).

2.Eat a meal consisting of "other foods," such as cooked matzah-meal(26) balls (knaidelech(27)), meat, fish(28), fruit(29) or a kosherfor-passover cholent(30) any time after 2:00 p.m. until 4:45 p.m. (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city). After that time, one is required to minimize his intake of food so as not to ruin his appetite for the seder.

Since both of these options are halachically problematic, many people have the custom of following both procedures, i.e., they split the morning meal, and then eat a meal of "other foods" after 2:00 p.m. (All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Consult your local Rav for the appropriate time in your city).

FIVE POINTS TO REMEMBER …

1. The matzos which are designated for use at the seder should not be moved on Shabbos, as they are considered muktzeh in the opinion of several poskim(31).
2. On Shabbos, it is advisable not to cast chametz crumbs to the winds even within an eiruv, as some poskim hold that this may be a violation of the Shabbos Labor of Zoreh, Winnowing(32).
3. The challos which are designated for lechem mishneh should be left in a safe place where children cannot reach them(33).
4. A small child who will not participate in the seder may eat regular matzah this Shabbos.(34)
5. Before the women begin to prepare for the seder after Shabbos is over, they should recite Boruch hamavdil bein kodesh l'kodesh(35).

FOTNOTES:

1 There are different customs concerning when exactly the chametz is sold this year, since many people eat chametz and use chametz dishes until Shabbos morning. 2 All times are for Cleveland Heights, Ohio. 3 This custom is only l'chatchillah. If the chametz was not burned by this time, it may be burned anytime prior to the onset of Shabbos. 4 See Beiur Halachah 468:1. 5 Even a "verbal preparation," such as stating that the Shabbos nap is for the purpose of being well-rested for the seder, should be avoided; see Mishnah Berurah 290:4 6 For the sake of the children, who are a primary focus of the seder, the seder should begin as promptly as possible once Shabbos is over. 7 The horseradish should be ground and stored in an airtight container until the seder. 8 When feasible, even the seder table should be set on Friday. 9 A soft-bristled broom should be used. A carpet sweeper should not be used on Shabbos. 10 Mishnah Berurah 321:30 11 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:112; Seridei Eish 2:28; Minchas Yitzchak 3:48; Shevet ha-Levi 5:45; Tzitz Eliezer 7:30. [While a minority opinion permits using toothpaste – see Ketzos ha-Shulchan (Badei ha-Shulchan 138:31), Yabia Omer 4:28 and Nefesh ha-Rav, pg. 168 – it is universally accepted not to do so.] 12 See Minchas Shelomo 2:35:3. 13 Based on Mishnah Berurah 327:10 14 Minchas Yitzchak 3:50. 15 Igros Moshe, ibid.; Shevet ha-Levi, ibid. 16 Igros Moshe, ibid. 17 Although egg matzos contain some eggs, they are mainly kneaded with either apple cider or grape juice. 18 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:155 There is, however, a minority view who objects to eating egg matzah on Erev Pesach; see Nezer ha-Kodesh 52 and Teshuvos v'Hanhagos 2:21 for an explanation of this view. [To satisfy this view, it is preferable to use egg matzah which is kneaded with grape juice.] 19 Mishnah Berurah 168:24; Igros Moshe O.C. 1:56 3:32; 4:41. See explanation in Pirkei Moed on Pesach (Ha av M. Gifter), pg. 17-19. 20 According to some poskim, it is preferable to eat a k'beitzah (about 2 fl. oz.) of egg matzah, since Al netilas yadayim is only recited over a k'beitzah or more; see Mishnah Berurah 158:10 and Igros Moshe O.C. 4:41 21 Igros Moshe O.C. 1:155 based on Rama 444:1. 22 Indeed, some poskim hold that there is no mitzvah to eat seudah shelishis at all on this Shabbos, and that none of the following options should be employed; Aruch ha-Shulchan 444:6. 23 The more important Shabbos foods should be served during the first morning meal, as the second Shabbos meal is considered more significant than seudah shelishis. 24 If time allows, a short walk outside between the meals is recommended. 25 When using egg matzah at this meal, other foods must also be served; otherwise ha-motzi and Birkas ha-Mazon cannot be recited. 26 Although it is prohibited to eat matzah on Erev Pesach, cooked or boiled matzah-meal products are permitted according to all of the poskim. Fried matzah-meal products, however, should be avoided (see Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 444:1). Baked matzah-meal products, such as cakes or cookies, are prohibited; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Erev Pesach Shechal b'Shabbos, pg. 207); Shevet ha-Levi 8:117. 27 For those who eat gebrokts. Some people eat gebrokts on Erev Pesach even if they do not do so on Pesach; She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 115:7. 28 Even if they were prepared with matzah-meal. A shehakol is recited over them. 29 When possible, eating matzah balls – whose blessing is mezonos – is preferable to eating meat or fish. Eating meat or fish is preferable to eating fruit; O.C. 291:5 30 Mishnah Berurah 444:14 31 See Pri Megadim 308:10; 471:8; 444:1. 32 Magen Avraham 446:2; Shulchan Aruch Harav 446:5-6; Maharsham (Derashah to Shabbos ha-Gadol, 76). Mishnah Berurah, however, is not concerned with this; see Beiur Halachah 319:17 (s.v. mefazer). 33 Mishnah Berurah 444:3 34 Rama 471:2. 35 Mishnah Berurah 299:36

From: **Yitz Etshalom**[SMTP:rebyitz@torah.org]
[From 2001]
To: P'shuto Shel Mikra Subject: Mikra Haggadah Shel Pesach
By RABBI YITZCHAK ETSHALOM
EREV PESACH ON SHABBAT
(with thanks to DR. SHNAYER LEIMAN)

A: The Problem

This year we have a relatively rare intercalation Pesach begins on Motza'ei Shabbat. This occurrence always raises significant Halakhic discussions unique to this situation (e.g. preparations for the Seder, how to accomplish the destruction of Hametz and how to fulfill the obligatory three meals of Shabbat). In addition, there are several minor changes in the Seder itself (the extended Havdalah within Kadesh and the switching of "Zevahim" and "Pesahim" [according to some] in Birkat haG'ulah. Beyond all of these, the Gemara records a curious event, directly related to the "Erev Pesach which falls on Shabbat" phenomenon, which is, at first blanch, hard to decipher. Indeed, we may have only found the key to unlocking this mystery of history in the last few decades.

The Mishnah (Pesahim 6:1) records the law that the slaughtering and subsequent worship related to the Korban Pesach overrides the prohibitions of "M'lakhah" on Shabbat, such that the Korban Pesach is offered on the fourteenth of Nissan, even if that

date falls on Shabbat.

The Gemara (66a) presents some of the background to the Tannaitic discussion revolving around this thorny issue (some of which is found in the aforementioned Mishnah):

Our Rabbis taught: This halachah was hidden from [i.e., forgotten by] the Bene Bathyra. On one occasion the fourteenth [of Nisan] fell on the Sabbath, [and] they forgot and did not know whether the Passover overrides the Sabbath or not. Said they, 'Is there any man who knows whether the Passover overrides the Sabbath or not?' They were told, 'There is a certain man who has come up from Babylonia, Hillel the Babylonian by name, who served the two greatest men of the time, and he knows whether the Passover overrides the Sabbath or not...

The Gemara goes on to present Hillel's argument (echoed in our Mishnah) from the text in Bamidbar 9. (Later on, Hillel chastises those who didn't remember the Halakhah for dereliction in their studies, following which Hillel is himself stumped by a nuance of the same issue the interested reader is encouraged to follow the sugya "inside".) What is relevant for our purposes is the opening statement that B'nei B'tera, the guardians of the Beit haMikdash (see BT Pesahim 3b) forgot the Halakhic response to a most basic question is the Korban Pesach offered on Shabbat?

Most of us remember if only vaguely the last time that Pesach began on Motza'ei Shabbat (it was seven years ago). Whether or not we remember how we fulfilled the obligation of the three meals of Shabbat, we probably remember the early minyan attended by everyone and watching the clock that morning. Certainly the Poskei haDor hold this information at their fingertips and all of our congregational rabbis are familiar with all of the necessary details and know how to access them when circumstances and calendar demand. Most of the contemporary questions relate to the rabbinic admonition against eating Matza on Erev Pesach and the problems of "egg matza" as an unacceptable solution for some (Ashkenazim). Significant as these issues may be, they pale in comparison to the most documented ceremony of the Beit haMikdash the Korban Pesach. How could everyone, including B'nei B'tera and the rest of the rabbinic leaders of the generation, have forgotten such an elementary Halakhah?

B: The Judean Desert Scrolls

Perhaps the single most significant archeological discovery in the 20th Century (a century marked by dozens of critical finds at digs throughout the Levant) was the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Scrolls, found in a series of caves in the Judean desert, were accidentally unearthed by two young Bedouin shepherds in 1947 who, trying to retrieve a lost goat, happened upon seven nearly complete scrolls encased in clay jars. The ensuing search (by both Bedouins and archeologists) brought to light hundreds of scrolls that had been composed between the fourth century BCE and the first century CE. Over the past fifty years, much scholarly research has been devoted to deciphering these scrolls and comparing them with literature extant at the same time. Over this time, academicians who specialize in "the Scrolls" have attempted to determine, among other facts, the identity of the group that resided in the vicinity of these caves and which was responsible for the composition of the many documents.

Among the documents found are liturgical poems, letters, copies of canonized text from T'nakh as well as books of the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, Midrashic expansions of those books (known as Pesharim) along with codes of practice. These codes not only contain the practices of the Qumran community, but, in some cases, record the polemics of their dispute with the Pharasaic community. A fascinating development of "Scrolls research" has been to "finally" see the mirror image of disputes recorded in Rabbinic literature from the perspective of the Rabbinates opposite number. For instance, at the end of Mishnah Yadayim (4:7), there is a record of a Sadduccean complaint against the Pharisees: "We complain against you Pharisees, for you declare pure the Nitzoq (poured out liquid stream)." This statement is followed by the counter argument proffered by the Hakhamim however, for the roughly 1700 years between the publication of the Mishnah (c. 220 CE) until the publication of the Mik'tzat Ma'aseh Torah ("Halakhic Letter"), students of the Mishnah had no access to the Sadduccean perspective of this debate. With the discovery and subsequent publication of Mik'tzat Ma'aseh Torah we find the following argument put forth:

"And even regarding liquid streams, we say that they do not have purity. And even the liquid streams do not separate between the impure and the pure. For the moisture of the liquid streams and the vessel which receives from them are both considered one identical moisture." (MMT B56 58). [The case in question deals with a pure vessel that is the source of a liquid stream which flows into an impure vessel. The Sadduccean position was that the water is all one, therefore the upper vessel is rendered impure by the lower vessel. The Rabbinic position is that the lower vessel has no effect on the upper vessel.] (Cf. M. Makh'shirin 5:9, MT Tum'at Okh'lin 7:1).

This find is much more than a historical curiosity of purely academic/research concern; by seeing the "counter argument" spelled out, we can better identify the group which resided in the desert and authored (or, at least copied and maintained) these scrolls. Whereas earlier indications where that the "Qumran community" was made up of Essenes, the publication of Mik'tzat Ma'aseh Torah has provided much support for the theory that these sectarians were Sadduccees (or an offshoot of that group) as indicated by the example cited above. This is critical for our purposes, as any information found in the Scrolls can be helpful in helping us understand the Sadduccean position a position with which we were only familiar from Rabbinic sources until now.

C: The Sadduccean Calendar

Among the many significant passages in the Mik'tzat Ma'aseh Torah is the Calendar of the community. Although there is much scholarly debate as to whether this calendar was ever put into practice, this solar calendar (!) is quite clearly spelled out and sheds much light on the "ignorance" of the B'nei B'tera.

The calendar (taken here from pp. 302 303 of Lawrence Schiffman's "Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls", the source for much of the background information above) consisted of a 364 day year, constituting exactly 52 weeks. Each month had thirty days and, in order to keep the calendar in line with the equinoxes and solstices, a thirty first day was added to every third month.

As a result of the exact weeks (with no remaining days) in this calendar, each Festival occurred on the same day of the week every year. [It is difficult to imagine how a calendar of this sort could ever be maintained without regular correction for the missing 30 hours every solar year; that is why, as pointed out above, many scholars claim that this calendar was never actually put into practice.] Here are the days found in the Scrolls calendar which have relevance to our discussion: Pesach (14th of First Month) Tuesday Matzot (15th of First Month) Wednesday

It is evident from a number of Talmudic sources that the Sadduccees held control over the worship in the Beit haMikdash during some periods of the last few hundred years of the Second Commonwealth. For instance, the Mishnah in Yoma records that the Beit Din would make the Kohein Gadol swear never to deviate from their instructions while inside the Sanctum Sanctorum on Yom haKippurim. As the Gemara (BT Yoma 19b) explains, the suspicion arose that he was secretly a Sadduccee. There is also the well known story (BT Sukkah 48b) of the Kohen Gadol who spilled out the water libation at his feet (and was subsequently "Etrogged" by the worshippers) note Rashi at Yoma 26b s.v. shePa'am Ahat who identifies him as a Sadduccee. The Sadduccees rejected the tradition of the water libation.

Since this sect, from time to time, exercised significant control over the Beit HaMikdash during the first century BCE and into the millenium, it is reasonable to assume that they put their calendar into operation during those years. Dr. Shnayer Z. Leiman suggests that this is the most reasonable explanation to the "ignorance" of the rabbinic community regarding how to behave on Nissan fourteenth which falls on Shabbat. There had been many years, perhaps several generations, since Pesach had fallen on Shabbat, since it would always be set for Tuesday under Sadduccean rule.

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from: torahweb@torahweb.org
to: weeklydt@torahweb.org
date: Mar 17, 2021, 4:00 PM
Rabbi Ahron Lopiansky -
Korbanos: Man's Offering of a Gift
Korbanos: Man's Offering of a Gift

Vayikra is the sefer that deals, to a great degree, with korbanos. In many ways, korbanos are almost a "different" type of mitzvah. Just as Torah and tefillah are miztvos, but may rightfully be considered a subsection of miztvos, so too korbanos seem to comprise a "subsection" of the world of mitzvos. Let us consider a few of the many unique features of korbanos:

The bringing of korbanos is the first and only mitzvah described as such in the Torah, well before mattan Torah. Thus from Adam Harishon onwards, we have korbanos being brought by Adam, Kayin & Hevel, Noach, Avraham, etc. Chazal have revealed to us allusions in the pesukim to different mitzvos that the avoas performed but none of them are even remotely stated explicitly. We also find acts of kindness and hachonsas orchim by Avraham, but they are presented as general acts of benevolence, not as a specific religious act the way korbanos are.

All mitzvos require a minimum level of kavana, i.e. a simple intent to perform the miztva. It is noble and worthy to have many other thoughts and kavanos, but the simple intent to do the mitzvah is all that is necessary. Yet regarding korbanos, the mishan mandates six(!) kavanos [although they do not invalidate the korban if not had in mind.] There is also a kavana of lishma which the absence of or corruption of may invalidate the korbon. Why this unique requirement?

The Nevi'im berate Klal Yisroel many times for bringing korbanos while still being engaged in sin, especially injustice, etc. There is never a parallel rebuke to the effect of," why are you wearing tefillin if you are corrupt?" As a matter of fact, the Rambam

in Igeres Teiman makes this point explicitly, "...but Yaravam ben Navat, of cursed memory, will be punished for the calves [idols] that he sinned with and caused Israel to sin with, and at the same time he will be punished for not sitting in the Sukkah..." Why, then, do the nevi'im excoriate Israel for performing the mitzvah of korbanos?

In order to resolve these issues we need to understand what distinguishes korbanos from mitzvos as a whole. The overarching description of mitzvos is "fulfilling the command of Hashem." It's an act of obedience, the fulfillment of one's duties [albeit one that changes and elevates the person performing the mitzvos.] But korbanos are described as a "doron - gift." The Maharal makes the point many times (see Gevuros 37, Tiferes 70) that a korban is a personal desire to connect to Hashem. The distinction between mitzvos and korbanos is like the difference between a husband supporting his wife as required by marital obligations vs. purchasing a gift as an act of appreciation and love. This is perhaps why the Torah starts its laws of korbanos with the korbanos that are voluntary, as opposed to those that are obligatory. Voluntary korbanos more completely reflect the essential nature of a korban than do those that are obligatory.

Using this perspective, we understand the reason for the unique features of korbanos. Bringing a korban is an act of bonding with HKB"H, and as such, even before there were mandated mitzvos there were korbanos, reflecting man's timeless yearning to reach out and connect to Hashem. As opposed to mandated mitzvos whose primary value lies in the performance of the mitzvah itself, when it comes to a korban the kavana is of paramount importance, much like when giving a gift where "it is the thought that counts."

It is the same point regarding the castigation of Israel for bringing korbanos whilst sinning. It's appropriate for a person to continue supporting his wife even though their relationship is strained. But if a person showers her with gifts while treating her wretchedly, it is a travesty!

This understanding of korbanos inspires us to year for the day when the Beis Hamikdash returns and we can once again offer our "gifts" / selves to Hashem. We will then go from subjects dutifully carrying out their tasks to a loved one eagerly waiting to be embraced! Bimeheira b'yameinu, amen.

More divrei Torah from Rabbi Lopiansky

More divrei Torah on Parshas Vayikra

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from: The **Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust** <info@rabbisacks.org>
date: Mar 17, 2021, 3:16 PM
subject: The Sins of a Leader (Vayikra 5781)

The Sins of a Leader

Vayikra 5781

Rabbi Sacks zt''l had prepared a full year of Covenant & Conversation for 5781, based on his book Lessons in Leadership. The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust will continue to distribute these weekly essays, so that people all around the world can keep on learning and finding inspiration in his Torah.

As we have discussed so many times already this year, leaders make mistakes. That is inevitable. So, strikingly, our parsha of Vayikra implies. The real issue is how leaders respond to their mistakes.

The point is made by the Torah in a very subtle way. Our parsha deals with sin offerings to be brought when people have made mistakes. The technical term for this is sheggagah, meaning inadvertent wrongdoing (Lev. 4:1-35). You did something, not knowing it was forbidden, either because you forgot or did not know the law, or because you were unaware of certain facts. You may, for instance, have carried something in a public place on Shabbat, perhaps because you did not know it was forbidden to carry, or you forgot what was in your pocket, or because you forgot it was Shabbat.

The Torah prescribes different sin offerings depending on who made the mistake. It enumerates four categories. First is the High Priest, second is "the whole community" (understood to mean the Great Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court), a third is "the leader" (Nasi), and the fourth is an ordinary individual.

In three of the four cases, the law is introduced by the word im, "if" – if such a person commits a sin. In the case of the leader, however, the law is prefaced by the word asher, "when" (Lev. 4:22). It is possible that a High Priest, the Supreme Court or an individual may err. But in the case of a leader, it is probable or even certain. Leaders make mistakes. It is unavoidable, the occupational hazard of their role. Talking about the sin of a Nasi, the Torah uses the word "when," not "if."

Nasi is the generic word for a leader: a ruler, king, judge, elder or prince. Usually it refers to the holder of political power. In Mishnaic times, the Nasi, the most famous of whom were leaders from the family of Hillel, had a quasi-governmental role as representative of the Jewish people to the Roman government. Rabbi Moses Sofer (Bratislava, 1762-1839) in one of his responsa[1] examines the question of why, when positions of Torah leadership are never dynastic (never passed from father to son), the role of Nasi was an exception. Often this role did pass from father to son. The answer he gives, and it is historically insightful, is that with the decline of monarchy in the Second Temple period and thereafter, the Nasi took on many of the responsibilities of a king. His role, internally and externally, was as much political and diplomatic as religious. That in general is what is meant by the word Nasi.

Why does the Torah consider this type of leadership particularly prone to error? The commentators offer three possible explanations. R. Ovadiah Sforno (to Lev. 4:21–22) cites the phrase "But Yeshurun waxed fat, and kicked" (Deut. 32:15). Those who have advantages over others, whether of wealth or power, can lose their moral sense. Rabbeinu Bachya agrees, suggesting that rulers tend to become arrogant and haughty. Implicit in these comments – it is in fact a major theme of Tanach as a whole – is the idea later stated by Lord Acton in the aphorism, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."[2]

Elie Munk, citing the Zohar, offers a second explanation. The High Priest and the Sanhedrin were in constant contact with that which was holy. They lived in a world of ideals. The king or political ruler, by contrast, was involved in secular affairs: war and peace, the administration of government, and international relations. They were more likely to sin because their day-to-day concerns were not religious but pragmatic.[3]

Meir Simcha ha-Cohen of Dvinsk[4] points out that a King was especially vulnerable to being led astray by popular sentiment. Neither a Priest nor a Judge in the Sanhedrin were answerable to the people. The King, however, relied on popular support. Without that he could be deposed. But this is laden with risk. Doing what the people want is not always doing what God wants. That, R. Meir Simcha argues, is what led David to order a census (2 Sam. 24), and Zedekiah to ignore the advice of Jeremiah and rebel against the King of Babylon (2 Chr. 36). Thus, for a whole series of reasons, a political leader is more exposed to temptation and error than a Priest or Judge.

There are further reasons.[5] One is that politics is an arena of conflict. It deals in matters – specifically wealth and power – that are in the short-term, zero-sum games. 'The more I have, the less you have. Seeking to maximise the benefits to myself or my group, I come into conflict with others who seek to maximise benefits to themselves or their group.' The politics of free societies is always conflict-ridden. The only societies where there is no conflict are tyrannical or totalitarian ones in which dissenting voices are suppressed – and Judaism is a standing protest against tyranny. So in a free society, whatever course a politician takes will please some and anger others. From this, there is no escape.

Politics involves difficult judgements. A leader must balance competing claims and will sometimes get it wrong. One example – one of the most fateful in Jewish history – occurred after the death of King Solomon. People came to his son and successor, Rehoboam, complaining that Solomon had imposed unsustainable burdens on the population, particularly during the building of the Temple. Led by Jeroboam, they asked the new King to reduce the burden. Rehoboam asked his father's counsellors for advice. They told him to concede to the people's demand. Serve them, they said, and they will serve you. Rehoboam then turned to his own friends, who told him the opposite: Reject the request. Show the people you are a strong leader who cannot be intimidated (1 Kings 12:1-15).

It was disastrous advice, and the result was tragic. The kingdom split in two, the ten northern tribes following Jeroboam, leaving only the southern tribes, generically known as "Judah," loyal to the king. For Israel as a people in its own land, it was the beginning of the end. Always a small people surrounded by large and powerful empires, it needed unity, high morale and a strong sense of destiny to survive. Divided, it was only a matter of time before both nations, Israel in the north, Judah in the south, fell to other powers.

The reason leaders – as opposed to Judges and Priests – cannot avoid making mistakes is that there is no textbook that infallibly teaches you how to lead. Priests and Judges follow laws. For leadership there are no laws because every situation is unique. As Isaiah Berlin put it in his essay, 'Political Judgement,'[6] in the realm of political action, there are few laws and what is needed instead is skill in reading a situation. Successful statesmen "grasp the unique combination of characteristics that constitute this particular situation – this and no other." Berlin compares this to the gift possessed by great novelists like Tolstoy and Proust.[7] Applying inflexible rules to a constantly shifting political landscape destroys societies. Communism was like that. In free societies, people change, culture changes, the world beyond a nation's borders does not stand still. So a politician will find that what worked a decade or a century ago does not work now. In politics it is easy to get it wrong, hard to get it right.

There is one more reason why leadership is so challenging. It is alluded to by the Mishnaic Sage, R. Nechemiah, commenting on the verse, "My son, if you have put up security for your neighbour, if you have struck your hand in pledge for another" (Prov. 6:1):

So long as a man is an associate [i.e. concerned only with personal piety], he need not be concerned with the community and is not punished on account of it. But once a man

has been placed at the head and has donned the cloak of office, he may not say: 'I have to look after my welfare, I am not concerned with the community.' Instead, the whole burden of communal affairs rests on him. If he sees a man doing violence to his fellow, or committing a transgression, and does not seek to prevent him, he is punished on account of him… you are responsible for him. You have entered the gladiatorial arena, and he who enters the arena is either conquered or conquers.[8]

A private individual is responsible only for their own sins. A leader is held responsible for the sins of the people they lead: at least those they might have prevented.[9] With power comes responsibility: the greater the power, the greater the responsibility.

There are no universal rules, there is no failsafe textbook, for leadership. Every situation is different and each age brings its own challenges. A ruler, in the best interests of their people, may sometimes have to take decisions that a conscientious individual would shrink from doing in private life. They may have to decide to wage a war, knowing that some will die. They may have to levy taxes, knowing that this will leave some impoverished. Only after the event will the leader know whether the decision was justified, and it may depend on factors beyond their control.

The Jewish approach to leadership is thus an unusual combination of realism and idealism – realism in its acknowledgement that leaders inevitably make mistakes, idealism in its constant subordination of politics to ethics, power to responsibility, pragmatism to the demands of conscience. What matters is not that leaders never get it wrong – that is inevitable, given the nature of leadership – but that they are always exposed to prophetic critique and that they constantly study Torah to remind themselves of transcendent standards and ultimate aims. The most important thing from a Torah perspective is that a leader is sufficiently honest to admit their mistakes. Hence the significance of the sin offering.

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai summed it up with a brilliant double-entendre on the word asher, meaning "when" in the phrase "when a leader sins." He relates it to the word ashrei, "happy," and says: Happy is the generation whose leader is willing to bring a sin offering for their mistakes.[10]

Leadership demands two kinds of courage: the strength to take a risk, and the humility to admit when a risk fails.

[1] Responsa Chatam Sofer, Orach Chayyim, 12.

[2] This famous phrase comes from a letter written by Lord Acton in 1887. See Martin H. Manser, and Rosalind Fergusson, The Facts on File Dictionary of Proverbs, New York: Facts on File, 2002, 225.

[3] Elie Munk, The Call of the Torah, Vayikra, New York, Mesorah Publications, 1992, 33.

[4] Meshech Chochmah to Lev. 4:21-22.

[5] This, needless to say, is not the plain sense of the text. The sins for which leaders brought an offering were spiritual offences, not errors of political judgment.

[6] Isaiah Berlin, The Sense of Reality, Chatto and Windus, 1996, 40-53.

[7] Incidentally, this answers the point made by political philosopher Michael Walzer in his book on the politics of the Bible, In God's Shadow. He is undeniably right to point out that political theory, so significant in ancient Greece, is almost completely absent from the Hebrew Bible. I would argue, and so surely would Isaiah Berlin, that there is a reason for this. In politics there are few general laws, and the Hebrew Bible is interested in laws. But when it comes to politics – to Israel's Kings for example – it does not give laws but instead tells stories.

[8] Exodus Rabbah, 27:9.

[9] "Whoever can prevent the members of his household from sinning and does not, is seized for the sins of his household. If he can prevent his fellow citizens and does not, he is seized for the sins of his fellow citizens. If he can prevent the whole world from sinning, and does not, he is seized for the sins of the whole world." (Shabbat 54b)

[10] Tosefta Baba Kamma, 7:5.

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On Holiness

By Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz)

The book of holiness

It is commonly said that the book of Leviticus deals with the laws of the korbanot, and indeed it does contain many of these laws. But the truth is that these laws also appear in Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, and even in Genesis, to some extent. What is more, while Leviticus itself does deal extensively with these laws, it is not devoted exclusively to them. If we had to connect Leviticus with the orders of the Talmud, we would say that, generally, it deals with material found in tractates Kodashim and Teharot. Most of the contents of these two orders appear in Leviticus, while a small part appears in Numbers. Additionally, Leviticus deals with a number of topics that are scattered throughout other books of the Torah as well, albeit in different contexts.

If, nevertheless, we must provide a general description of the book's theme, it is accurate to say that Leviticus deals with the various aspects of holiness. Holiness is found in all of the book's subjects, in the major principles as well as in the small particulars. This emphasis on holiness manifests itself linguistically as well: In no other book in all of Tanach does the root k-d-sh (holy) appear so frequently.

Holiness is the context for all the subjects discussed throughout Leviticus. Even subjects that, at first glance, do not seem to pertain to the laws of holiness are included in Leviticus as part of the larger scheme of holiness and consecration in religious life. This holds true whether the subject is korbanot or matters of tumah and taharah; it holds true for the laws of forbidden sexual relationships in Parshiot Acharei Mot and Kedoshim, and even for the interpersonal mitzvot. Thus, for example, the section on idolatry begins with: "Anyone of the People of Israel…who gives of his offspring to Molech shall be put to death," and ends with: "Sanctify yourselves and be holy, for I am G-d your Lord."1 Similarly, regarding forbidden foods, it says, "I am G-d your Lord who has set you apart from the nations. So you shall set apart the pure animals and birds from the impure…You shall be holy unto Me, for I, G-d, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be Mine."2

Similarly, laws whose rationale appears, at first glance, to be related to law and order or to morality appear in Leviticus as deriving from the sphere of holiness. An example of this can be seen in the section on dishonesty: "G-d said to Moses, saying: If a person sins and commits a trespass against G-d by dealing deceitfully with his neighbor in the matter of an article left for safekeeping, or a business deal, or by robbery, or by defrauding his fellow."3 The case is that of one who robs his neighbor in one way or another, either openly or secretly. However, the Torah, in mentioning the obligation to return the stolen article, the withheld funds, or the deposit, focuses on another aspect of the act: "He shall bring his sin offering to G-d…And the Priest shall effect atonement for him before G-d, and he will be forgiven."4 Beyond what he did to his fellow man, he committed "a trespass against G-d." This is a new factor, not a social factor but a kind of desecration. The sinner has desecrated something that was set aside as holy. Even interpersonal relationships are not discussed here from the standpoint of law and order or morality but from the standpoint of "a trespass against G-d."

Even the Ten Commandments, all of which are alluded to in Parshat Kedoshim,5 are viewed from a different angle, the special angle of the book of Leviticus.

Definition of holiness

It is important to stress that if the general common denominator in Leviticus is the theme of holiness, then the definition of holiness here is not exactly the definition we would expect. Holiness is not only what one does or does not do in the Temple, but something that applies even in places that have nothing at all to do with the ritual holiness of the Sanctuary or the Temple. It is a spiritual quality in its own right, beyond the kind of holiness described by the Maharal, for example, who speaks of holiness as the aspect of standing apart from everything or as a type of detachment.6 Here, holiness diverges from the ritual sphere and takes on a different meaning: something special or unique.

From the book of Leviticus it follows that if an ordinary person steals, he, too, impinges, somehow, on holiness. To defraud someone is "to commit a trespass against G-d." This may seem strange; what does stealing from one's neighbor have to do with G-d? However, the Torah insists that such a person has committed sacrilege, and therefore must make amends before G-d.

What all this adds up to is that holiness is a type of general refinement, perfection, and exaltation, not necessarily limited to one particular point or area. Holiness here means that there are certain acts that are so foul that one embarrasses not only himself, but G-d as well upon committing them.

When one refrains from committing a transgression, it may be because one simply has no desire to commit such an act. In contrast, it may be that one is able to refrain from committing the transgression despite his desires. The Midrash articulates this line of thinking: "I do have a desire for such and such, but what can I do, since my Father in heaven has ordered me to abstain?."7 The general conception of holiness is, in a certain sense, "I have no desire" – I cannot do it; I have an aversion to such a thing; it is simply out of the question for me to stoop to such a base, low level and commit such a sin. A story is told of a rebbe who claimed regarding one of his Hasidim that the reason he does not sin is simply pride. For this Hasid, it seemed degrading that an exalted personality such as he should demean himself through sin.

There is a clever (though certainly not straightforward) explanation of the verse, "The wicked crows (hillel) about his unbridled lust"8: Does a wicked man resemble the great sage Hillel? The answer is that even a man as distinguished as Hillel the Elder is capable – when obsessed with "unbridled lust" – of bringing himself to a state that is so indecent that he reduces himself to the level of the basest of individuals. This can be seen in the case of all sorts of desires. A person can be distinguished, admirable, respected, and highly regarded; but when he is overcome with passion – suddenly, all

the eminence peels off him, he debases himself and becomes a kind of four-legged creature, or even something lower.

When it says, "You shall be holy unto Me, for I, G-d, am holy,"9 the Torah is talking about the glory of Israel: You are holy, you are uplifted; therefore, you must not degrade yourselves and sink so low. The requirement of holiness in Leviticus is thus a type of musar. There are children on whom this type of musar works very well. One need not hit his child or punish him, but merely say to him, "This kind of behavior is beneath you." Much of what is written in Leviticus about transgressions is based on this approach: "Is it possible that you would do such shameful things?"

The Midrash says that the meaning of "ascending and descending on it (bo)"10 is that Jacob's image was engraved on the Throne of Glory, and the angels were comparing the ideal image of the heavenly Jacob with his image as it actually appeared below.11 This is a very demanding comparison: Does Jacob's actual appearance correspond to his ideal image, to what he is capable of being? Likewise, the requirement of "You shall be holy, for I am holy" derives from the comparison of one's heavenly image with one's earthly image, as though to say: This is your source, this is your root, you originate from this ideal image; in light of this – how can you possibly sin?

That is why we say each morning: "My G-d, the soul that You gave me is pure." We start from above and continue below. It could be that during the day a person is occupied with all sorts of mundane things; nevertheless, he remembers that "the soul that You gave me is pure." The Talmud states that just as the beams of a person's house testify against him, so do his own limbs and his own soul.12 The Baal Shem Tov writes, "A person's own soul will teach him," meaning that one feels embarrassment when facing his own soul, his own heavenly image. In the same way, one is embarrassed in the face of the injunction, "You shall be holy unto Me."

The requirement of holiness is at the essence of a Jew's very existence. Hence, there are transgressions regarding which the Torah says, "I will cut him off," or "that soul shall be cut off." After a person does such things, there is no longer justification for his soul to continue its existence. Such a person removes himself from the circle of holiness and ceases to be part of the community of Israel, not just socially, but spiritually as well; he is lost in the sense that he is cut off from the source of life, from all that justifies his existence – precisely because it is holy.

Exceptional responsibility

Our sages often refer to the book of Leviticus as Torat Kohanim (the Law of the Priests). Though it does contain many such laws, it is certainly not devoted exclusively to the Priests and their service. Nonetheless, the message that "You shall be My special treasure among all the peoples…You shall be to Me a kingdom of Priests and a holy nation,"13 which is the essence of Israel's chosenness, appears in Leviticus with special emphasis. The Jewish people is "a kingdom of Priests" both literally and figuratively. We are, in a sense, the Priests of all mankind, with all the obligations that derive from this calling.

The prophets, too, speak of the exceptional responsibility that goes with being chosen as "a kingdom of Priests." Regarding other nations, for example, G-d does not always make a strict accounting, whereas regarding the People of Israel it says, "You alone have I known of all the families of the earth – that is why I will call you to account for all your iniquities."14 This is not only because the greater the person, the greater his fall, and the higher his level, the lower his descent. Rather, there is improper behavior that an ordinary person can get away with, whereas a Jew is held up to much more intense scrutiny; if he does these things, it is considered a major blemish.

This distinction can be seen in connection with prophecy. The Talmud says that "The Holy One, Blessed Be He, causes His Divine Presence to rest only on one who is strong, wealthy, wise, and humble."15 These qualities are required only of the prophets of Israel, and they are connected with the holiness that is unique to Israel. In the case of all the other nations, a person who possesses none of these positive traits can still become a great prophet.

Bilam not only is not an admirable individual, he is a truly base creature. Nevertheless, the Midrash relates that Bilam's level of prophecy paralleled that of Moses himself: "Never again has there arisen in Israel a prophet like Moses – in Israel there has not arisen, but among the nations there has arisen. And who is that? Bilam son of Beor."16 Bilam is the only prophet from among the nations of the world whose prophecy is included in the Torah. The daily morning prayer service begins with a verse spoken by him – "How fair are your tents, O Jacob, your dwellings, O Israel"17 – and his prophecy reached to the end of days, to the end of all generations. Why is this so?

Apparently, in the case of nations of the world, prophecy is simply a matter of talent. The prophet can be a philosophical genius but totally incompetent in everything else, just as a peerless mathematician can be clueless in other fields of study. Among the nations, prophecy is a gift, a special quality that remains isolated from the rest of the prophet's essence. In the case of Israel's holiness and spiritual essence, however, such a thing could not be; there cannot be an exalted personality whose exaltedness is sullied.

This same point is echoed in the saying, "If someone tells you, 'There is wisdom among the nations,' believe it; 'There is Torah among the nations,' do not believe it."18 Wisdom can be found anywhere. One can learn even from an animal – as it says, "Who teaches us by the beasts of the earth"19 – and certainly one can learn wisdom from someone who is not a member of the covenant. A person can be both a great mathematician and an adulterer, but it cannot be that someone who transgressed the laws that are found in Parashot Achaarei Mot or Kedoshim is also a true Torah scholar. Torah, which belongs to the kabbalistic category of "wisdom of holiness," can be found only where there is holiness – and holiness does not go together with baseness. The requirements of holiness are much stricter.

Devarim FOOTNOTES

1.Lev. 20:1–8.
2.20:24–26.
3.Lev. 5:20–21.
4.5:25–26.
5.Leviticus Rabbah 24:5.
6.Tiferet Yisrael 11.
7.Sifra, Kedoshim 9.
8.Ps. 10:3.
9.Lev. 20:26.
10.Gen. 28:12.
11.Genesis Rabbah 68:12. According to this interpretation in the Midrash, bo refers not to the ladder but to Jacob.
12.Taanit 11a.
13.Ex. 19:5–6.
14.Amos 3:2.
15.Nedarim 38a.
16.Sifrei, Deuteronomy 357.
17.Num. 24:5.
18.Lamentations Rabbah 2:13.
19.Job 35:11.

By Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) Rabbi Adin Even-Israel (Steinsaltz) (1937-2020) was internationally regarded as one of the leading rabbis of this century. The author of many books, he was best known for his monumental translation of and commentary on the Talmud. To learn more visit his website.

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Isheh Reyach Nichoach Lashem - A satisfying aroma to Hashem. (1:9)

The service comes to its conclusion as the aroma of the offering rises up in smoke to Hashem. This pleases Hashem because, as Chazal (Sifra, cited by Rashi) explain, "I have spoken, and My will has been carried out." Hashem certainly is not into aroma, nor does He require offerings. We do not understand the esoteric rationale behind korbanos, offerings. We do understand, however, that when Hashem commands – we respond by executing to His will. What could be more pleasing than having one's will carried out to perfection. Indeed, the Talmud (Menachos 110a) teaches: "The term ishei reiach nichoach is written concerning the burnt-offering of an animal (cattle), the burnt-offering of a fowl and the meal-offering made of flour and oil. This is to teach that, regardless what one brings as an offering, be it expensive (cattle) or little (such as the offering of a poor man, a Korban Minchah, meal-offering), offerings are all the same before Hashem, as long as the donor is mechavein, directs his heart, focuses his intention, toward Heaven/Hashem."

In order to give the reader an understanding and appreciation of the meaning of yechavein libo laShomayim, "directs his heart Heavenward," Horav Reuven Karlinstein, zl, relates a vignette concerning the saintly Bobover Rebbe, zl, Horav Shlomo, zl. When Rav Karlinstein was in America to receive treatment for an illness, a Bobover chassid who was himself very close to the Rebbe attended to Rav Karlinstein's needs, which included traveling to various medical centers across the country. This chassid related that the Rebbe had an interesting daily custom. Almost like clockwork, every day, between the hours of four and five o'clock, the gabbai, aide, would bring in a plate with egg kichel, light cookies, of which the Rebbe would partake, make a B'racha Achronah, Al Ha'michyah, and continue with his day. The Rebbe insisted specifically on cookies – no fruit substitute. Indeed, one day, the gabbai said he had always wondered what it was

about cookies that "excited" the Rebbe.
Shortly prior to the Rebbe's passing, a close confidant of the Rebbe gathered up the courage to question the Rebbe concerning his insistence on cookies for his daily afternoon repast. The Rebbe was not into food. He ate very little, and he was not finicky concerning his menu, except when it concerned his afternoon cookies. "Why?" he asked. "What is so unique about these cookies that they mean so much to the Rebbe?"
The Bobover explained, "The Bracha Achronah, After Blessing, recited for mezonos, cookies and other such snack-oriented foodstuffs, is U'nevarechcha alehah bikedushah u'vtaharah; "and we will bless You in holiness and purity." It is the only brachah of its kind; the only one in which we petition Hashem to allow us to bless Him in sanctity and purity. I cannot allow a day to pass during which I do not beseech Hashem to allow me to be worthy of this opportunity." [In an addendum to this story, my brother-in-law, Reb Moshe Brunner, a staunch Bobover chassid, was, for all intents and purposes, a ben bayis, frequent guest/visitor at the Rebbe's home. He observed the Rebbe many an afternoon, and eating cookies at 4:00 p.m. was not his usual daily tidbit. In fact, he remembers being with the Rebbe at 10:00 p.m. as the Rebbetzin came in to insist that he have dinner. The Rebbe responded that there were chassidim still waiting to be seen. He would have his egg kichel instead. He had not yet blessed Hashem b'kedushah u'be'taharah.
Rav Karlinstein bemoans the fact that Al Ha'michyah is one of the most neglected b'rachos. We attend a Kiddush after davening; someone has yahrzeit; we grab a danish, eat and run – no Al Ha'michyah. We make Havdalah, and something comes up which requires our attention. The result is that we neglect to say Al Ha'gefen. When we stop to think about the implications of this brachah and the opportunity it affords us to offer a "satisfying aroma to Hashem," we will think twice before neglecting this important brachah.

Asher Nasi Yechta - When a ruler sins. (4:22)
Rashi explains the word asher, as related to ashrei, fortunate: "Praised/fortunate is the generation whose leader is bold/courageous enough to offer penance/korban/offering for his shegagah, inadvertent sin; kal v'chomer, how much more so, if he is prepared to show remorse/ regret over his willful sin." It is a rare leader who does not conceal his error, who does not hide behind his exalted office, often denying that he committed an error in judgment or had a lapse in his spiritual relationship with Hashem, one who proclaims, Chatasi, "I have sinned." This is unfortunately a rare phenomenon, but this alone is reason to underscore the good fortune of a generation which has such a leader. This leader is not arrogant or pompous, does not blame his mistakes on everyone else but himself, the perpetrator of the misdeed. He is a human being – and human beings occasionally err.
Horav A. Henach Leibowitz, zl, observes that one would expect such laudatory/recognition in a corrupt generation whose leadership is selected, not on the basis of their Torah erudition or fear of G-d, but on "connections" and "pull." One might suspect that a leader whose Torah and yiraas Shomayim is, at best, elementary, and, for the most part, lacking, to be one who would camouflage his misdeeds. This is not unexpected when one's character is far from praiseworthy. Thus, one who breaks from the pack, acts remorseful and seeks penance, should be commended. The Rosh Yeshivah, notes, however, that Rashi implies that arrogance and cover-up are not unknown in a generation whose congregants are impeccable in their yiraas Shomayim and whose leadership are the products of an exhaustive search for one whose erudition matches his unsurpassed yiraas Shomayim. Would such a person be the victim of arrogance? Could he fall prey to concealing his spiritual deficiency? Apparently, even the best of the best are human, and, as such, fear humiliation. Thus, a generation whose leadership declares his guilt is truly fortunate.
Hashem selected Shaul Ha'Melech to be our people's first king. This appointment was indicative of his spiritual excellence. Yet, his extraordinary humility was insufficient to protect him from his own human nature, which did not allow him to confess to his shortcomings. The Rosh Yeshivah cites Eliyahu Rabbah (31:13) that refers to Shaul as being guilty of gasus ruach, thickness of spirit (arrogance), a deep desire to be someone of significance. On the other hand, we find the Navi excoriating Shaul for his misplaced humility, referring to him as nechba el ha'keilim, hiding behind the vessels (Shmuel I, 10:22). Clearly, Shaul was righteous and humble but this, explains the Rosh Yeshivah, does not necessarily obviate him from declaring, "I listened to the voice of Hashem," when, in fact, he did not (Shmuel I, 15:20). Clearly, on Shaul's exalted spiritual level, the slight tinge of impropriety was viewed as a sin, thus we see the reference to him being guilty of gasus ha'ruach. This shows us that, regardless of a person's stature, confessing to a wrong, however slight, takes much spiritual and emotional character.
Perhaps we might be able to explain Shaul's actions by distinguishing between gaavah, haughtiness, and gasus ha'ruach, thickness of spirit. The fellow who is plagued by gasus ha'ruach seeks significance, wants to be relevant, independent of Hashem. Arrogance, on the other hand, is the feeling that one has actually made it; he has achieved significance. Thus, the one who is plagued with gasus ha'ruach, passions for what he has convinced himself he must have, while the baal gaavah has what he thinks is important. He thrives on being relevant and being the object of public adulation – regardless of whether it is all external. He is convinced that he is special. This is all that counts.
Let us address the opposite side of the coin. One who is humble neither ignores his fine attributes, nor negates his achievements and potential. He knows what he is and what he is capable of doing. It just does not mean that much to him. "So what?" he will reply to those who laud his accomplishments. In Chabad Chassidus, this feeling is called a lack of hargashas atzmo, feeling of self. He is neither absorbed in nor conscious of himself. He acts, does what he is supposed to do – and moves on with life. He neither stops to pat himself on the back, nor pines for adulation.
Gasus ha'ruach leads one to depression and disillusionment when he does not obtain what he is seeking. A person who has developed his middas ha'anavah, attribute of humility, does not allow for extraneous issues that pull so many people down to affect him. He remains b'simchah, filled with joy, because what he might not have, the accolades that mean so much to his counterpart, mean nothing to him.
Shaul Ha'Melech's humility was contrived of melancholy and despair resulting from the gasus ha'ruach that affected him. (We must underscore that the use of these terms about a tzaddik of the level of Shaul Ha'Melech are used only relative to his exalted spiritual stature.) Shaul sought significance and, when he felt it was not forthcoming, he fell into despair which, for all outward appearances, manifested itself as humility. One who is truly humble is filled with simchah, because he has no cares to bring him down. One whose anavah is the result of gasus ruach is plagued by atzvus, despondency, because he feels that what he is seeking eludes him. Shaul Ha'Melech was not guilty of arrogance. As the Eliyahu Rabbah teaches, he was plagued with gasus ha'ruach. Regardless of his achievements, he was dissatisfied, because he wanted more.
Some people live for attention – because they not only thrive on it, but they need it to live. Without a feeling of relevance and significance, they become despondent. Sad, but that is the human nature of those who are plagued with a thickness of spirit. We should focus and learn from those who truly would do anything not to garner public adulation and fanfare. No dearth of stories describes the sincere modesty manifest by our Torah leaders. It seems as if the greater they were, the greater their demureness. Their unpretentiousness was real. The Rachmastrivka Rebbe, zl, was unique in his saintliness. At one point, he was in excruciating pain in his arm. It had become infected, and his doctors were concerned that the infection would spread. He exercised his arm as per his doctor's orders in order to loosen up the muscles and increase blood flow. He was informed that chamei Teveryah, the hot springs at Teveryah, would heal him. The Rebbe absolutely refused to travel to Teveryah for therapeutic purposes.
When asked why he was so reluctant to take the trip, he explained, "When I announce that I am leaving, a crowd of chassidim will gather on the day of my journey to gezegen zich, say goodbye to me. When I return, they will come again, gather and wait in line to welcome me home. It is not worth it for me to take leave of my chassidim if this is what is involved. I cannot put my chassidim through such an "ordeal." When they convinced the Rebbe that they would see to it that no one would "alter his schedule," he acquiesced to go.

Ve'im Zevach Shlamim Korbano - If his offering is a feast peace-offering. (3:1)
A Korban Shelamim is unique in that it is self-motivated, brought voluntarily, because a person has been moved to express his gratitude to Hashem for favors granted, and to enhance his closeness with Him. Shelamim is derived from shaleim, wholeness, perfection and shalom, peace. It increases good will, since so many people – the Kohanim, the family and friends of the donor – participate in its consumption. Ramban focuses on the relationship of the Shelamim with sheleimus, wholeness. He observes that the donor who offers a Shelamim is doing so freely, not to atone for an infraction on his part. He is a person who seeks spiritual growth on a positive trajectory, not because he is running away, but because he is surging forward.
In way of explanation, I will digress with a story and elaborate afterwards. The Holocaust was a devastating cataclysmic tragedy during which six million of our brothers and sisters were systematically murdered – their only "offense" being their religion – leaving its survivors traumatized for life, some physically and others spiritually. The following story, related by Rabbi Elimelech Biderman, Shlita, is about one such Yid who was observant prior to the war's outbreak and, although he survived physically, he became a victim of the spiritual questions he had after the war.
He arrived in America, a young, broken survivor, seeking to distance himself as much as possible from the communities that were home to organized Jewish religious observance. After his experiences, he sought distance between himself and Judaism. He moved to a small village in southern United States, married a like-minded third generation biologically Jewish American, and together they raised their only child, a wonderful young boy, happy, inquisitive and totally oblivious to the religion of his

ancestors. Despite his father's antagonistic relationship to religious observance, when his son approached his thirteenth year, the father told him that, for a Jewish boy, his thirteenth birthday holds unique significance as a rite of passage. Thus, his father, who was by now a prosperous businessman, wanted him to pick out a present of his liking; money was no object. The problem was that the village where they lived was so far off the beaten path that they did not even have a "dollar store."

Father and son drove to the closest city, where they could visit its shops and select a suitable gift of his son's liking. Money was not an issue, but the boy was not the usual spoiled, American boy who only sought electronic diversions which lack substance. He was a child whose emotions went beyond the puerile, shallow games and toys that excite the unsophisticated mind. When they passed a Judaica store, the boy suddenly became enthusiastic and wanted to go in. He could not see enough. He had questions about everything – from books to Judaica. He was curious concerning the tradition beyond the religious objects that he saw. His father made every attempt to convince him to leave the store that sold religious "antiques," tributes to a no longer vibrant religion. The father was ill at ease, anxious that his son was expressing an interest in Judaism.

Suddenly, his son feasted his eyes on a clay Chanukah menorah. It was old, but, by the intricate artwork, it was evident that its creator had put his heart and soul into its conception. "This is what I want!" the boy excitedly informed his father. "I will buy you anything but that," the father countered. His son pleaded with him, "I did not ask for anything from the previous stores. I finally found something that I like and want. Please, let me have it."

The father asked the storekeeper to tell them the menorah's history. "This precious menorah," the man began, "was discovered in a concentration camp. Apparently, it was made by an inmate, concealed from the eyes of the SS guards. This menorah was to illuminate the darkened lives of the Jewish inmates." When the boy heard the story, he wanted the menorah even more. His father relented and purchased it. The boy spent hours staring at the menorah, going over its intricacies, imagining the danger and sacrifice experienced by the inmate who risked his life to make it. As Chanukah loomed closer on the Jewish calendar, the son told his father that he would like to light the menorah in memory of its creator. Unfortunately, as he was carrying the menorah to its honored place on the table, it slipped from his hands, fell on the ground and broke into many pieces.

When the father saw how distraught his son was, he offered to help him glue it back together. As they worked on the menorah, a small yellow piece of paper fell out of one of the hollow branches which the father picked up, read and promptly fainted. When he was revived he explained, "This paper has a message written in Yiddish that related the story of its creator and his purpose in making the menorah. He wrote, 'I am forced to work fourteen hours a day. The work is backbreaking, but, at the end of the day, rather than go to sleep, I abstain from sleep and instead devote myself to my labor of love – to make this little menorah. In a few months it will be Chanukah, and, if I am still alive, I will light the menorah. If Heaven-forbid, I do not survive this misery, I ask that whoever finds it light the candles on Chanukah, and this way my neshamah, soul, will have an aliyah, spiritual elevation. The letter is signed…" and the father read the name. It was his name! He had made the menorah years earlier during the Holocaust. With Hashgachah Pratis, Divine Providence, it had returned home.

The story ends on a bittersweet note. The father never ended up doing teshuvah. Nonetheless, the story produced an emotional tug on the son's heart which became stronger until he eventually did teshuvah, became fully observant, and raised a beautiful, frum, observant family, a credit to Klal Yisrael. I digressed from the original dvar Torah, because I was troubled about the story's ending: Why did the father not return? He saw clear, unequivocal Hashgachah Pratis. For what more could he ask? Indeed, the story had a good ending in the fact that his legacy was preserved through his son, but I wonder what prevented him from returning. I think the answer may well be gleaned from the Ramban's understanding of the Korban Shelamim. There seem to be two variant approaches towards serving Hashem: the positive , wholesome approach employed by the one who offers a Korban Shlelamim, and the guilt-ridden manner in which one brings a Korban Chatas, sin-offering.

I think that these variant approaches, likewise, break down into the manner and reason one does teshuvah and continues on to become a fully observant member of Klal Yisrael. Part of the baal teshuvah's struggle is to erase the past, to see to it that his previous life does not come to haunt him. Teshuvah, return, gives new and exciting positive meaning to life, but it also casts a shadow of disapproval, a harsh light, on the past. The residue of the past often surfaces, unless one breaks his ties, not out of anger, but out of a positive change of direction. Penitence leads to atonement and absolution, which, in effect, is the expunging of one's sin, allowing the baal teshuvah to sort of become reborn. Teshuvah, thus, has two essential phases: disengagement from the past, followed by rebirth. The process takes as long as the baal teshuvah allows it to be drawn out. As long as he hides in shame, anger, weakness, the process will remain negative; the joy of rebirth will not begin. Some people, like the father who made the menorah, cannot make that break with the past. This man experienced unspeakable suffering, which left him superficially angry at his religion, but essentially angry at himself. This emotional negativity did not allow him to turn the corner, to act positively, to alter his life's trajectory. He feared his son's gravitation to observance, because he knew it would awaken within him feelings that would haunt him. He loathed himself for what he had become, but he was not sufficiently at peace with himself to extricate himself from these feelings. Without shalom, peace of mind, he could have no shleimus. The Korban Shelamim is the product of positive energy, positive emotions, gratitude emanating from a wholesome feeling of knowing that everything we have is good, because it comes from Hashem.

RAV AVINER

Ha-Rav answers hundreds of text message questions a day. Here's a sample:

Throwing Stones at Arabs

Q: Considering the many cases in which Arabs threw stones at Jews, may individual Jews stone Arab villages?

A: No. We are not Arabs.

Prenatal Test

Q: I'm 40 years old and pregnant. Most of the prenatal tests are very expensive. Which ones are absolutely mandatory?

A: The health insurance plans completely or partially cover the costs of the recommended tests. You can trust their experienced judgment.

Humble Behavior

Q: I don't understand the principle that whoever strives to avoid honor is honorable, whereas whoever seeks personal honor is scorned.

A: The Maharal explains that chasing honor is a negative trait, whereas striving to avoid honor is praiseworthy.

Playmobile

Q: On Shabbat may we assemble a Playmobile toy?

A: Yes, on condition that it's temporary, and that it's disassembled before Shabbat is over. The same applies to Lego and puzzles.

Winning Lottery

Q: Does winning the lottery deplete one's merits?

A: Perhaps.

Part of Divinity

Q: According to my understanding, my soul is finite. I don't comprehend how it's connected to Hashem.

A: 1. Mathematically speaking, finite numbers belong to infinity. 2. The soul isn't actually a part of the essence of Divinity per say but is illuminated by Divine light that transcends all of the worldly spheres.

Necklaces for Men

Q: May a male wear a necklace?

A: It's permissible on condition that the jewelry is obviously masculine. However, according to the teaching of Sefer Orchot Tzaddikim in the chapter outlining the importance of humble and modest behavior, it's unadvisable.

Divine Presence

Q: How do we know that Hashem is present? Please include sources above and beyond the regular teachings.

A: Your down-to-earth question requires serious ongoing study. A response in a short text message isn't enough to quench your healthy curiosity, as we're talking about a basic fundamental tenet of Judaism. Hashem governs and reigns over every single aspect of nature and creation. Rav Kook delves into these matters in his book "Be-Eekvai Ha-Tzon" in two separate articles: "Da'at HaElokim" and "Avodat Ha-Elokim". He explains there that Hashem is the Unique One and Only Creator and Master of the entire universe. Our Eternal Father and Merciful King is the Almighty Power and Provider, Regal Judge, Legislator, Single Orchestrator, Redeemer, Provider, All Encompassing Epitome of Perfection and Purity.

Child's Money

Q: When a very young child, unfamiliar with monetary dealings, receives a gift of money, may members of his family spend it or should they save it for him?

A: The money belongs to him. It should be set aside for his future use. The family may open a bank account in his name or keep an accurate record of the spending on his behalf.

Lost and Found

Q: Are we permitted to take abandoned articles of clothing and other items left on the beach?

A: No. The owners may return to claim them.

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash[SMTP:yhe@vbm torah.org] Subject: Special Pesach Package

LAWS OF EREV PESACH WHICH FALLS ON SHABBAT

By RAV YOSEF ZVI RIMON

Translated by David Silverberg

INTRODUCTION: BOTTOM LINE SUMMARY OF THE HALAKHOT

"SHABBAT HA GADOL DERASHA": The "derasha" takes place on the Shabbat before Shabbat Erev Pesach, a full week before Pesach. "Viyehi No'am" is recited on this Shabbat.

THE FAST OF THE FIRSTBORN: The fast is observed on the Thursday before Pesach, and a firstborn may exempt himself from the fast by participating in a "siyum." (There may be even more room for this leniency on such a year than on regular years.)

THE SEARCH FOR CHAMETZ: One conducts the search on Thursday night, following the standard procedure.

DESTROYING THE CHAMETZ: One burns the chametz on Friday morning until the end of the fifth halakhic hour (printed in the calendars), but does not recite "kol chamira" (the declaration of renunciation). One must ensure to concentrate all the chametz he wants to keep for Shabbat and eat it with utmost care. It is preferable to leave a small amount of bread, ideally bread that does not produce crumbs, such as pita. (Some do not leave over any bread for Shabbat see below.)

WORK ON FRIDAY: As opposed to Erev Pesach on regular years, all types of activities are permissible on this Friday. "KASHERING" UTENSILS: One may do so throughout the day on Friday. PREPARATIONS FOR THE SEDER: Optimally, one should prepare before Shabbat the lettuce, shank bone, charoset, yahrzeit candle, etc.

TERUMOT AND MA'ASROT: One must separate all terumot and ma'asrot and perform bi'ur ma'asrot before Shabbat. SHABBAT PRAYER SERVICE: Prayers on this Shabbat should begin early and not be prolonged (nor should they be rushed). For the haftara we read "Ve arva," the standard haftara for Shabbat Ha gadol. (According to the Vilna Gaon, we read the regular haftara for the parasha of the week.)

SHABBAT MEALS: One should eat food that is kosher for Pesach in Pesach pots, preferably in disposable pans (since one may not wash pots on Shabbat). As for "lechem mishneh," one must choose between two options: 1. Egg matza is used and the berakha of "ha motzi" is recited. Ashkenazim use egg matza only for the first two meals (i.e. night and morning), as their custom prohibits the consumption of egg matza after the time when chametz becomes forbidden (i.e. the fourth hour). One should try to avoid contact between the egg matza and the Pesach utensils. If one uses egg matza for his Shabbat morning meal, he must complete it by the end of the fourth hour (approximately 9 A.M. in Israel), unless he follows the view allowing the consumption of egg matza until the tenth hour. 2. Chametz bread is used for lechem mishneh at the first two meals. One should preferably use only a small amount of bread, of a type that doesn't make crumbs. Since one must ensure that no crumbs come in contact with the Pesach utensils, one should either eat the chametz at the beginning of the meal and then properly shake out the tablecloth and garments, or use disposable dishes. One must finish eating the bread by the end of the fourth hour.

LEFTOVER CHAMETZ; "BITTUL": All consumption of chametz must conclude before the end of the fourth [halakhic] hour. Before the end of the fifth hour, one should crumble the leftover chametz and throw it into the toilet. (When dealing with a large amount of chametz, one may throw it into a public domain where there is an eruv.) Tablecloths and clothing used with chametz must be thoroughly cleaned off, and one should likewise rinse his mouth and sweep the floor. The broom should preferably be placed together with the chametz utensils. One formally renounces the chametz ("bittul") before the end of the fifth hour. SE'UDAT SHELISHIT: On a regular Shabbat, one should preferably eat bread for se'udat shelishit and conduct the meal after the time from which one may recite Mincha (one half hour after chatzot). On Shabbat Erev Pesach, of course, one cannot satisfy both these requirements. One must therefore choose between the following three options (while preferably reciting Mincha before se'uda shelishit): 1. One who eats egg matza after the fourth hour (most Ashkenazim are stringent in this regard) may eat se'udat shelishit at its optimal time (starting from a half hour past midday) using egg matza. (Egg matza may not, however, be eaten after the tenth hour.) 2. Those who do not eat egg matza may conduct se'uda shelishit at its proper time using meat, fish or fruit (as the Rema recommends). One may eat "kneidlech" (cooked matza meal) and some even allow the consumption of "matza brei" (fried matza crumbs). 3. Some have the practice of following option 2 but also splitting the morning meal. They recite Birkat Ha mazon, wait a short while, and then begin a new meal with netilat yadayim and ha motzi.

PREPARATIONS ON SHABBAT: One should not conduct preparations on Shabbat for the seder, except for basic cleaning that enhances Shabbat as well. MOTZA'EI SHABBAT: "Va todi'einu" is added to Shemoneh Esrei at Ma'ariv, and "Viyehi No'am" and "Ve Ata Kadosh" are omitted.

CANDLE LIGHTING: One may light candles only after reciting Ma'ariv with "Va todi'einu" or saying "Barukh ha mavdil bein kodesh le kodesh." A woman lighting candles recites "She hecheyanu" and omits this berakha over the first cup of wine at the seder.

KIDDUSH: One follows the order known by the acronym, "yaknehaz" "yayin" (blessing over the wine), "kiddush" (the standard Yom Tov text, "asher bachar banu mi kol am□"), "ner" (berakha over the havdala candle), "havdala" (the standard berakha: "ha mavdil bein kodesh le chol□"), "zeman" ("she hecheyanu"). "GA'AL YISRAEL": Most people change the text of the berakha when the seder occurs on Motza'ei Shabbat and recite, "□ ve nochal sham min ha pesachim u min ha zevachim."

Now we will follow this summary with a more detailed analysis of the laws and their source. The article is divided into three parts: things to do before Shabbat; the Shabbat meals; miscellaneous details.

PART 1: THINGS TO DO BEFORE SHABBAT

This year, Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbat a relatively rare occurrence. (The last two times were in 5754 and 5741, though in coming years this will occur more frequently: 5765 and 5768.) The infrequency of this phenomenon requires review of the relevant halakhot prior to Pesach more so than on other years. In fact, the Gemara tells of even the greatest of the Tannaim who forgot halakhot pertinent to Erev Pesach on Shabbat. The family of Beteira, who served "Nesi'im" (princes), did not remember whether or not the korban Pesach overrides the prohibitions of Shabbat until Hillel reminded them that it in fact does (Pesachim 66a).[1] Furthermore, some authorities maintain that we do not decide halakha regarding Erev Pesach on Shabbat based on widespread custom, since there cannot exist a "common practice" regarding such a rare phenomenon occurring only every several years (Tel Talpiyot, vol. 4, p.65).

THE FAST OF THE FIRSTBORN

At first glance, it would seem that the firstborn should observe this annual fast on the Thursday preceding Shabbat Erev Pesach. The rationale for such a ruling emerges from the Gemara (Megilla 5a). The mishna had established that when Tisha Be Av falls on Shabbat, we delay the fast until Sunday. The Gemara explains that we specifically delay the fast rather than observing it earlier, on Thursday, because of the impropriety of commemorating calamity earlier than usual. It would seem, therefore, that only fasts commemorating tragedy must not take place earlier than the regularly scheduled date. Other fasts, by contrast, are observed on Thursday. (The Terumat Ha deshen takes this position in chap. 110.) Indeed, when the thirteenth of Adar generally observed as Ta'anit Esther falls on Shabbat, we move the fast up to Thursday. Accordingly, it would seem, when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat, the firstborn should observe their fast on Thursday.

However, it remains unclear whether the fast should be transferred to Thursday or Friday. As mentioned, when Ta'anit Esther falls on Shabbat we fast on Thursday, for once we must already conduct the fast earlier, we prefer to do so on Thursday. Why do we seek to avoid fasting on Friday? An explanation cited in the name of Mahram Provencal (Birkei Yosef, 470:4; Divrei Ze'ev 19:21) claims that the recitation of Selichot (added to the prayer service on fast days) would disrupt the preparations for Shabbat. The Maggid Mishneh (Hilkhot Ta'aniyot 5:5), by contrast, explains that entering Shabbat hungry after a full day of fasting undermines the honor of Shabbat. A practical difference between these two reasons arises when the fast of the firstborn, on which no Selichot are recited, falls on Shabbat. Indeed, according to Maharam Provencal the firstborn observe the fast on such a year on Friday. However, the majority of authorities ruled that the fast be moved to Thursday, since the explanation of the Maggid Mishneh is viewed as authoritative, appearing already in the Midrash Tanchuma (Bereishit 83), which mentions explicitly that the firstborns fast on Thursday. The Rema adopts this ruling, as well (480:2).

We find yet a third position, as well, one advanced by the Agur (771) and mentioned in the Terumat Ha deshen (126). The Yerushalmi (Pesachim, chap. 4) records Rebbi's practice to refrain from eating on Erev Pesach, and questions whether he did so because he was a firstborn or to ensure an appetite for the consumption of matza at the seder. Presumably, the Gemara could have resolved this issue easily

by observing the sage's conduct on Erev Pesach when it occurred on Shabbat. If he fasted (on Thursday or Friday), then he obviously adopted this practice because he was firstborn, rather than to preserve his appetite. From the Yerushalmi's apparent refusal to determine the basis of Rebbi's conduct in this manner, we may deduce that firstborns do not fast at all when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat.

However, the Terumat Ha deshen himself rejects this proof by raising the possibility that such a situation simply never arose in Rebbi's lifetime.[2]

The Shulchan Arukh (470:2) cites the first two views, calling for the observance of the fast of the firstborn on Thursday or Friday, respectively. According to the accepted principles of the Shulchan Arukh's rulings, he personally concurs with the second view, to fast on Friday (see Shut Yabi'a Omer, vol. 6, C.M. 2). The Rema, however, comments that one should follow the first position, which schedules the fast on Thursday.

May a firstborn, on such a year, conduct a "siyum" (celebration of the completion of a masekhet), or participate in that of another, in order to exempt himself from this fast, as is commonly practiced on other years? One of the reasons for the general leniency in this regard allowing a "siyum" to exempt firstborns in attendance from fasting involves our concern of the possible adverse effects of fasting on that night's seder. Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank, in Mikra'ei Kodesh (vol. 2, 23), views this rationale as a basis for not allowing this leniency when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat and the fast thus takes place on Thursday two full days prior to the seder on Saturday night.

Nevertheless, it would seem that one may act leniently in this regard, since other reasons exist for exemption through attendance at a siyum.[3] (What's more, as we have seen, some authorities hold that the firstborns do not fast at all when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat.) This decision is mentioned specifically by Rav Sonenfeld (Seder Erev Pesach She chal Be Shabbat, 1), Rav Moshe Feinstein (Iggerot Moshe O.C. 4:69), and Rav Ovadia Yosef (Yechaveh Da'at vol. 6, 91). [The Yechaveh Da'at adds that a father who generally fasts on behalf of his eldest son need not fast on such a year.] We may infer a similar conclusion from the Mishna Berura and other Acharonim who make no mention of such a stringency when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat.

Thus, as for the final halakha, the firstborns observe their annual fast this year on the Thursday before Pesach, and they may, as in other years, exempt themselves through participation in a "siyum."

BEDIKAT CHAMETZ

We generally conduct bedikat chametz (final check for chametz) on the night of the fourteenth of Nissan, which occurs this year on Friday night. As such, we may not carry around a candle and hence cannot perform the bedika at the usual time. Therefore, as emerges from the Gemara (Pesachim 49a) and ruled explicitly by the Rambam (3:3) and Shulchan Arukh (444:1), we conduct the bedika on Thursday night (the night of the thirteenth).

The procedure of the bedika follows that of other years: the recitation of the berakha "al bi'ur chametz" prior to the bedika, and the formal renunciation of the chametz ("bittul") afterward (Taz, 444:7; Mishna Berura 444:1).

One who failed to perform the bedika on Thursday night does so on Friday morning (with a berakha Mishna Berura 193:22). If he neglected to conduct the bedika on Friday morning, too, then he does so on Motzaei Shabbat (the night of the Seder). However, if he renounced the chametz on Shabbat morning before the fifth [halakhic] hour of the day, then he checks for chametz on Motzaei Yom Tov (Mishna Berura 435:3 and Sha'ar Ha tziyun).[4]

"BI'UR" AND "BITTUL": DESTROYING AND RENOUNCING THE CHAMETZ

The chametz must be destroyed on Friday morning. Although generally one must destroy his chametz before the fifth hour on Erev Pesach, it would appear that this year one may do so the entire day, as no prohibition exists regarding the possession or consumption of chametz throughout the day on Friday (the thirteenth of Nissan). Nevertheless, the Mordekhai (end of Pesachim, chap. 1) cites Rashi as applying the fifth hour deadline in our case, too, as a safeguard to prevent errors in other years. Accordingly, the Shulchan Arukh (444:2) deems this practice preferable.[5]

One does not declare renunciation of ownership of the chametz ("bittul") after destroying it on Friday, since he will do so on Shabbat itself (Maharil, Hilkhot Bedikat Chametz; Rema 444:2). Since one must leave over some chametz for use on Shabbat, he must perform the "bittul" on Shabbat in any event (Mishna Berura, 10). The "bittul" must take place before the end of the fifth hour on Shabbat morning.

WORK ON FRIDAY

The mishna (Pesachim 50a) establishes a prohibition against certain types of work on Erev Pesach after "chatzot" (midday). Rashi explains, "[This prohibition is] in order that one not preoccupy himself with work and thereby forget the destruction of his chametz, slaughtering the korban pesaand the preparation of matza" The Yerushalmi (Pesachim 4:1), however, presents a different reason: it is improper for one to involve himself in work during the time designated for the offering of the korban pesach.

A practical difference between these two reasons arises when Erev Pesach occurs on Shabbat: may one, in such a year, perform these forbidden activities on Friday? According to Rashi, here, too, the concern exists that one may neglect the responsibilities of destroying the chametz, etc. If, however, we adopt the reasoning of the Yerushalmi, no prohibition would apply on Friday afternoon, a full day prior to the time of the korban pesach.

The halakha follows the position of the Yerushalmi, as most Rishonim adopt this view (Tosafot, Rosh, Ran and Rambam). One may therefore engage in work on Friday afternoon in our case. (Regarding the general guidelines concerning activity on Friday afternoon, see Shulchan Arukh O.C. 251:1 and Mishna Berura.) Indeed, this is the ruling of the Bi'ur Halakha (468:1).

FOOTNOTES TO PART 1:

[1] We should note, however, that in those days many more years may have passed in between the occurrences of Erev Pesach on Shabbat (more so than today), since the calendar system depended upon visual confirmation of the new moon, rather than the fixed calendar used today. (The Terumat Ha deshen 126 makes a similar note regarding the Yerushalmi in Pesachim chap. 4, mentioned later.)

[2] Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank (Mikra'ei Kodesh, Pesach, vol. 2, 23) suggests a different method of negating the proof from this Yerushalmi, based on a gemara (Megilla 5b) regarding Tisha Be Av. While the conventional view calls for the observance of the fast on Sunday should Tisha Be Av fall on Shabbat, the Gemara cites the dissenting view of Rebbi that in such a year Tisha Be Av is not observed at all. It stands to reason, then, that even if Rebbi had been a firstborn he would not have observed the fast of the firstborn in a year when Erev Pesach occurred on Shabbat. The Yerushalmi therefore could not resolve its question based on Rebbi's conduct in such a year; either way, he would not have fasted. Accordingly, this Yerushalmi has no bearing on practical halakha, which follows the majority view of the Chakhamim, against that of Rebbi.

However, Rav Frank continues by raising several reasons to dispute such an argument. Firstly, Rebbi's position regarding a fast whose date falls on Shabbat may apply only to those fasts that we would have to delay to Sunday (as implied by Rebbi's wording in Masekhet Megilla: "Since it is delayed, it is delayed [entirely]"). When, however, we may observe the fast earlier, he may agree to the fast's observance. Additionally, it stands to reason that in practice Rebbi followed the majority position, rather than his own, for according to the Yerushalmi, a single authority who dissents from the majority on a given issue should personally practice in accordance with his disputants. Rav Frank mentions other reasons, as well, to dispute his suggestion.

[3] An additional basis for leniency arises from the somewhat questionable source of this fast to begin with. Although the Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10:1), the Talmudic source of the fast, says that "the firstborn fast ['mitanim']" on Erev Pesach, other versions of the text read, "the firstborn indulge ['mitangim']" on Erev Pesach. (See Responsa Minchat Yitzchak, vol. 2, 93.)

As for the fast of the firstborn on other years, some authorities require the firstborns to fast (Noda Bi Yehuda, Mahadura Tinyana Kuntras Acharon, 354; Chatam Sofer cited in Shut Maharitatz 52; and Rav Kook). Many others, however, rule that firstborns do not have to fast if they attend a seudat mitzva (e.g. a siyum): see Yabi'a Omer, vol. 4, O.C. 13; Iggerot Moshe, O.C. vol. 1, 157; Minchat Yitzchak, vol. 2, 93; Mishna Berura 470:10.

[4] At first glance, one may argue for the permissibility of conducting the bedika on Shabbat itself. Since generally halakha states that a "positive commandment" ("mitzvat asei") overrides a "negative commandment" ("lo ta'aseh"), the same principle may call for rabbinically ordained mitzvot, such as bedikat chametz, to override rabbinic prohibitions, such as carrying candles on Shabbat (see, for example, Magen Avraham 446:2, citing the Shela). However, the Sedei Chemed (Ma'arekhet Chametz U matza 5:14) presents several refutations of this argument, including the fact that one has yet to perform the mitzva of bedika immediately upon lifting the candle, as well as the unique, stringent status of moving forbidden objects on Shabbat.

[5] However, the Shulchan Arukh mentions the preferred practice of destroying before "chatzot" (midday), not before the fifth hour. The Maharsham (in Da'at Torah) explains that the stringency of observing the deadline even in such a year is meant to safeguard only the Biblical requirement, that one destroy the chametz prior to midday, but not the additional rabbinic ordinance that one do so prior to the fifth hour. Therefore, when burning the chametz on Friday when Erev Pesach falls on Shabbat, one need ensure only to destroy the chametz before midday. Nevertheless, we mentioned the fifth hour deadline, rather than "chatzot," since this is how most later authorities understood the intention of the Shulchan Arukh (Mishna Berura 444:9; "Lu'ach Eretz Yisrael" by Rav Tuketchinsky).

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Erev Pesach that Falls out on Shabbat Part 2: The First Two Shabbat Meals

Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon

On Shabbat, we are required to eat lechem mishne (two loaves of bread) at each meal. Theoretically, when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat, we can fulfill this requirement in two different ways: with regular chametz bread, or with matza. We shall first examine the halakhic problems associated with each option, and afterwards suggest ways to overcome these problems.

EATING MATZA

The Yerushalmi (Pesachim 10:1) writes that one is forbidden to eat matza on Erev Pesach:

One who eats matza on Erev Pesach is likened to one who has relations with his fiancee in his father-in-law's house [i.e., he cannot restrain his desire for matza until the evening]. And one who has relations with his fiancee in his father-in-law's house is liable for flogging.

This Yerushalmi is codified by the Rishonim,[1] and brought down as the halakha by the Rambam (Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza 2:12) and the Shulchan Arukh (471).

The Rishonim explain the prohibition in various ways. The Meiri (Pesachim 13a) writes that the Sages prohibited the eating of matza on Erev Pesach in order to ensure that a person will eat the obligatory matza later that night with an appetite. The Rambam (ibid.) writes that the prohibition was intended to make the eating of matza at night more distinctive. The Roke'ach explains that matza is likened to the paschal offering, which could only be eaten at night.

The Rishonim disagree when precisely one is forbidden to eat matza: According to the Orchot Chayyim (Chametz u-Matza 114, citing an anonymous source; and so also is it implied by the Ramban, Milkhamot Ha-Shem, Pesachim, end of chap. 3), eating matza is forbidden already on the night of Erev Pesach, the fourteenth of Nisan. Most of the Rishonim (Rif, Rambam, Ramban [elsewhere], and others), however, understand that the prohibition does not begin at night, but only on the morning of Erev Pesach.

An interesting proof supporting the majority position is brought in the name of Rav Chayyim Brisker (cited in the book Eish Tamid)[2]: The Mishna states that "on all other nights we eat chametz and matza," implying that on no night of the year is the eating of matza forbidden.

What time in the morning does the prohibition begin? According to the Ramban (Pesachim 50a), the prohibition begins at alot ha-shachar (the morning dawn). The Ba'al ha-Ma'or, on the other hand, maintains that the prohibition only begins at the time that chametz is forbidden (a similar position is found in the Rosh, chap. 3, sec. 7). The Rema (471:2) rules that the prohibition begins at dawn. The Mishna Berura (471, no. 12) accepts this ruling, and adds that there are those who are accustomed to refrain from eating matza already from Rosh Chodesh Nisan.

In light of this prohibition, it is clearly problematic to eat matza at the Shabbat meal[3] when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat.[4]

EATING CHAMETZ

Eating chametz on this Shabbat raises several problems, some halakhic in nature, others purely practical:

If a person fails to finish all of his chametz, he must find a way to dispose of what is left over. Similarly, utmost care is required to ensure that no crumbs are left anywhere in the house.

If a person cooked food for Shabbat in a chametz utensil, he must find a way to warm it up without rendering the stove or hotplate chametz.

Rinsing the chametz pots on Shabbat is forbidden, for they are no longer needed for Shabbat (see Mishna Berura 444:11).

The dishes cannot be washed, for the sink has already been made kosher for Pesach.

A particular problem arises regarding se'uda shelishit, the third meal eaten on Shabbat, for many authorities maintain that one cannot fulfill this requirement before mincha time, by which point the prohibition against the consumption of chametz has already begun.

In light of the various problems mentioned above, it is preferable that when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat, one not prepare food in or eat on chametz utensils (Maharil – Mishna Berura 444, no. 12). It is best to use disposable utensils, especially disposable cooking tins (we shall mention this again below in the context of the solutions). If someone insists on eating on chametz utensils, he may do as follows:

Warming the food: One should try to heat up the food on a stovetop or hotplate that will not be used for Pesach. If this is impossible, the hotplate should be covered with thick aluminum foil (or several layers of regular foil), and care should be taken that no liquids spill onto the hotplate itself.

Washing the pots and the dishes: There is no permissible way to wash dishes that will no longer be needed on Shabbat. However, the level of cleaning that is necessary to avoid violating the prohibition against chametz is permitted (Mishna Berura 444, no. 14). Hence, the dishes may be wiped with a paper towel, and whatever does not come off may be removed with a small amount of water (Rema 444:3). The utensils that are still needed for Shabbat itself may be washed. It goes without saying that this may not be done in a sink that was made kosher for Pesach, but only in a sink that will not be used to wash Pesach utensils, e.g., the bathroom sink.

Chametz leftovers: We shall deal with this problem below.

THE SOLUTIONS

As stated above, it is preferable not to eat a chametz meal when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat. In order to overcome the problem of lechem mishne, one may chose one of the following two solutions:

SOLUTION #1: EGG MATZA

The first option calls for the destruction of all chametz before Shabbat and using only Pesach dishes on Shabbat. The requirement of "lechem mishne" may be fulfilled with egg matza. (We shall use the term "egg matza" interchangeably with the Hebrew expression, "matza ashira," which refers to matza kneaded with wine, fruit juice, oil, honey or eggs.) To understand this option, we must first examine the status of matza ashira.

The Gemara in Pesachim (35a-36a) deals with matza kneaded with wine, oil, or honey. (The same law applies to matza needed with other fruit juices [Rambam, Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza 5:2] or eggs [Rabbenu Tam in Tosafot, ad loc.; Rosh and Ran, ad loc.; and others].) The Rishonim take two opposite views as to whether or not fruit juice renders dough chametz. Rabbenu Tam (Tosafot, Pesachim 35b), the Rosh (ad loc.), the Rambam (Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza 5:2), and others write that fruit juice without water does not render dough chametz at all. Even if the dough rises, it may still be eaten. Rashi (Pesachim 36a, s.v. ein lashin) and Ra'avad (Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza 5:2), on the other hand, rule that fruit juice does in fact render dough chametz, and therefore matza kneaded with it is forbidden.[5]

The Shulchan Arukh (462:1) rules leniently that fruit juice without water does not turn dough into chametz at all.

Fruit juice without water does not render dough chametz at all. One is, therefore, permitted to eat matza kneaded with fruit juice on Pesach, even if the dough sat [unbaked] all day long.

The Rema (462:4) disagrees, ruling that matza should not be kneaded with fruit juice:

In these countries, we are not accustomed to knead [matza] with fruit juice…. One should not deviate [from common practice], unless there is a dire need, for the sake of a sick or elderly person who needs it.

Ideally (lekhatchila), we take into account the position of those posekim who maintain that fruit juice alone renders dough chametz, and even hastens the process. And we are also concerned that perhaps a small amount of water may have become mixed into the fruit juice, and all agree that [such a mixture] turns dough into chametz.[6]

The Bet Yosef (462) brings in the name of the Kolbo another reason for the prohibition of egg matza, even though he himself does not accept the stringency: The Kolbo (no. 48, p. 10c) writes that it is customary not to prepare matza ashira at all on the first two days [of Pesach], so that one not confuse it [with regular matza], and eat of it for the obligatory portion of matza [eaten at the seder]. The Levush (ad loc.) also cites this reason that one may not eat egg matza, so as not to come by mistake to eat of it for the obligatory portion of matza.

In any event, it is clearly permissible to eat egg matza on the fourteenth of Nisan before the end of the fourth hour, for at that time, even full-fledged chametz may be eaten.[7] Whether or not one is permitted to eat egg matza even after the fourth hour seems to depend on the aforementioned reasons: If the prohibition to eat egg matza on Pesach stems from the concern that a person will come to eat of it for the obligatory portion of matza, there is no room to forbid the eating of egg matza before Pesach, even on the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan. If, however, the concern is that such matza is regarded as chametz – whether because of a concern that water may have become mixed into the fruit juice, or because of a concern for Rashi's position – there is room to forbid egg matza from the time of bi'ur chametz.

The Noda Biyehuda (Responsa, mahadura kama, Orach Chayyim, no. 21) writes that even if we are concerned about the position of Rashi – the eating of egg matza should not be forbidden before Pesach, for even according to him, egg matza is only chametz nukshe (lit., "hardened chametz"), which does not carry the penalty of excision (karet), and therefore there is no room for stringency except on Pesach itself (thus also writes Responsa Avnei Nezer, Orach Chayyim, II, no. 377). And indeed, the simple reading of the Shulchan Arukh and the Rema implies that egg matza may be eaten on the fourteenth of Nisan, even after the time of bi'ur chametz. The Shulchan Arukh writes that it is permissible to eat egg matza on the fourteenth of Nisan until the beginning of the tenth hour.[8] The Rema implies that he too agrees with this ruling:

And before the tenth hour, one is permitted to eat of matza ashira.

Rema: But the matza with which one fulfills his obligation at night, may not be eaten the entire day of the fourteenth.

According to the Shulchan Arukh, one is certainly permitted to eat egg matza on Erev Pesach, for he permits it even on Pesach itself. Even according to the Rema, it would seem that the prohibition is limited to Pesach itself, for only then is there concern that a person will mistakenly eat of it for his obligatory portion of matza, and only then is there room for concern about the position of Rashi, as argued by the Noda Biyehuda.

The Shulchan Arukh (444:1) writes that se'uda shelishit should be eaten after mincha time (because se'uda shelishit cannot be eaten earlier), but before the tenth hour, for the eating of pat (i.e., any bread-like food) is forbidden from the tenth hour (so as to eat the matza at the seder with appetite). The Rema notes that we are not accustomed to eat egg matza:

When the fourteenth [of Nisan] falls out on Shabbat… The time [to eat] se'uda shelishit is after mincha. At that time one may eat neither matza nor chametz, but [only] matza ashira. The meal must be eaten before the tenth hour.

Rema: In these countries, where we are not accustomed to eat matza ashira, (as is explained below 462:4 in the Rema) - one should fulfill se'uda shelishit with fruits or meat and fish.

If the Rema permits the eating of egg matza until the tenth hour (as he implies in 461), why does he forbid eating it at se'uda shelishit? The Arukh ha-Shulchan tries to reconcile this contradiction (444:5):

It seems that [the Rema] does not mean that even on Erev Pesach one should not eat matza ashira in accordance with the custom, for there is no reason in that. Rather, he means that since we are accustomed not to eat matza ashira on Pesach, we do not bake matza ashira. And to bake it only for se'uda shelishit, people do not exert themselves for such a small amount….

According to the Arukh ha-Shulchan, even the Rema allows the eating of egg matza until the tenth hour, for "there is no reason" for stringency. The Rema rules that one should fulfill se'uda shelishit with fruits or meat for a purely technical reason: As a rule, Ashkenazi Jews do not have matza ashira in their houses, for they are accustomed not to eat it on Pesach. Thus, it follows that if a person has egg matza in his house, he is permitted to eat of it at se'uda shelishit, even according to the Rema (this is also the position of Chok Ya'akov, 444, 1).

According to the Noda Biyehuda, the Rema disagrees with the Shulchan Arukh and permits matza ashira only until midday (an hour after the end of the time of bi'ur chametz):[9]

In truth, I am very astonished by the Rema, for in any event, nobody maintains that there is a biblical prohibition with respect to chametz nukshe on Erev Pesach. Why then was he concerned in a matter that is forbidden only by rabbinic decree for an opinion of a single authority, i.e., Rashi, against the majority of early posekim? Were it not for the fact that the leading halakhic authority, that is, the Rema, already issued a prohibition even on Erev Pesach, I would allow matza ashira all day long on Erev Pesach. In any case, I rule that until midday, even the Rema agrees that matza ashira is permitted… According to what I have written, it is understandable, for the time of se'uda shelishit is after midday; therefore, the Rema ruled stringently even about matza ashira… In my humble opinion, therefore, the conclusion seems to be that until midday, it is certainly permissible to eat matza ashira on Erev Pesach. Any authority who issues an allowance for the entire day – has not lost anything if it is for some need, even if not for the sake of a sick or elderly person.

The Shulchan Aruch ha-Rav writes that we are accustomed not to eat matza ashira after the beginning of the fifth hour. The Sha'ar ha-Tziyun (444, 1) also implies that matza ashira should not be eaten even before the tenth hour (the fact that he does not specify otherwise implies that the prohibition begins at the beginning of the fifth hour). A similar ruling is found in Responsa Iggerot Moshe (Orach Chayyim, I, 155), that it is our custom not to eat matza ashira once the time has arrived that chametz may no longer be eaten.

In practice, since many Acharonim forbid the eating of matza ashira once the time has arrived that chametz may no longer be eaten, it would seem to be preferable to use egg matza for lechem mishne only for the first two Shabbat meals.

THE BERAKHA FOR MATZA ASHIRA

Matza ashira falls into the category of "pat ha-ba be-kisnin" - bread made from dough kneaded with ingredients other than just flour and water. The Shulchan Arukh (168:7) rules that the ha-motzi berakha is recited over pat ha-ba be-kisnin, only if one appoints a meal over it (kevi'at se'uda). There are various different opinions regarding how much food constitutes an appointed meal. Some write that it is food in the amount of three or four eggs (224 cc). Others rule that it is food in the amount that people regularly eat at a meal (see Mishna Berura 168, no. 24). The Magen Avraham (168, no. 13, cited in the aforementioned Mishna Berura) maintains that even if a person eats of pat ha-ba be-kisnin less than the amount required for an appointed meal, but together with the rest of the food eaten at the meal, he eats enough for kevi'at se'uda, he recites ha-motzi and birkat ha-mazon. In compliance with the ruling of the Shulchan Arukh, it seems that a person should eat enough egg matza for kevi'at se'uda (according to the Magen Avraham, it suffices if the egg matza together with the rest of the food eaten at the meal satisfy that amount). The Maharach Or Zaru'a, however, writes as follows (Responsa Maharach Or Zaru'a, no. 71):

Shabbat fixes a meal, for [on Shabbat] even incidental eating is considered a fixed meal with respect to tithes. It seems then that the same applies to pat ha-ba be-kisnin… any amount eaten on Shabbat is considered a fixed meal, as with respect to tithes.

In other words, even if a person eats produce on Shabbat in a merely incidental manner, he must set aside terumot and ma'asrot, for Shabbat gives his eating importance and turns it into a fixed meal which obligates the setting aside of terumot and ma'asrot. Similarly, writes the Maharach Or Zaru'a, if a person eats pat ha-ba be-kisnin on Shabbat, he must recite ha-motzi and birkat ha-mazon, because Shabbat gives the eating special importance and establishes it as an appointed meal.

The Sha'arei Teshuva (168, 9) cites Responsa Ginat Veradim (kelal 2, no. 11), which disagrees with the Maharach Or Zaru'a:

There is no difference between Shabbat and the rest of the week. The Birkei Yosef agrees with me, and he writes that this is the common practice.

It would seem that when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat, the berakha recited over the matza ashira should depend on this dispute: "ha-motzi" according to the Maharach Or Zaru'a, and "borei minei mezonot" according to the Ginat Veradim. Rav Moshe Feinstein argues that in any event, one should recite the ha-motzi blessing over the matza ashira eaten at one of the obligatory Shabbat meals (Responsa Iggerot Moshe, Orach Chayyim, I, no. 155):

Even though the Halakha is not in accordance with them when there is no appointed meal, nevertheless when there is an appointed meal as in the case of the obligatory Shabbat meals, one must certainly recite ha-motzi and the three blessings, as it is explicitly stated that this is the way one should act.

Yet another argument may be advanced: Many Acharonim imply that the definition of bread depends on common custom (see the formulation of the Bet Yosef in sec. 168, "the matter does not depend on what is called 'bread'"; Ma'amar Mordekhai cited in the Bei'ur Halakha, 168; and Arukh ha-Shulchan 168, 5). For this reason, some Sefardim recite the ha-motzi blessing on matza only on Pesach, for only then does it substitute for bread, but not during the rest of the year.[10] According to this argument, it may very well be that when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat, and it is the common practice to eat matza ashira in place of bread – the ha-motzi blessing should be recited (a similar argument was put forward by Rav Chayyim Palagi, in his Responsa Lev Chayyim, II, no. 88).

As for the Halakha, it follows from Minhagei Maharil (Hilkhot Shabbat ha-Gadol ve-Erev Pesach) that one should recite the "bore minei mezonot" blessing on matza ashira even when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat. This is also the opinion of Rav Ovadia Yosef (Responsa Yechave Da'at, I, no. 91). On the other hand, Responsa ha-Radbaz (I, no. 489) states explicitly that one who eats matza ashira on this Shabbat recites the ha-motzi blessing. This is also the ruling of Responsa Iggerot Moshe (Orach Chayyim, I, 155), and thus it also follows from the Mishna Berura (471, no. 21).[11] It should be added that together with the other foods served at the meal, we generally eat in the amount of an appointed meal. Thus there is an additional reason for reciting the ha-motzi blessing, and this seems to be correct way to act.

In practice, when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat, there are those who are accustomed to eat matza ashira in place of bread for lechem mishne during the first two meals. This is suggested by the Iggerot Moshe (Orach Chayyim, I, 155), and thus it is explicit already in the Maggid Mishne (Hilkhot Chametz u-Matza 3:3):

There are those who practice a stringency not to leave over [any chametz], but rather to eat matza ashira….

The Iggerot Moshe explains that even the Bet Yosef implies that this is the preferred solution, so as not to come to any mishaps by leaving over chametz on Shabbat, but it is impossible to require people to exert themselves and bake matza ashira:

It is therefore recommended for those who do not wish to leave over chametz on Shabbat, because they are concerned about the mishaps that may result, that they fulfill the mitzva of the [first] two meals with matza ashira. Since a person appoints Shabbat meals over them, he must recite the ha-motzi blessing and birkat ha-mazon. As it is explicit in the Bet Yosef (Orach Chayyim 444) that it is proper to do so. For he writes: "And one should not ask: Let him destroy all [his

chametz] before Shabbat, and not leave over any [chametz], and on Shabbat he can eat matza ashira! Since not everyone is capable of preparing matza ashira for all three meals, the Rabbis did not require them to do so." We see that it would have been right to enact or to impose by custom to destroy all [the chametz] before Shabbat so as not to come to a mishap if any chametz should remain, and to fulfill the mitzva of [the Shabbat] meals with matza ashira, only the Rabbis did not require us to do so. Therefore, those who wish and are able to bake matza ashira for the two meals, that is preferable. Even though the Shabbat meal requires bread over which we recite ha-motzi and birkat ha-mazon, since he eats it for the Shabbat meals which require bread, there is no appointment greater than that.

Rav Feinstein's suggestion to use matza ashira when Erev Pesach falls out on Shabbat has been accepted in many communities. One should make sure that the matza was kneaded without any water at all, or alternatively, that it was baked with all the stringencies of regular matza. One must, therefore, pay careful attention and purchase matza ashira with a very reliable hekhsher (in light of the above, it is preferable to buy matza ashira that was baked with all the stringencies of regular matza, and without letting it rise (see Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 462, no. 25, regarding Pesach itself)!

It should be noted that ideally (lekhatchila) the matza ashira should not come into contact with the Pesach dishes (Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, cited in Erev Pesach she-Chal be-Shabbat, chap. 8, note 4). There is no question, however, that after the fact (bedi'eved) the dishes do not become forbidden for use on Pesach, even for those who wish to adopt stringency, for the matza ashira was cold when it came into contact with the dishes.

To summarize Solution #1: For lechem mishne we use matza ashira and recite the ha-motzi blessing. (One should be careful to buy matza ashira with a reliable hekhsher.) It is important to finish eating the matza ashira by the time that eating chametz is no longer permitted. Ideally, the matza ashira should not come into contact with Pesach utensils. One who conducts himself in this manner, may nullify his chametz already on Friday.[12]

As for the utensils, the Shabbat meal may be eaten off of Pesach dishes. Practically speaking, it would seem to be more convenient to use disposable baking tins, and the like, as explained above.

SOLUTION #2: REGULAR BREAD

Some authorities preferred not to make use of the solution of eating matza ashira. They argued that the commonly accepted practice is not to eat matza ashira on the fourteenth of Nisan (see Kovetz mi-Beit Levi, no. 5), or that the blessing recited over matza ashira is not ha-motzi (Responsa Yechave Da'at, I, no. 91, note 12). According to these authorities, one should follow the simple reading of the Shulchan Arukh (444) that we leave over enough chametz for the two Shabbat meals, or in other words, we use bread for lechem mishne. Even if one follows this practice, it is recommended to cook all the other food in Pesach utensils. The practice of eating bread while using Pesach pots is mentioned by many posekim (Minhagei Maharil, Hilkhot Shabbat ha-Gadol; Magen Avraham 444, no. 4; Peri Megadim ad loc.; Responsa Orach Mishpat, Orach Chayyim no. 128, letter 58; Lu'ach Eretz Yisrael; see also Mishna Berura 444, no. 14). But as we wrote above, practically speaking, it is more convenient to use disposable baking tins.

It is important to make sure that the bread does not come into contact with the Pesach dishes on the table. One should therefore adopt one of the following alternatives:

Bread may be eaten at the beginning of the meal (ideally, bread in the size of an egg – on account of the Shabbat meal (Shulchan Arukh 291:1), but after the fact the size of an olive suffices (Mishna Berura 639, no. 23). The table should then be cleared, with all crumbs being removed. Only then should the Pesach dishes be brought to the table. In this way, one can eat off of Pesach dishes.[13]

If one wishes to follow this practice, it is preferable that he cover the table with a disposable tablecloth, eat the bread, roll up the tablecloth, thoroughly clean himself of all crumbs, and only then bring the Pesach dishes and the food to the table. For birkat ha-mazon, it is preferable that there be bread on the table. For this, one may bring to the table a small piece of bread in a plastic bag, or else part of a piece of matza. (It is preferable not to bring a whole piece of matza to the table, for lekhatchila we do not bring a whole loaf of bread to the table for birkat ha-mazon.)[14]

One may eat off of disposable dishes, and in that way, eat chametz throughout the meal. In the morning it is recommended to eat chametz only at the beginning of the meal, so that the rest of the meal contribute to the cleaning of one's teeth (for those who do not use a toothbrush on Shabbat).

One may eat off of chametz dishes. This option is the least preferred, but someone who wishes to make use of it is permitted to do so. Even in this case, it is preferable to heat the food in Pesach pots, for the pots may not be washed on Shabbat. Food should not be dished out directly from the Pesach pots to the chametz plates, but rather by way of another Pesach utensil between them.[15] As for washing the dishes, see above. One should make sure to cover the table on Friday in such a way that the tablecloth can be removed on Shabbat. (That is, he should not place the candlesticks on the table, or else he should put them on a tray on which there is some other article that is needed for Shabbat).

Leftover Chametz: If a person is left with chametz after his Shabbat morning meal, he must crumble it and throw it into the toilet (Mishna Berura 444, no. 21), or else douse it with bleach or some other agent that makes it inedible, or alternatively, give it to an animal which he is responsible to feed.[16] One should remember to rinse his mouth after eating chametz and also to shake out his clothing (or change them). After the meal, one should sweep the floor and also clean the broom. It is preferable to put the broom away with the chametz dishes, and use a different broom over Pesach.

It is recommended that small challot be bought for this Shabbat, so that they can be finished during the meal. It is also recommended that one buy bread that leaves a minimum of crumbs, e.g., pitas.[17]

To summarize Solution #2: For lechem mishne, we eat bread (following the plain sense of the Shulchan Arukh). Even in such a case, it is preferable to cook in Pesach pots (or in disposable baking pans), and not in chametz pots.

One may eat off of disposable dishes and thus eat chametz throughout the meal (today, when attractive disposable dishes are readily available, it is recommended to use this option, for in any event, the dishes cannot be washed on Shabbat for the seder}.

Alternatively, one may eat off of Pesach dishes. In such a case, the bread should be eaten at the beginning of the meal. For birkat ha-mazon, one should place on the table a small piece of bread in a plastic bag, or else part of a piece of matza. (In such a case, it is preferable to eat the bread on a disposable tablecloth, throw out the tablecloth, shake out one's clothing, and afterwards continue with the meal. Alternatively, one may eat the bread in one room, and continue the meal in another room, and recite birkat ha-mazon in the first room, or else in the second room if he eats there a small amount of bread.)

A SOLDIER OR AN ORDINARY PERSON WHO DOES NOT HAVE BREAD OR MATZA ASHIRA

On Friday night, he can certainly eat ordinary matza, for according to the basic law, one is permitted to eat matza at that time. For the morning meal, he should prepare in advance cooked matza (the solution proposed by Rav Ovadia Yosef; see note 17). If he did not cook matza before Shabbat, he should eat matza in the amount of an egg, and rely on those who permit it. (For even those who forbid matza on the morning of Erev Pesach maintain that the prohibition is only by rabbinic decree, whereas eating bread at the Shabbat meal may be required by Torah law.) In such a situation, it may be permissible to rely on the Ravya and put the matza in a keli rishon, e.g., a pot of soup that had been removed from the fire (see Shulchan Arukh 318:5).

FOOTNOTES:

[1] a) The Tosafot Rid (Pesachim 99b), however, does not rule in accordance with this Yerushalmi.

b) We find an interesting interpretation of this Yerushalmi in the writings of Mahari Weil (Responsa, no. 193): Just as one's fiancee becomes permissible only after "sheva berakhot" (the seven blessings recited at the marriage ceremony), so does matza become permissible only after seven blessings - "ha-gefen," "mekadesh Yisrael ve-hazemanim," "she-hecheyanu," "ha-adama" (over the karpas), "al netilat yadayim," "ha-motzi," and "al akhilat matza."

[2] It should be noted that the book Eish Tamid attributes various novel ideas to Rav Chayyim, though in fact they should be ascribed to his grandson, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.

[3] There does not seem to be a problem with eating matza at the Friday night meal. Rav Moshe Feinstein writes, however, that lekhatchila one should avoid eating matza even on Friday night (Responsa Iggerot Moshe, Orach Chayyim, no. 155).

[4] In a case of need, matza may be used as the second loaf of lechem mishne (Responsa Pri ha-Sade, II, no. 88). The matzot that a person was planning to use to fulfill the mitzva of eating matza at the seder should not be used, for they are muktze (Peri Megadim 444, Eishel Avraham, no. 1). Obviously, one must take care to prevent the matza from coming into contact with crumbs of chametz. In any event, because of the concern about chametz, it is preferable to put that piece of matza away with the chametz items at the end of the meal.

[5] It is possible that according to Rashi and Ra'avad, fruit juice renders dough chametz at the level of chametz nukshe – see Tosafot, Menachot 53b, s.v. ein. A review of the various opinions may be found in the Tur and Bet Yosef, sec. 462. We shall further clarify this position below when we discuss the view of the Noda Biyehuda.

[6] The Mishna Berura explains that the Rema permits matza ashira for a sick person in a case of dire need, only if the dough was not given a chance to rise, but rather "he must bake them immediately, for we must consider the position of Rashi" (Sha'ar Tziyun, no. 25).

[7] Some authorities expressed their reservations about eating matza ashira on the morning of the fourteenth of Nisan for another reason. The Yerushalmi (Pesachim 2:4) records a Tannaitic controversy whether or not a person fulfills the mitzva of eating matza with matza ashira. According to this, since we rule that beginning with the morning of the fourteenth, one is not permitted to eat matza that may be used for the mitzva, the eating of matza ashira should be forbidden. Nevertheless, the prevalent opinion among the posekim is that there is no need for concern, and that matza ashira may be eaten on Erev Pesach.
[8] A person is forbidden to eat any type of pat – including matza ashira – after the end of the tenth hour, in order to ensure that he will eat the obligatory matza later that night with an appetite.
[9] As was noted earlier, the Noda Biyehuda himself maintains that matza ashira may be eaten until the end of the tenth hour.
[10] For this reason it stands to reason that today even Sefardim should recite ha-motzi on sweet challa.
[11] The Mishna Berura discusses the law applying to a person who was eating matza ashira before the tenth hour, and continues his meal into the night of the seder. He argues that such a person should recite the "al akhilat matza" blessing, but not ha-motzi, because he is already in the middle of his meal. This implies that the person had recited ha-motzi over the matza ashira that he had eaten on Erev Pesach.
[12] If a person conducts himself in this manner and destroys all of his chametz before Shabbat, he may nullify his chametz already on Friday following the bi'ur, for he has no intention of eating any more chametz. It may be a good practice to recite the bittul formula once again on Shabbat.
[13] If a person has in mind when he recites the ha-motzi blessing to eat chametz in one room and continue his meal in another room, he may eat chametz in the size of an olive in the first room, continue the meal in the second room, and then return to the first room and there recite birkat ha-mazon. So too he may eat chametz in the size of an olive in the first room, eat even a small amount of chametz in the second room (Mishna Berura 184, no. 8, following the Magen Avraham: according to the Kaf ha-Chayyim, no. 10, he must eat at least the size of an olive), and then recite birkat ha-mazon in the second room where he ate his meal.
(We are trying here to overcome the following problems: 1) reciting birkat ha-mazon in the place where a person ate bread – Shulchan Arukh, 184; 2) if a person eats bread, and then decides not to eat any more bread, and he moves to a different room, the food that he now eats may require a new blessing, for it is no longer subordinate to the bread – Shulchan Arukh, 177:2. The suggestions made earlier in the note overcome these problems. Responsa Cheshev ha-Efod, III, no. 10, maintains that one may recite birkat ha-mazon in the second room, even if he did not eat bread there.)
[14] The Shulchan Arukh (180:2) writes that one should not bring a whole loaf because it looks as if he were bringing it for idolatrous purposes. The Mishna Berura writes (no. 4), however, that if he does not have bread on the table, he may bring even a whole loaf. Responsa ha-Radbaz (I, no. 201) also writes that one is certainly not obligated to cut up a loaf in order that he should have a partial loaf for birkat ha-mazon, but rather in such a case he may bring a full loaf.
What is the minimal size of the piece of bread? Two reasons are brought for leaving a piece of bread on the table for birkat ha-mazon:
Because the blessing must relate to some portion of the food.
So that he may give it to a poor person should he appear at that time. The Mishna Berura (Sha'ar ha-Tziyun, no. 3) writes that one should leave a piece that is "fit for giving" to a poor person. It stands to reason, however, that today when even should a poor person come, we would not give him a scrap of bread, one may leave on the table even a smaller piece (Responsa Az Nidbaru, XI, no. 46).
[15] For there must be no contact between a keli rishon of Pesach and a chametz utensil; see Peri Chadash 444, 3; Reponsa Orach Mishpat, Orach Chayyim 128, 58; Kovetz mi-Beit Levi 5. The Peri Megadim (444, Eshel Avraham, no. 4), however, raises an objection to this solution, and the Eliyahu Rabba suggests waiting until the food is no longer at a temperature that causes the hand to withdraw (yad soledet bo) and only then transferring the food.
[16] a) If there is a large amount of chametz, one may renounce ownership of it and throw it into the public domain (provided, of course, that there is an eiruv). The Rishonim disagree whether or not one may renounce ownership on Shabbat: The Ramban (beginning of Pesachim) and others maintain that renouncing ownership is forbidden on Shabbat, because of the similarity between renouncing ownership and acquisition. The Meiri (Shabbat 127a) and others disagree and say that renouncing property is permitted on Shabbat. This is also the opinion of the Magen Avraham and Rabbi Akiva Eiger (Yore De'a 320, and Gilyon Maharsha, ad loc.). In our case, since we permit giving the chametz as a gift to a non-Jew on Shabbat for the purpose of bi'ur (Shulchan Arukh 444:1), it is clearly permissible to renounce ownership of the chametz (see Sedei Chemed, kelalim, ma'arekhet 5, letter 100). If, however, a person throws his chametz into a garbage bin, he may not yet have solved the problem, for the chametz is still found on property belonging to Jews. There are those who are lenient because the chametz becomes soiled in the garbage bin (see Responsa Minchat Yitzchak, IV, no. 56, and others). It stands to reason, however, that even if the garbage bin belongs to the municipality or the like, since the bin is open to all, and whoever wishes may remove from it what he likes, whatever is placed within it should be regarded as renounced property. This is the position of Rav Elyashiv (as reported by Rav Zilberstein). He who wishes to be stringent, especially in a place where there is concern that Jews might remove the chametz from the bin, should douse the chametz with soap or some other agent that makes it inedible, and then throw it into the garbage. See below.
The Chazon Ish (Orach Chayyim 118, 3; 116, 16) writes that if one performs bi'ur chametz after the sixth hour – one should douse it with soap or some other agent that makes it unfit even for animal consumption (for chametz that is flushed down the toilet is still fit for animal consumption). If, however, one performs the bi'ur before the sixth hour (as one is supposed to do), it suffices to flush it down the toilet, for in that way it becomes unfit for human consumption. Nevertheless, it is a good idea to crumble the chametz before throwing it into the toilet, so as not to cause an obstruction in the pipes.
[17] A third solution, one that we did mention in the text, is to fulfill the obligation of lechem mishne with cooked matza. This solution is brought in the Magen Avraham (444, no. 2) and in the Shulchan Arukh ha-Rav (444:4), and even Rav Ovadia Yosef (Responsa Yechave Da'at, I, no. 91; Responsa Yabi'a Omer, VI, no. 39) recommends its use. He suggests that a person fulfill his obligation of lechem mishne with a piece of cooked matza larger than an olive. For this, one should take a piece of matza before Shabbat, put it into a pot of boiling soup, remove the pot immediately from the fire, wait until the soup cools down a little, and remove the matza whole. This solution is certainly effective for the Friday night meal, for according to the basic law, even regular matza is permitted (though the Iggerot Moshe [Orach Chayyim, I, no. 155] writes that is preferable not to eat matza even on the night of the fourteenth). Rav Ovadia suggests using this solution also on Shabbat morning, and also at se'uda shelishit. There are, however, those who write that we are not accustomed to eat cooked matza on the fourteenth of Nisan (see Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 444, no. 1). The Mishna Berura (471, no. 20) implies that one is permitted to eat cooked matza on the fourteenth of Nisan before the tenth hour. The Maharsham (in Da'at Torah) writes that only if the matza was cooked before the fourteenth of Nisan may it be eaten on Erev Pesach, for if it is already cooked on the morning of the fourteenth, the prohibition to eat matza on Erev Pesach has no opportunity to apply to it.
We should also mention the solution proposed by Rav Betzalel Zolti, chief rabbi of Jerusalem, to bake matza not for the sake of the mitzva, and eat it at the Shabbat meals. (In a time of great need, this practice is also permitted by Responsa Yechave Da'at, III, no. 26, and by Responsa Az Nidbaru, XI, no. 37). The reasoning: Since one cannot fulfill one's obligation on the night of the seder with such matzot, there is no prohibition to eat them on Erev Pesach. He bases his position on the Gemara in Pesachim 40a, which states that one is permitted to eat the dough of non-Jews on Erev Pesach. That Gemara may, however, be understood differently (see Meiri, Pesachim 99a, and others). Rav Zolti's position seems to depend on the question whether the prohibition of eating matza on Erev Pesach is because a person is forbidden to eat matza with which he can fulfill his obligation at the seder, or because he is forbidden to taste matza on Erev Pesach, so that matza will be dear to him that night. Matza that was baked not for the sake of the mitzva cannot be used to fulfill a person's obligation, but it has the taste of matza. It is also possible that matza that was guarded against leavening is regarded as matza shemura, even if it was baked not for the sake of the mitzva (see Responsa Minchat Yitzchak, VIII, no. 37, who forbids the practice, and Teshuvot ve-Hanhagot, II, 211, 23, and Responsa Lehorot Natan, IV, no. 40).
(Translated by David Strauss)

Parshat Vayikra: Animal Sacrifice? The Shelamim

by Rabbi Eitan Mayer

This week we will look at two fundamental questions:

1) Are sacrifices a concession or an ideal? Does Hashem allow them or demand them? Sources to be discussed:

a) Rambam (Maimonides), Guide to the Perplexed 3:32
b) Rambam, Guide 3:46
c) Midrash VaYikra Rabba 22:8
d) Ramban (Nahmanides), VaYikra 1:9

2) What is the Torah's attitude toward killing animals for food? Sources to be discussed:

a) Bereshit (Genesis) 1:29-30 -- Mission statement I to humanity
b) Bereshit 9:3-4 -- Mission statement II to humanity
c) Bereshit 4:4 -- Hevel's sacrifice
d) Bereshit 8:20 -- No'ah's sacrifice
e) VaYikra (Lev.) 3 -- the shelamim I
f) VaYikra 7 -- the shelamim II
g) VaYikra 17 -- the shelamim III
h) Devarim (Deut.) 12 -- slaughter for meat

SACRIFICES: IDEAL OR CONCESSION?

Many of us have wondered about the purpose of the korbanot (offerings to Hashem, including animal sacrifices), especially from Hashem's end: Does He really want them? If so, why? If not, why does He command us to offer them?

THE RAMBAM: CONCESSION:

In the Guide of the Perplexed 3:32, the Rambam begins his discussion of korbanot by observing that human nature cannot change overnight. In order for people to change, they must be gradually introduced to new situations and new rules. If suddenly presented with unfamiliar demands, they simply reject them. Hashem is aware of this, of course, so when He calls upon the newly freed Bnei Yisrael to become his "kingdom of priests and holy nation," He knows that He will have to transform the people gradually. Since the people are deeply entrenched in the idolatrous practices of the nations (see Ezekiel 18) of which they have become part -- Egypt in particular -- Hashem knows that transferring their theological loyalty from the gods they worship to Himself must be done gradually and smoothly to succeed. If the people are used to worshipping their gods by offering sacrifices, then the way to establish their permanent knowledge of and loyalty to Hashem is to have them sacrifice to Hashem instead of to their former gods. Of course, Hashem does not have much use for sacrifices Himself and would not have commanded them if He had His "druthers," but He is willing to accept them because He is patient and understanding of human frailties.

Lest we reject the Rambam's theory on the grounds that the Torah would not have gone to all the trouble of the great detail of the korbanot for such a paltry purpose, the Rambam offers an example to demonstrate that Hashem is willing to go to plenty of of 'trouble' to allow for the people's weaknesses. When Hashem leads the people out of Egypt, He takes them the 'long way,' purposely bypassing the shorter route since it would lead through the land of the Philistines. Hashem sees that these people, slaves yesterday, cannot magically become warriors today and be willing to encounter the trained forces of a hostile nation -- they might just turn back in fear and return to Egypt. In the same way, the Rambam argues, Hashem knows that telling Bnei Yisrael to worship Him without sacrifices would be like telling us nowadays that we are not to pray or try in other ways to communicate with Hashem; instead, we are to worship Hashem solely by meditating on Him.

It is worth noting that VaYikra Rabba 22:8 records a point of view which seems to express the same idea as the Rambam expresses here.

THE RAMBAN: IDEAL:

The Ramban (VaYikra 1:9) reports the Rambam's position, vehemently rejects it, and then articulates his own view. He

reports, based on Guide of the Perplexed 3:46, that the Rambam believes that korbanot are intended only as a polemic against idol worship; for example, since the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Hindus worship sheep, rams, and cows respectively and therefore do not kill these animals, we are commanded to slaughter these very animals to our God to show our rejection of the veneration of these animals.

The Ramban's objections to the Rambam's idea:

1) The Torah records in many places that the korbanot create a "pleasing smell" when they burn; this clearly shows that Hashem is pleased by them and does not just tolerate them.

2) If the whole idea is to show to ourselves (and the world) that we reject these animals as gods, then the most direct way for the Torah to accomplish that would have been to command us to slaughter and eat these animals (something which their true worshippers would never do) -- not to slaughter these animals as *sacrifices.* Sacrificing these animals might lead people to believe that we *agree* that these animals represent the heavenly constellations of the lamb and ox, and that we are worshipping these constellations.

3) No'ah offers sacrifices when he emerges from the ark after the floodwaters subside. Since there are no Egyptians and Chaldeans yet in the world, the Rambam's theory cannot explain why Hashem seems pleased with the sacrifices. Hevel also offers a sacrifice, and certainly there are no idol worshippers to worry about at that time.

[Of course, it is possible to respond to some of these arguments in various ways. The Ramban's second objection to the Rambam's position seems especially weak, as the Ritva points out in Sefer ha-Zikkaron: the reason it would not have been enough for the Torah to command us to eat the above animals is because, as the Rambam says in 3:32 (which the Ramban does not cite -- he cites only from 3:46), the people were entrenched in the practice of sacrificing and could not be deflected from it. That being the case, Hashem decided that as long as they were sacrificing, they might as well use the opportunity for a polemic against idol worship -- i.e., by sacrificing the animals worshipped by others. The Ritva and Abravanel also deal with the Ramban's other questions.]

The Ramban himself offers two explanations for korbanot: one mystical, which we will leave for others to explain, and one symbolic: Bringing a korban communicates to the bringer that in truth, he himself ought to suffer the fate of the korban for his sin. He leans on the animal ("semikha"), using the same hands as performed the sin; he confesses his sin with the mouth that may have committed it; he burns the innards and kidneys because his own innards and kidneys guided him to his lusts (the kidneys are seen in Tanakh as the seat of the moral conscience); he burns the legs because his own legs brought him to sin; he sprinkles the blood to show that his own blood should be spilled to expiate his sin.

As attractive as some aspects of this explanation may seem, it is also highly problematic for some sacrifices. While it may explain the expiatory korbanot, such as the hattat and asham -- brought to attain forgiveness for sins -- it certainly does not explain the shelamim, for example, which is brought to express joy, celebrate, mark the creation of a covenant, and the like. One who brings a shelamim may have been motivated by the joy of graduating college, for example; this has nothing to do with sin (unless you are somewhat right-wing, of course) and requires no expiation. Perhaps even more convincing, the celebrant *eats* the shelamim! Certainly, if the korban is meant to represent me and my suffering the death penalty, it is particularly strange that I am allowed to enjoy the flesh which is supposed to represent my own executed corpse!

KILLING FOR FOOD:

We now move to our second issue this week: What is the Torah's attitude toward killing animals for food? Although Parashat VaYikra, which is all about sacrifices to Hashem, may seem like an unlikely place to focus on this issue -- after all, the topic is killing animals to offer them to Hashem, not killing them to feed ourselves -- we will see where the issue comes up in our context.

If you stretch back to Bereshit perek (chap.) 1 you will recall the "Mission statement" with which Hashem charges humanity: He created them be-tzelem Elokim -- in the image of Hashem -- meaning that they are gifted with the potential necessary to fulfill the goals of creating ("be fruitful and multiply"), controlling ("fill the land and conquer it"), and behaving morally (represented by the prohibition to kill animals for food). Although it has recently become popular to see tzelem Elokim as a description of the inherent *nature* of a human being, from the way tzelem Elokim is used by the Torah it appears that that is only half the story. Tzelem Elokim is a *demand*, not a description; it is a state we are commanded to achieve. [For details I will be happy to forward to you the shiur on Parashat Bereshit.]

Before very long, humanity sinks deep into evil, failing the tzelem Elokim mission completely. Hashem, seeing that the tzelem Elokim project has fallen apart, destroys all of the failed tzelem Elokims (after all, the whole purpose of their existence is to reflect Hashem; if they fail that, they have no purpose) except the one person who shows some promise: No'ah. Eventually, the floodwaters subside and No'ah emerges to reestablish human and animal life on dry land. Hashem marks the recreation of the world and humanity in particular by commanding No'ah with "Mission statement II" in Bereshit 9. This mission statement largely duplicates the first one, with several marked differences -- including that permission is given to kill animals for food!

As we discussed in Parashat Bereshit and Parashat No'ah, Hashem lowers His standards after the flood. He 'realizes' that humanity as a whole cannot maintain the high standards He had originally set, so He relaxes the standards and begins the process of selecting individuals to found a nation which will accomplish the mission properly. But, significantly, Hashem has not simply thrown out the old goals completely. Originally, humanity was to show respect for life by not killing it for food. Now, although He permits No'ah to kill animals for food, Hashem insists that their blood may not be eaten, since blood, throughout Tanakh (the Bible), represents life or the life force. Eating blood, symbolically, means consuming the life-force/soul, and this is something humans can never do.

Lest the animal rights activists among us jump to the conclusion that the Torah's original intent is that humans never ever kill animals for any purpose, it is worth noting that even during the period in which the higher standard was in force, killing animals was permitted for sacrificial purposes. Thus Hevel brings an animal sacrifice to Hashem (4:4), who is pleased with the offering and rejects Kayyin's offering of fruits; and thus No'aah brings animal sacrifices to Hashem just after exiting the ark (8:20), before he has been given permission to eat animals. Of course, the bringers of these sacrifices do not eat any portion of the offering -- the Torah explicitly calls No'ah's offering an "ola," a totally fire-consumed offering, and it is likely that the same is true of Hevel's korban. Why is it OK to kill animals for korbanot but not for food? Perhaps because serving Hashem is more important than eating meat, so taking animal life is justified for the former but not for the latter. Apparently, life can be used for some instrumental purpose, but the instrumental purpose must be very important.

THE SHELAMIM:

We now come to Parashat VaYikra andd the korban shelamim, which will connect with the issue of killing for meat. First we will talk about what a shelamim is and some of the details of how it is brought.

THE NAME:

What does "shelamim" mean? I have found enough possibilities to convince me that no one is really sure:

1) From "shalom" (peace): it makes everyone happy because everyone gets a piece of it (i.e., Hashem, the kohanim, and the owner of the korban) -- Tosefta Zevahim 11:1, Sifra, Nedava 16:2.

2) From "shalom" (hello): it is like a greeting to Hashem, like saying "shalom."

3) From "shalem" (complete): you bring it when *you* feel shalem, whole, complete, sound, as opposed to when, for example, you are in mourning -- Sifra, Nedava 16:3.

4) From "shalem" (complete): you bring it to join with Hashem in a meal, and this gives you completion.

5) From "shilem" (to pay): the korban repays Hashem for blessings -- Rashbam 3:1.

6) From Akkadian "salimu," (covenant): as we will see, the shelamim is often brought to seal or celebrate a covenant.

7) From Akkadian "sulmanu" (gift): the korban is a gift to Hashem.

THE PURPOSE:

What is the purpose of the shelamim? Since it is a voluntary korban, under what circumstances would it be appropriate to volunteer a shelamim? VaYikra perek 7 offers several possibilities:

1) A "neder": It is worth noting that when Hazal use the term 'neder,' they mean that one has simply promised to bring a korban. When Tanakh uses the term 'neder,' it often is referring to a case where a person made a "deal" with Hashem.

The person promises to give something to Hashem if Hashem does something for the person. Examples:

a) Bereshit 28:20-22 -- Ya'akov, on his way to Lavan's house, dreams a vision of Hashem speaking to him from atop a ladder with angels ascending and descending. Hashem promises to protect Ya'akov and return him safely home. When Ya'akov awakens the next morning, he builds an altar, pours oil on it to consecrate it, and then makes a deal with Hashem: If Hashem will come through on the promises He has made to Ya'akov in the dream, Ya'akov will in turn give various gifts to Hashem.

b) Yonah 1:16, 2:10 -- Yonah is commanded by Hashem to go to Ninevei, a non-Jewish city, and warn the people to repent lest Hashem destroy them. Yonah refuses the command and boards a ship headed elsewhere. Hashem storms the seas, the ship is endangered, it is discovered that Yonah is the cause of the storm, and he is tossed overboard. In order to gain Hashem's favor, the sailors make "nedarim" to bring shelamim if Hashem saves them. Later, in the belly of the fish, Yonah scoffs at the sailors' promises, declaring that they are not truly faithful to Hashem, but that he, Yonah, will indeed keep his neder. The implication is that Yonah, too, has made a deal with Hashem, promising to bring a korban if Hashem saves him.

2) Nedava -- designating a specific animal as a korban.

3) Toda: a thanksgiving offering. According to Hazal, the Toda is not really included in the shelamim category, because it has different requirements. But in VaYikra 7, the toda appears subsumed or closely related to the shelamim, so we will mention it here. Hazal say that it is brought under four circumstances:
a) return from a sea voyage
b) return from a desert journey
c) recovery from a serious illness
d) release from prison

What all of these have in common is that they are happy occasions. The shelamim is a korban brought to express joy, to celebrate, to thank. For example, we find that there is a shelamim (or several) at the following events in Tanakh:

1) When covenants are made:
a) Bereshit 26:30 -- between Yitzhak and Avimelekh
b) Bereshit 31:54 -- between Ya'akov and Lavan
c) Shemot 24:5, 11 -- between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael at Sinai

2) Occasions of individual or national celebration:
a) Shemot 18:12 -- Yitro offers olot and zevahim to Hashem and then shares the meal with the elders.
b) BeMidbar 10:10 -- shelamim are to be brought on days of joy, hagim, Rosh Hodesh.
c) Devarim 27:7 -- when the people cross into Israel for the 1st time, they are to bring shelamim.

Since the "ola," the completely burned offering, and the shelamim are both brought voluntarily, why would one decide to bring a shelamim as opposed to an ola? The shelamim is eaten by the common people: the kohanim receive certain parts of it and the rest of the meat is eaten by the owner of the korban and his invitees. Only the helev (certain types of fat) is burned on the Mizbe'ah as an offering to Hashem. On the other hand, the ola is completely burned on the mizbe'ah; no part of it is eaten, so it does not provide meat for a feast to celebrate the joyous occasion. This does not mean that the ola is brought only under non-joyous circumstances -- VaYikra 22:17-19 and other examples show that an ola can be the form of a neder or nedava, which can certainly be expressions of joy. Other sources complete the picture and show that the ola is a multi-purpose korban which can be motivated by many different occasions or feeling. But the ola does not provide a feast, while the shelamim does.

As a general point, it is worth noting that the shelamim and the ola both appear in the Torah prior to VaYikra; this means that these types of korbanot were known beforehand and were not 'invented' by the Torah. Before the Torah, there were two multipurpose korbanot -- the ola and shelamim -- the ola being especially suited to serious occasions, such as in order to achieve forgiveness for sins, and the shelamim especially suited to celebrations. The hattat and asham ("sin-offering" and "guilt-offering"), on the other hand, are 'new' korbanot which the Torah introduces for expiation of certain sins. We may cover these korbanot next week.

OFFERING A SHELAMIM (5 easy steps):

The purpose of bringing a shelamim is to express good feelings: joy, thanks, celebration, completion of an agreement, achievement of a goal. The details of the bringing of the korban hold important lessons for us, and here we begin to focus on the question with which we began -- the Torah's attitude toward eating meat. What is the actual process of bringing a normal shelamim?

1) Semikha: The owner lays his hand on the animal. This is understood in different ways by different commentators:
a) To transfer sin to the korban
b) To show ownership of the korban
c) To identify with the korban

The possibility that seems most likely is that it signifies ownership. This is shown by the fact that there is no semikha for communal korbanot (except in two cases, which are explainable), since no one in particular owns the korban; it belongs to the community. Also, semikha cannot really be to transfer sin, since the shelamim requires semikha even though it has nothing to do with expiation for sin.

2) Shehita (slaughtering): can be done by anyone, not necessarily a kohen.

3) Zerikat ha-dam (sprinkling blood on the mizbe'ah).

4) The korban is skinned and cut apart; the kohen puts the helev etc. on the fire on the mizbe'ah.

5) The kohen takes his portion of the korban and eats it; the owner takes his portion and eats it.

THE FAT OF THE MATTER:

Before we look at the evidence for what the Torah thinks of eating meat, we will consider for a moment the helev, the fat offered to Hashem. The helev is fat located under the skin and around organs. It is thick and easy to remove, unlike 'shuman' (permitted fat), which is entwined with the muscles. Paradoxically, modern sources tell us that helev is inedible, or at least not usually eaten, although it can be used in cooking and for other purposes (Rabbi Shalom Carmy mentioned to me that since it is prohibited to eat helev, heretics used to take candles made of helev and eat them -- on Yom Kippur, when all eating is forbidden anyway -- in order to show their total disrespect for the Torah).

The fact that helev is not really edible, or not much good to eat, raises a question: If the reason the helev is forbidden to eat is because it is supposed to be offered to Hashem, and the reason why things are offered to Hashem is because they are the best, how can helev qualify, since it is either inedible or at least not the choice part by any standard?

Perhaps things are offered to Hashem not because of their *practical* worth, but for what they symbolize. Helev and blood are both offered to Hashem even though helev is inedible and blood is certainly not normally drunk for enjoyment and not considered the 'best part' of the animal. We will get to the blood in a moment, but as far as helev goes, it seems to represent *richness* in the ways it is used in Tanakh:

1) Bereshit 45:18 -- Paro invites Yosef to bring his family down to Egypt, where he will provide them with the "helev ha-aretz" -- the "fat of the land," the richness of the land.

2) BeMidbar 18:12 -- The kohanim are presented by Hashem with the "fat of the wine and fat of the oil," the best or richest parts.

3) Devarim 32:14 -- Hashem warns the people that they will eventually become fat and complacent when they consume all of the good Hashem will offer them in Eretz Yisrael, including the "helev kilyot hita" -- the fat of the kernels of grain.

BLOOD AND THE SHELAMIM:

Note that the shelamim section in VaYikra 3 ends with a prohibition to eat blood and helev. Note that this prohibition appears again in the shelamim section in VaYikra 7! And the blood prohibition appears *again* in connection with the shelamim in VaYikra 17. Why does the blood prohibition seem to dog the shelamim in particular? Perhaps it is because the shelamim is the korban from which the common people can eat, so there is the most likelihood for confusion and mistakes here (i.e., the inadvertent ingestion of blood).

But there may be another reason as well. If one of the primary thrusts of the shelamim, especially as opposed to the ola, is to provide animal meat for a feast, then when the Torah cautions us not to eat blood, it is doing the same thing it did when it permitted meat to No'ah: "Yes, you can eat meat, but do not eat the blood!" The blood represents life, as these prohibitions in VaYikra repeatedly confirm explicitly -- and blood must not be eaten. What VaYikra adds is that blood spilled in the context of a korban must be offered to Hashem. This requirement can be understood in many ways, as we will see.

LIMITED LOCATIONS:

VaYikra 17 prohibits slaughter except at the Ohel Mo'ed. But it remains unclear if the prohibition refers to sacrificial slaughter or even to profane slaughter. Does the Torah mean that if I want to offer a korban shelamim, I must bring it to the Ohel Mo'ed and offer it to Hashem there and not on my backyard altar, or does it mean that I cannot slaughter an animal in my backyard for any reason, even for meat, and can get meat only by making my animal a korban shelamim at the Ohel Mo'ed?

This question is debated by R. Akiva and R. Yishmael in Hullin 16b. R. Akiva says that the Torah in VaYikra 17 was only demanding that all *korbanot* be brought to the Ohel Mo'ed; as the Torah warns in VaYikra 17, the people had been bringing sacrifices to demons (which they understood were represented by goats and are therefore referred to as 'se'irim'). The best way to prevent this was to demand that all sacrifices be brought at the Ohel Mo'ed under the supervision of the kohanim, who would presumably help insure that the sacrifice was headed for the right God. R. Yishmael, on the other hand, says that the Torah was prohibiting profane slaughter completely. The permission that had been given to No'ah long ago to eat meat was being severely limited. From now on, meat could be obtained only by offering the animal as a shelamim at the Ohel Mo'ed. It is clear that R. Yishmael also is working with the reason given in the Torah -- that the people were sacrificing to demons; he differs with R. Akiva only in his claim that the Torah prohibited all slaughter, not just home-performed sacrifice, because he feels that even profane slaughter might lead to sacrifices to the demons.

Or perhaps not -- perhaps R. Yishmael focuses on the ethical question with which we began: Is it OK to kill for food? Originally, the Torah said no (to Adam); to No'ah, it said yes ("but don't eat the blood!"); now, the Torah takes a middle position, permitting meat but only if provided by a sacrifice to Hashem. An echo of this position is perhaps also discernible in the fact that when the Torah warns the people not to slaughter animals in VaYikra 17, it says that if they do so, "dam shafakh" -- one who does so has spilled blood, has murdered. This is clearly an ethical/moral issue, not connected (or not obviously so) to the fear that slaughter might become pagan sacrifice. If so, then what the Torah is doing in VaYikra 17 is calling the Bnei Yisrael to a higher moral standard than the rest of humanity; everyone else can slaughter for meat, but we may do so only if the slaughter is justified as a form of avodat Hashem, service of Hashem -- as a korban.

In any event, everyone agrees that profane slaughter eventually becomes permitted, as Devarim 12 clarifies. But, as we might expect, R. Akiva and R. Yishmael interpret Devarim 12 differently. R. Akiva, who believes that profane slaughter has always been permitted and that VaYikra 17 only prohibited private sacrifice, understands that Devarim 12 is telling Bnei Yisrael that when they perform profane slaughter, they must do so through the process of shehita, while during the entire period of their wanderings in the desert, they were permitted to simply stab the animal to death. R. Yishmael, on the other hand, understands thaat Devarim 12 is telling the people that they can now engage in private slaughter (although sacrifices can be brought only at the Misshkan/Mikdash).

This makes for a fascinating disagreement: R. Akiva belives that Devarim 12 represents a moral step up -- now the people cannot simply stab the animal to death and must instead kill it through shehita, which many understand as the most painless available way to kill the animal, while R. Yishmael may believe that it is a moral step down -- now the people can return to killing for meat and no longer must subsume this act in an act justified as divine worship. R. Yishmael's most likely rationale is that once the people conquer the land, settle it, and spread out over hundreds of miles -- the reality assumed by Devarim 12 -- it becomes simply impractical to demand that all slaughter be done only in the Mishkan/Mikdash. On the other hand, when Bnei Yisrael are are travelling through the desert, with everyone grouped around the Mishkan fairly densely, the ideal of making every meat meal a sacrifice to Hashem is achievable. [Of course, one could also say -- as the Rambam does in the Guide -- that the prohibition of slaughter/sacrifice in the desert was repealed later by the Torah because only during the earlier period were the people prone to bringing sacrifices to the demons. Later on they overcame these habits and therefore were permitted to slaughter at home.]

Shabbat Shalom

Parshiot Vayikra-Tzav: The Korban Minchah

By Rabbi Yitzchak Etshalom

I. OVERVIEW OF SEFER VAYYIKRA

Sefer Vayyikra is devoted to the subject of Shekhinah - God's Presence among the Jewish People. The Sefer can be broken up, in broad strokes, into the following sections:

Ch. - Topic

1-7: Korbanot (offerings)

8: Investiture of Kohanim

9-10: Inauguration of the Mishkan

11-15: Various Sources of Impurity

(which render one unfit to participate in Mishkan-related activities)

16: Purification of the Mishkan (Yom haKippurim)

17: Laws Related to Offerings

18-20: Sanctity of the People

21-22: Sanctity of the Kohanim

23: Festivals (and their "Mishkan" aspect)

24: Additional Offerings

25: Sanctity of the Land

26: Covenantal Blessing and Warning

27: Sanctified Objects

Parashot Vayyikra and Tzav overlap two of these topics (Korbanot and Investiture of the Kohanim); we will focus on the first of these - and on the first seven chapters of Vayyikra.

II. VAYYIKRA & TZAV: DIFFERENT PRESENTATIONS

Although we have listed the first seven chapters under the title "Korbanot", there is a significant difference in the presentation of the Korbanot in Parashat Vayyikra (Chapters 1-5) and that in Parashat Tzav (Chapters 6-7) (which, at a cursory glance, seem to be somewhat redundant). Whereas the presentation in Vayyikra comes from the non-Kohanic perspective - i.e. from the point of view of the "bringer" of the offering - the presentation in Tzav is Kohanic in function. Each of the Korbanot is introduced with the phrase *Zot Torat ha...* - "this is the instruction regarding [the offering] of ...". In Parashat Vayyikra, the emphasis is on what types of circumstances would motivate the bringing of an offering, what type of animal (or grain) is brought etc. In Tzav, the focus is on the procedure of the officiant Kohen once the offering has been brought.

KORBANOT: DEFINITIONS AND CATEGORIES

The word Korban is traditionally translated as "sacrifice". Regardless of what the original meaning of "sacrifice" was (it probably comes from a combination of Latin words - meaning "to make holy"), its common usage bears little - if any - resemblance to the ideology -or etymology - of a Korban. In conventional English, a sacrifice is something given up in exchange for nothing - but on behalf of a noble cause (e.g. defense of country, raising children etc.) The word Korban, on the other hand, comes from the Hebrew root "K*R*B - meaning "to come close". A Korban is a vehicle for Man to come close to God. For purposes of this shiur, we will either refer to these offerings as Korbanot (plural of Korban) or as "offerings".

There are, generally speaking, two types of Korbanot: Zevachim (lit. "slaughtered") and Menachot (grain offerings). Although we will focus on the Korban Minchah, a brief overview of Zevachim is in order - and it will help us understand the phenomenology of the Korban Minchah with greater insight.

ZEVACHIM: AN OVERVIEW

There are four basic types of Zevachim. (My thanks to the Judaic Seminar list, from whose archives I copies this synopsis)

1 OLAH:. "ascend", seems to refer to this sacrifice's distinctive feature, that the offering is completely burnt on the altar (except for the hide, which is given to the participating priest), thus it totally "ascends" to God. Only male animals or doves or pigeons (male or female) are acceptable.

2. SH'LAMIM: from "shalem" or "shalom", presents many possible interpretations. It may express a sense of "well-being"; "wholeheartedness" with God; a gift of "greeting" to God; or perhaps "completeness" (altar, donor and priest all sharing in it). Male or female animals are acceptable but not birds. Certain fat and internal organs are placed on the altar by the kohanim. The remainder, almost the whole animal, is permitted to be eaten. In Vayyikra Chapter 7, the Torah ordains that any pure person is permitted to partake of the Sh'lamim, thus allowing the donor to share it with family and invitees. Eating the Sh'lamim is permitted during the day and night of the offering and the day following and was not restricted to the sanctuary precincts. The "todah" (thanksgiving offering) - a Sh'lamim subdivision - is an exception in that it is only allowed to be eaten the day of its offering and the night following. Kohanim receive the breast and the right thigh.

An individual's olah and Sh'lamim are voluntary offerings. Although their names may connote certain purposes, and expiation was mentioned in connection with the olah, the reasons why one may bring an olah are not provided. [Note that Hazal do provide several explanations for the 'Olah - notably, that it is a form of expiation for neglected Mitzvot Aseh.]

3. HATTAT: "sin-offering", refers only to unintentional sins, generally those that had they been done intentionally are culpable of "karet". Carelessness and inadvertence indicate laxness as concerns one's responsibilities; such transgressions defile the sanctuary. The hattat, bringing purification and expiation to the sanctuary, is a mandatory part of the unintentional sinner's repentance process. With the exception of the Asham brought for withholding testimony, intentional sins can not be expiated by means of a sacrifice.

Four classes of hattat, varying according to the offender's status and without reference to the particular transgression, are itemized - those of:

a) the Kohen Gadol;

b) the whole community of Israel (explained by the sages as based on a high court directive);

c) the Nasi (including the king);

d) any individual.

From the sanctuary perspective the first two classes reflect a graver transgression, impacting the spiritual welfare of the nation, and require an elaborate ritual involving a young bull, a blood- sprinkling ritual on the parokhet veil in the Ohel Moed and upon the incense altar as well as upon the bronze altar, and burning the complete bull on the ash heap outside the camp. The latter two classes of hattat lack these stringencies. After all, the Nasi is not an official religious leader. He brings a male goat while the private individual brings a female goat or ewe. Male Kohanim eat from these latter offerings within sanctuary precincts.

Three particular transgressions of omission that require a hattat offering for expiation are also listed:

a) one who withheld testimony despite having heard an adjuration to testify;

b) various cases of being impure in a span of forgetfulness (and entering the sanctuary or eating sacred items); and

c) inadvertently violating an oath.

Depending on financial ability, one either brings a female sheep or goat, two birds or a measure of flour. In the latter case, oil and frankincense are not added, reflecting the somber nature of the offering.

4. ASHAM: "guilt-offering" of a ram, referring to three specific classes of violations:

a) asham me`ila - an unintentional misappropriation for personal use of sanctuary property. The violator makes full restitution and pays a penalty of one fifth in addition to the sacrifice

b) asham taluy - the contingency asham - when one has a doubt if he committed an unintentional transgression that had be been certain he did transgress unintentionally would require a hattat and

c) asham g'zelot - a trespass against God in that one lied under oath, defrauding his fellow man concerning a deposit, loan, stolen article, found article, etc.

When the defrauder chooses to repent, he restores the lost capital to the owner, adds a fifth as penalty and brings an

asham sacrifice. Although the sin was intentional, when the violator came forth himself to repent by making restitution and paying a penalty, he is allowed the expiation sacrifice. Bamidbar 5:5-10 contains a supplement to this asham legislation.

Before addressing the fifth type of Korban - the Minchah - we will look at two approaches among the Rishonim as to the meaning behind Korbanot (specifically Zevachim).

III. RAMBAM AND RAMBAN ON KORBANOT

Rambam, in his philosophic work Moreh Nevuchim (The Guide for the Perplexed), devotes a good deal of discussion to the topic of Ta'amei haMitzvot (the rationale behind the Mitzvot). Most of the third (and final) section of the Guide contains a study of many of the ritual Mitzvot and prohibitions found in the Torah. Rambam's general approach (unlike that of Rashi as noted in the beginning of this week's special reading, Bamidbar 19) is that every Mitzvah is driven by a specific and deliberate rationale. Much of the thinking behind ritual prohibitions (e.g. Sh'a'atnez, meat & milk), according to Rambam, can best be understood against the background of Canaanite pagan practice at the time of the Torah. Since the pagans practiced such rituals as cooking a kid in its mother's milk, performing cult-worship in clothes made of a wool-and-linen mix etc., the Torah prohibited these practices to separate us from them and their idolatrous practices.

In his discussion of the rationale behind Korbanot, Rambam similarly follows a path of reasoning guided by historic considerations:

"It is impossible to go from one extreme to the other suddenly. Therefore man - according to his nature - is not capable of abandoning suddenly that to which he was deeply accustomed ... As it was then the deeply-ingrained and universal practice that people were brought up with to conduct religious worship with animal sacrifices in temples ... God in His wisdom did not see fit to command us to completely reject all these practices - something that man could not conceive of accepting, according to human nature which inclines to habit ... He therefore left these practices but transformed them from their idolatrous associations ... that their purpose should be directed toward Him. Thus, He commanded us to build a sanctuary for Him with an altar to His name and offer sacrifices to Him... In this way idolatry was blotted out and the great foundation of our faith - the existence and oneness of God - was established. This was accomplished without confusing people's minds by prohibiting the worship they were accustomed to and which alone they were familiar with ... God doesn't choose to change man's nature with a miracle ... As sacrificial worship is not a primary intention ... only one Temple has been appointed ... in no other place is it allowed to sacrifice ... to limit such worship within bounds that God did not deem it necessary to abolish it ... because of this the prophets often declared that the object of sacrifices is not very essential and that God can dispense with them..."(Guide III:32). [It should be noted that this approach stands in stark contrast to that taken by Rambam in the Mishneh Torah. Scholars have attempted to harmonize these approaches with varying degrees of success.]

While this approach has a certain attraction - especially in assuaging our modern sensibilities which are easily ruffled by the picture of animal offerings - it carries with it considerable difficulties. First of all, this places the entire scope of Korbanot in the realm of a temporary exigency born out of a regrettable situation. The implication of this is that Korbanot do not belong to the realm of the ideal - and, as such, have no place in our vision for the Messianic future. There are two additional challenges to this approach, voiced by Ramban. After quoting Rambam's approach, Ramban challenges:

"But these words are mere expressions, healing casually a severe wound and a great difficulty, and making "the Table of the Eternal polluted", [as if the offerings were intended only] to remove false beliefs from the hearts of the wicked and fools of the world, when Scripture says that they are "the food of the offering made by fire, for a pleasing odor." Moreover, [if the offerings were meant to eliminate] the foolish [ideas] of the Egyptians, their disease would not thereby be cured. On the contrary, it would increase the cause of sorrow, for since the intention of the above-mentioned wicked ones was to worship the constellations of the sheep and the ox, which according to their opinion possess certain powers [over human affairs], and which is why they abstain from eating them in deference to their power and strength, then if these species are slaughtered to the Revered Name, it is a mark of respect and honor to [these constellations]. These worshippers themselves were in the habit of so doing, as He has said: "And they shall no more sacrifice their sacrifices unto the satyrs," and those who made the [golden] calf sacrificed to it. Now the Rambam mentions that the idolaters used to sacrifice to the moon on the days of new-moon, and to the sun when it rose in a particular constellation known to them from their books. The disease of idolatry would surely have been far better cured if we were to eat [these animal-deities] to our full, which would be considered by them forbidden and repugnant, and something they would never do.

"Furthermore, when Noah came out of the ark with his three sons, there were as yet no Chaldeans or Egyptians in the world, yet he brought an offering, which was pleasing to God, as concerning it Scripture says: "And the Eternal smelled the pleasing odor"...Yet there was as yet not the slightest trace at all of idol-worship in the world...The Scriptural expression concerning the offerings is "My food which is presented unto Me for offerings made by fire, for a pleasing odor unto Me" (Bamidbar 28:2). Far be it that they should have no other purpose and intention except the elimination of idolatrous opinions from the minds of fools.

"It is far more fitting to accept the reason for the offerings which scholars (Ibn Ezra?) say, namely that since man's deeds are accomplished through thought, speech and action, therefore God commanded that when man sins and brings an offering, he should lay his hands upon it in contrast to the deed [committed]. He should confess his sins verbally in contrast to his [evil] speech, and he should burn the inwards and the kidneys [of the offering] in fire because they are the instruments of thought and desire in the human being. He should burn the legs [of the offering] since they correspond to

the hands and feet of a person, which is analogous to the blood in his body. All these acts are performed in order that when they are done, a person should realize that he has sinned against his God with his body and his soul, and that "his" blood should really be spilled and "his" body burned, were it not for the loving-kindness of the Creator, Who took from him a substitute and a ransom, namely this offering, so that its blood should be in place of his blood, its life in place of his life, and that the chief limbs of the offering should be in place of the chief parts of his body. The portions [given from the sin-offering to the priests], are in order to support the teachers of the Torah, so that they pray on his behalf. The reason for the Daily public Offering is that it is impossible for the public [as a whole] to continually avoid sin. Now these are words which are worthy to be accepted, appealing to the heart as do words of Agadah. (Commentary on the Torah: Vayyikra 1:9)

In summary, whereas Rambam views Korbanot as a historical exigency, Ramban sees them as [close to] ideal, reflecting man's obligation or need to vicariously offer himself on the altar - the image of which will surely stir him to repentance. As we explained earlier (in the shiur on Parashat Vay'chi this year), the act of Semikhah (laying the hands on the animal immediately prior to slaughtering it) is the vehicle through which the person transfers his "energy" to the animal, thus effecting the substitute-offering.

Although there are some theological and philosophical (as well as historical) difficulties with this approach, there is one which comes directly from our text. How does Ramban explain a Korban Minchah - which cannot possibly constitute a human substitute and where the law of Semikhah does not apply?

Besides this problem, there are several textual "flags" in the Torah's commands regarding the Korban Minchah which we will address.

IV. KORBAN MINCHAH

A Minchah, meaning "tributary gift" to God, is the fifth type of Korban. Although in other parts of Tanakh the term "Minchah" is applied to offerings of both agricultural produce and animals (B'resheet 4:3-4; Sh'muel I 2:15-17), in Korbanic legislation it strictly refers to grain offerings. Generally, it is comprised of semolina wheat (solet) and olive oil with some frankincense spice (levonah) added. It could be offered in several varieties: raw, oven-baked in either a thick or thin preparation, or fried either on a griddle or deep-fried in a pan. A fistful is burnt on the altar and the remainder eaten by male priests within sanctuary precincts.

The laws of the Minchah are delineated in Vayyikra, Chapter 2 - and later, from the Kohanic perspective, in 6:7-11. [It is recommended that you read these sections before continuing].

There are several textual anomalies in this section:

1) Unlike the first chapter, which describes the "Korban Olah" (and later sections describing the other Zevachim), the section on the "Korban Minchah" is introduced with the phrase *v'Nefesh ki Takriv*. A "Nefesh" (which means soul in Rabbinic Hebrew) means "a person" in Biblical Hebrew. The specific orientation of the word is "life-force", as we see in Vayyikra 17:11, "The Nefesh of all flesh is in the blood". Why is the Minchah uniquely described as being brought by a Nefesh?

2) The "Kometz" (fistful) of the Minchah which is burned on the altar is called an *Azkarah* - commemoration. What is this commemoration and what is being remembered?

3) In 2:11, the Torah prohibits a leavened Minchah - or the use of any leavening or sweetening agent on the altar. Why is Hametz to be distanced from the Mikdash?

4) Within the context of the Korban Minchah, the Torah commands us to salt every Minchah - with the *Melach B'rit Elohekha* (The salt of the covenant of your God - 2:13). What is the significance of salt - specifically within the context of the Korban Minchah?

There are two other questions, both related to the issue of Hametz:

5) Although the Torah forbade the use of leavening in preparing a Minchah, we are commanded to offer a communal Minchah on Shavuot composed of two loaves (known as Minchat Sh'tei haLechem - specifically made of Hametz (Vayyikra 23:17). Why the exception?

6) There is one other exception to the Hametzless-Minchah rule: the loaves which accompany the Korban Todah (a subset of Sh'lamim). In Vayyikra 7:12-13, the Torah commands us to bring (40) loaves as an accompaniment to the Korban Todah (thanksgiving offering) - and ten of them must be Hametz! Again - why the exception? (See M. Menachot 5:1, where these two are presented as the only two exceptions.)

V. RAV BIN-NUN'S APPROACH

Regarding the sh'tei halechem, I'd like to share the synopsis of an approach developed by R. Yo'el Bin-Nun. The complete thesis is found in Megadim 13:25-45. This synopsis was put together by Shalom Holtz for the Virtual Beit Midrash of Yeshivat Har Etzion:

The key difference between Hametz and Matzah lies in how sophisticated the wheat has become through production. Hametz is wheat in its most complex form. It is the goal of the wheat grower and the final stage to which the wheat-growing process can be taken. Matzah, on the other hand, is bread in its most basic form, at the beginning of the bread-baking process. These physical characteristics of Hametz and Matzah shed light on several mitzvot which govern their consumption, including the prohibition of Hametz on Pesach.

Because of its simple nature, Matzah is considered "lechem oni," bread of poverty. A poor person, one who cannot afford to bring the wheat to its most advanced form of Hametz, bakes Matzah. The Israelites are commanded to eat matzot and maror, together with the korban Pesach, in order to remember the poverty and slavery they experienced in Egypt.

It would seem more appropriate that with the redemption from Egypt would come a commandment to eat Hametz. Just as the Matzah has symbolized the Israelites' state of poverty and enslavement, Hametz would be an appropriate symbol of their newly-obtained freedom and prosperity, for Hametz is the food of the wealthy. However, the instructions for the days which commemorate the period immediately following the exodus commands exactly the opposite: not only a commandment to eat Matzah but also a ban on Hametz. "Throughout the seven days unleavened bread shall be eaten; no leavened bread shall be found with you, and no leaven shall be found in your territory (Shemot 13:7)." What, then, is behind this prohibition and the parallel obligation?

Matzah symbolizes that the exodus from Egypt is only the beginning of the redemption process. After the night of the korban Pesach, the Israelites are not fully redeemed. Matzah, bread at the beginning of the process of its production, serves as a reminder that the exodus is just the beginning of a journey, a long hard road through the desert, with the goal far in the distance.

The process which begins at the exodus culminates in two other major events: the giving of the Torah and the entrance into the Land of Canaan. The mitzva of bikkurim, the offering of the first-grown fully-ripe fruits, commemorates both of these events in Jewish history. The holiday marking the beginning of the harvest of the wheat crop, Shavuot, falls out on the same date as the giving of the Torah, the sixth of Sivan. A major component of the ceremony of the offering of the bikkurim, which commemorates the arrival in the Holy Land, is mikra bikkurim, the recitation of Devarim 26:5-10. These verses constitute a declaration of thanks for a successful crop grown in the Land of Israel. The mitzva of bikkurim, which commemorates the dual conclusion of the redemption process, includes a positive commandment regarding Hametz. The meal-offering brought with the bikkurim, known as minchat shtei ha-lechem, is an offering of two loaves of leavened bread. This sacrifice of Hametz on Shavuot represents the completion of the process begun on Pesach, which was symbolized by the matzot.

The "maggid" section of the Haggada is centered on the recitation of the midrashic interpretation of mikra bikkurim. However, the reading is limited to the first verses, which focus on the history of Am Yisra'el:

"My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down to Egypt and sojourned there, few in number. He became there a great mighty, and populous nation. The Egyptians dealt ill with us and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard labor. And we cried out to Hashem , the God of our fathers, and God heard our voice and saw our affliction and our toil and our oppression. And God took us out of Egypt with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm, and with great terror and with wonders." (Devarim 26:5-8).

The last verses, which contain the expressions of thanks: "And He brought us to this place, and He gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruit of the land which You, God, have given me" (ibid., 9-10) are not recited on the night of the Seder. The selection of this section of the Torah for maggid is a reminder of the nature of the Seder night and of Pesach in general. Pesach commemorates the beginning of the process of redemption whose conclusion is symbolized by the bikkurim. On Pesach we remember that the exodus was only a beginning, and to do this we eat Matzah. Similarly, we recite only those verses within mikra bikkurim which pertain to the process of redemption. We leave out the verses pertaining to the final arrival in Eretz Yisra'el as a reminder that on Pesach, at least, the process has just begun.

VI. ANOTHER APPROACH TO HAMETZ

I would like to propose another understanding of Hametz and the rationale behind the prohibition of Hametz both on Pesach and in Menachot. This will also explain the other text anomalies pointed out above.

Along with Rav Bin-Nun's take on Hametz, positing it as representative of the completion of a process, there is another, more basic reality about Hametz and about what it may represent.

Although on a molecular level there is certainly change which takes place in flour and water - that change is not visible (in a short time period) to the naked eye. Hametz, on the other hand, is the very soul of radical change. Flour and water, baked without leaven, can remain in that flat state (Matzah) for a long time and nothing much would change in the makeup of that bread. Once leaven is introduced, rapid change takes place - change which also introduces rapid entropy and mutation. Take a piece of Hametz and look at it several weeks later - the same leaven which caused it to rise and become glorious and airy - has introduced the mold which makes it inedible. Hametz represents immediate and radical change.

This explains why the Torah places such stringent prohibitions on the use of Hametz on Pesach. Although we might consider that Pesach is a time of change (from slavery to nobility, from darkness to a great light etc.), a quick look at the text of the Torah will give us a very different picture.

Throughout the Exodus narrative, we are reminded that the merit by which we were redeemed was an ancient covenant - going back to B'resheet 15 and the B'rit Bein haB'tarim (Covenant between the pieces). The very essence of Pesach is timelessness - that the B'rit was only dormant, not dead and that its time had come to be fulfilled. There is no room for Hametz on Pesach, because the celebration and commemoration of Pesach is the historical bond which we share with our ancestors going all the way back to the Exodus - and several hundred years before that. Indeed, Pesach can act as the model for the future Redemption because the absence of Hametz allows the experience to remain unchanged and alive.

We can explain the Sh'tei haLechem on Shavu'ot in this light. Although we are accumstomed to thinking of Shavu'ot as the commemoration of the Giving of the Torah, this association is not made anywhere in the T'nakh (the earliest source is the Book of Jubilees, an apocryphal work from the first two centuries BCE). Within the context of the Torah, Shavu'ot is purely an agricultural festival, commemorating the beginning of the wheat harvest.

Unlike Pesach, which represents the timeless nature of Jewish (meta-)history, the harvest season is a time which, by definition, we wish to see pass. It would be counterproductive (and, by definition, impossible) to have every day be the beginning of the harvest - it is specifically the change from growth, to harvest, to plowing etc. which causes the greatest blessings to be realized in the field. Hence, the offering brought on Shavu'ot is specifically Hametz - we are celebrating this particular time and its passage.

VII. BETWEEN ZEVACHIM AND MENACHOT

We can now revisit our earlier questions about the prohibition of Hametz in Menachot and the textual anomalies in Parashat Menachot.

The thesis here is that unlike Zevachim which (following Ramban) represent Man's desire to have a one-time "altar experience", a Minchah represents Man's yearning to stand in God's presence at all times. This is the sentiment expressed by David:

One thing I asked of Hashem , that will I seek after: to live in the house of Hashem all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of Hashem , and to inquire in His Temple" (T'hillim 27:4).

It is not just the "Adam" (person) who brings a Minchah - it is the "Nefesh", the essence of the person, that brings this offering in his attempt to come - and stay - close to God; to appease Him and enjoy His Presence. However, since the individual cannot practically stay in the Mikdash, in front of the altar and he must (sadly) depart - he leaves a piece of this offering behind, to commemorate not only his visit, but his yearning to stay. That is why the Kometz (fistful) is called an Azkarah - it commemorates his visit (almost, if you will, like signing a guest book).

Although it has been a number of years since I nestled in the safety of the Beit Midrash in Har Etzion, that experience is something which has a timeless component. I return there in my mind often and maintain those years as a series of unyellowed, fresh snapshots. I share this perception - which we all have in our souls with regards to some place or person in our past - to illustrate the ideology of the Minchah and the hopes of the person offering it. The endeavor of the Minchah is an experience which the Makriv (person bringing the offering) would like to have bronzed in time. His brief stand in the holiest of places, in front of the altar, in God's Presence, is a moment out of time which (hopefully) lasts forever. As such, there is absolutely no room for Hametz in the composition of a Minchah - it represents the fleeting, the temporary, the passing event.

Salt, on the other hand, plays the exact opposite role. Where Hametz mutates, salt preserves. Salt is called the Melach B'rit (salt of the covenant) because just as salt preserves meat for a long time, the B'rit is preserved (and preserves us) forever. The Minchah, which represents Man's desire to ever and always be standing "there", is salted in order to represent that timelessness.

We now come to the one other exception to our Hametz-rule: Lachmei Todah - the loaves which accompany the Korban Todah.

The Korban Todah is not brought by someone who just feels gratitude; it is brought by someone who was in some sort of danger and was saved. The Gemara (Berakhot 54b) states: There are four [circumstances in which a person] must give thanks. [They are:] those who travel by sea, those who travel through a desert, someone who was imprisoned [or taken captive] and freed - and a sick person who was healed. (The B'rakhah known as "Birkat haGomel" is recited today in lieu of that Korban).

Unlike a conventional Korban Sh'lamim, which might be brought as a demonstration of goodwill (see above), the Korban Todah is brought in direct response to a potentially tragic situation which was averted by the grace of God. There is every reason to introduce Hametz here - because this is a situation which the person bringing it would not want to see repeated - it is not a "snapshot in time" which is cherished, rather a horrible possibility which we would never want to

experience again.

[Note that only 10 of the loaves are Hametz, whereas the other 30 are not. Perhaps the idea is that the person bringing it was in one of the four dangers mentioned (sea, desert, prison, illness) - so that 1/4 of the loaves are Hametz.]

Compare the Lachmei Todah with its "sister-Minchah" - the *Lachmei Eil Nazir*. When a Nazir completes a successful term of N'zirut (see Bamidbar 6), he brings an offering which includes a ram - and the ram is accompanied by 40 loaves. Here, however, all 40 are Matzah - no Hametz at all. According to our thesis, this is easy to understand. Much as the Nazir is returning to the "real world", he likely sees the term (30 days or more) of N'zirut as an idyllic period of spiritual cleansing and sanctity - which he would like to preserve. Again, there is no room for Hametz here.

VIII. V'ARVAH L'Hashem ...

In Malakhi (3:4), we read a vision of the Messianic future which begins with this oft-quoted verse:

And the Minchah of Yehudah and Yerushalayim will be sweet to God, just as in days of old and like years past.

We can now approach this verse with a new understanding - the Minchah is the Korban which lasts forever and which, when God redeems us, will represent more than any other offering, the eternal link which we have with God and with the worship at His altar. Is it any wonder that Rav Kook zt"l was of the opinion that when the third Beit haMikdash is built, that all Korbanot will take on the spiritual flavor of the Minchah? The B'rit which God maintains, keeping us alive and restoring us to our Land, is symbolized by the eternal Korban Minchah.

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PARSHAT VAYIKRA

Does God need our "korbanot"?

Or, would it be more correct to say that we 'need' to bring them, even though He doesn't need them?

In an attempt to answer this 'philosophical' question, this week's shiur undertakes an analysis of Parshat Vayikra to show how its specific topic of "korbanot" [sacrificial offerings] relates to one of the primary themes of the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

The Mishkan certainly emerges as a primary topic in **both** the books of Shmot and Vayikra, and hence, it would only be logical to assume that its underlying purpose must be thematically important. To appreciate that purpose, we must first note a very simple distinction that explains which details are found in each book.

In Sefer Shmot, the Torah explains **how to build** the mishkan, and hence Shmot concludes (in Parshat Pekudei) with the story of its assembly. In contrast, Sefer Vayikra explains **how to use** the mishkan, and hence Parshat Vayikra begins with the laws of the korbanot - i.e. instructions regarding the sacrifices that will be offered there.

Even though this distinction explains why Sefer Vayikra discusses korbanot in general, it does not explain why the Sefer begins specifically with the laws of korban **ola** [the burnt offering]; nor does it explain the logic of the progression from one type of korban to the next. In our shiur, we begin with a technical analysis of its internal progression - but those conclusions will help us arrive at a deeper understanding of the purpose of korbanot in general.

AN OUTLINE for PARSHAT VAYIKRA

In our study questions, we suggested that you prepare an outline of chapters one thru five, by identifying the primary topic of each individual 'parshia'. The following table summarizes our conclusions. Before you continue, study it carefully (with a Chumash at hand), noting how the section titles provide an explanation of the progression of its topics.

[Note how each 'parshia' corresponds to one line in our chart. Note also that each asterisk ('*') in the outline marks the beginning of a new 'dibra', i.e. a short introduction for a new instruction from God to Moshe [e.g. "va-yedaber Hashem el Moshe..."]. Note as well how the outline suggests a short one-line summary for each parshia, as well as a title for each section. See if you agree with those titles.]

PARSHAT VAYIKRA - THE KORBAN YACHID
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I. KORBAN NEDAVA - Voluntary offerings (chaps. 1-3)

A. Ola (the entire korban is burnt on the mizbeiach)
1. 'bakar' - from cattle
2. 'tzon' - from sheep
3. 'of' - from fowl

B. Mincha (a flour offering)
1. 'solet' - plain flour mixed with oil and 'levona'
2. 'ma'afeh tanur' - baked in the oven
3. 'al machvat' - on a griddle
4. 'marcheshet' - on a pan (+ misc. general laws)
5. 'bikkurim' - from wheat of the early harvest

C. Shlamim (a peace offering, part is eaten by the owners)
1. bakar - from cattle
2. tzon - from sheep
3. 'ez' - from goats

[Note the key phrase repeated many times in this unit: "isheh reiach nichoach l-Hashem."]

II. KORBAN CHOVA - MANDATORY OFFERINGS

A. * CHATAT (4:1-5:13)
1. **for a general transgression**
[laws organized according to violator]
   a. 'par kohen mashiach' (High Priest) - a bull
   b. 'par he'elem davar' (bet din) - a bull
   c. 'se'ir nassi' (a king) - a male goat
   d. 'nefesh' (layman) a female goat or female lamb
2. **for specific transgressions** ('oleh ve-yored')
   a. a rich person - a female goat or lamb
   b. a poor person - two birds
   c. a very poor person - a plain flour offering

B. * ASHAM (5:14-5:26) - animal is always an 'ayil' (ram)
1. 'asham me'ilot' - taking from Temple property
2. 'asham talui' - unsure if he sinned
[Note the new dibbur at this point / see Further iyun.]
3. * 'asham gezeilot' - **stealing** from another

[Note the key phrase repeated numerous times in this unit: "ve-chiper alav... ve-nislach lo."]
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Let's explain why we have chosen these titles.

TWO GROUPS: NEDAVA & CHOVA

First and foremost, note how our outline divides Parshat Vayikra into two distinct sections: 'korbanot nedava' = voluntary offerings and 'korbanot chova' - mandatory offerings.

The first section is titled "nedava", for if an individual wishes to voluntarily offer a korban to God, he has three categories to choose from:

1) An OLA - a burnt offering [chapter one];
2) A MINCHA - a flour offering [chapter two]; or
3) A SHLAMIM - a peace offering [chapter three]

Note how these three groups are all included in the first "dibbur" - and comprise the "nedava" [voluntary] section.

In contrast, there are instances when a person may transgress, thus obligating him to offer a sin offering - be it a "chatat" or an "asham" (depending upon what he did wrong).

The two categories (chapters 4 and 5) comprise the second section, which we titled "chova" [obligatory].

The Chumash itself stresses a distinction between these two sections not only the start of a new dibbur in 4:1, but also the repetition of two key phrases that appear in just about every closing verse in the parshiot of both sections, stressing the primary purpose of each respective section:

In the nedava section: "**isheh reiach nichoach l-Hashem**"
["an offering of fire, a pleasing odor to the Lord"
See 1:9,13,17; 2:2; 3:5,11,16];

In the chova section: "**ve-chiper a'lav ha-kohen...** "
[the kohen shall make expiation on his behalf..." -
See 4:26,31,35; 5:6,10,13,16,19,26]

With this background in mind, we will now discuss the logic behind the internal structure of each section, to show how (and why) the **nedava** section is arranged by category of offering and the type of animal, while the **chova** section is arranged by type of transgression committed, and who transgressed.

NEDAVA - take your pick

If an individual wishes to offer a korban nedava, he must first choose the category that reflects his personal preference. First of all, should he prefer to offer the entire animal to God, he can

choose the **ola** category; but should he prefer (for either financial or ideological reasons) to offer flour instead, then he can choose the **mincha** category. Finally, should he prefer not only the animal option, but would also like to later partake in eating from this korban - then he can choose the **shlamim** category.

Once the individual has made this general choice of either an **ola**, **mincha**, or **shlamim** - next, he can pick the sub-category of his choice.

For example, should one choose to offer an **ola** - which is totally consumed on the **mizbeiach** - then he must choose between cattle, sheep, or fowl.

The Torah explains these three options (in the first three parshiot of chapter 1), including precise instructions concerning how to offer each of these animals.

Should the individual choose a **mincha** - a flour offering - instead, then he must select from one of the five different options for how to bake the flour, corresponding to the five short parshiot in chapter two. In other words, he can present his offering as either flour (mixed with oil), or baked in an oven ("ma'afe tanur), or fried on a skillet ("al machvat"), or deep fried ("marcheshet"). Should the flour offering be from the wheat of the early harvest ("minchat bikkurim"), it must first be roasted and ground in a special manner (see Ibn Ezra 2:14).

Finally, should he choose the **shlamim** option- a peace offering - then he must select between: cattle ("bakar"); sheep ("kvasim"); or goats ("izim") - corresponding to the three individual parshiot in chapter three.

It should be noted as well that the laws included in this **korban nedava** section also discuss certain procedural instructions. For example, before offering an **ola** or **shlamim**, the owner must perform the act of 'smicha' (see 1:4, 3:2,8,13). By doing "smicha" - i.e. resting all his weight on the animal - the owner symbolically transfers his identity to the animal. That is to say, he offers the animal instead of himself (see Ramban).

One could suggest that the act of smicha reflects an understanding that the korban serves as a 'replacement' for the owner. This idea may be reflective of the korban **ola** that Avraham Avinu offered at the **akeida** - when he offered a ram in place of his son - "**ola** tachat bno" (see Breishit 22:13).

CHOVA - if you've done something wrong

As we explained earlier, the second category of Parshat Vayikra discusses the "korban **chova"** (chapters 4 & 5) - an obligatory offering that must be brought by a person should he transgress against one of God's laws. Therefore, this section is organized by **event**, for the type of sin committed will determine which offering is required.

The first 'event' is an unintentional transgression of 'any of God's mitzvot' (see 4:2 and the header of each consecutive parshia in chapter 4). Chazal explain that this refers to the unintentional violation ('shogeg') of any prohibition of the Torah - that had the person transgressed intentionally ("meizid"), his punishment would have been 'karet' (cut off from the Jewish nation).

[This offering is usually referred to as a 'chatat kavu'a' (the fixed chatat).]

Should this transgression occur ("b'shogeg"), then the actual animal that must be brought depends upon **who** the sinner is. If the **kohen gadol** (high priest) sins, he must brings a bull ("par"). If it is the political leader ("nasi"), he must bring a male goat ("se'ir"). If it was simply a commoner, he must bring either a she-goat or lamb ("se'ira" or "kisba").

[There is also a special case of a mistaken halachic ruling by the 'elders' [i.e. the 'sanhedrin' - the supreme halachic court], which results in the entire nation inadvertently sinning. In this case, the members of the sanhedrin must bring a special chatat offering - known as the "par he'elem davar shel tzibur". See 4:13-21.]

In chapter five we find several instances of specific transgressions that require either a "chatat" or an "asham".

The first category begins with a list of three specific types of transgressions, including - the case when a person refuses to provide witness (see 5:1), or should one accidentally enter the Temple (or Mishkan) while spiritually unclean ('tamei' / see 5:2), or should one not keep a promise (to do/ or not to do something) made with an oath ('shvu'at bitui' / see 5:4).

Should one transgress in regard to any one of these three cases (detailed in 5:1-4), the specific offering that he must bring depends on his income. If he is:

a) rich - he brings a female lamb or she-goat;
b) 'middle class' - he can bring two birds instead;
c) poor - he can bring a simple flour offering.

Interestingly, this korban is categorized as a "chatat" (see 5:6,10,13), even though the Torah uses the word "asham" [guilt] in reference to these acts (see 5:5). It makes sense to consider it a "chatat", because in the standard case (i.e. if the transgressor be rich) - the offering is exactly the same animal as the regular chatat - i.e. a female goat or sheep.

Furthermore, note that these psukim (i.e. 5:1-13) are included in the same "dibbur" that began in 4:1 that discussed the classic korban "chatat", while the new "dibbur" that discusses the korban "asham" only begins in 5:14!

The rabbis refer to this korban as an "oleh ve-yored" [lit. up and down] as this name relates to its graduated scale - which depends entirely upon the individual's financial status.

One could suggest that the Torah offers this graduated scale because these specific transgressions are very common, and hence it would become rather costly for the average person to offer an animal for each such transgression.

The final cases (from 5:14 till the end of the chapter) include several other categories of transgressions - that require what the Torah refers to as a korban **asham -** a guilt offering. In each of these cases, the transgressor must offer an ayil [a ram], including:

- when one takes something belonging to hekdesh ('asham me'ilot'/ 5:14-16)
- when one is unsure if he must bring a **chatat** ('asham talui'), i.e. he is not sure if he sinned.
- when one falsely denies having illegally held possession of someone else's property ('asham gezeilot' / 5:20-26), like not returning a 'lost item' to its owner.

THE GENERAL TITLE - KORBAN YACHID

We titled the entire outline as **korban yachid** - the offering of an individual - for this entire unit details the various types of korbanot that an **individual** (='yachid') can (or must) bring. Our choice of this title reflects the opening sentence of the Parsha: "**adam** ki yakriv..".- **any person** should he bring an offering to God..." (see 1:2).

The korban yachid stands in contrast to the korbanot tzibbur - the public offerings - which are offered by the entire congregation of Israel (purchased with the funds collected from the machatzit ha-shekel). The laws relating to korbanot tzibbur we first found in Parshat Tezaveh in regard to the daily "olat tamid" offering. They continue with the special offering that the nation brings (collectively) on the holidays, as detailed primarily in Parshiot Emor (Vayikra chapter 23) and in Parshat Pinchas (Bamidbar chapters 28-29).

WHICH SHOULD COME FIRST?

Now that we have explained the logic of the internal order of each section, we must explain why the laws of korban **nedava** precede those of korban **chova**. Intuitively, one would have perhaps introduced the **compulsory** korban before the **optional** one.

One could suggest that Parshat Vayikra begins specifically with the korban nedava since these korbanot in particular reflect the individual's aspiration to **improve** his relationship with God. Only afterward does the Torah detail the korban chova, which **amends** that relationship (when tainted by sin). Additionally, perhaps, the korban **nedava** reflects a more **ideal** situation, while the obligatory sin-offering seeks to rectify a problematic situation.

We may, however, suggest an even more fundamental reason based on the 'double theme' which we discussed in our study of the second half of Sefer Shmot.

Recall from our previous shiurim that the mishkan served a dual purpose:

A) to perpetuate the experience of Har Sinai (emphasized by Ramban); and

B) to atone for chet ha-egel (emphasized by Rashi).

(A) REENACTING HAR SINAI

Recall how the covenantal ceremony that took place at Har Sinai (when Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah) included the public offering of "**olot"** & "**shlamim"** (when the declared "na'aseh ve-nishma"/ see Shmot 24:4-7). In fact, in that ceremony we find the very **first** mention in Chumash of a korban **shlamim**, suggesting a conceptual relationship between the korban **shlamim** and Har Sinai.

[Note also that Chumash later refers to the korban shlamim as a 'zevach' (see 3:1 & 7:11). The word zevach itself is also used to describe a feast, generally in the context of an agreement between two parties. For example, Lavan and Yaakov conduct a zevach after they enter into a **covenant** ('brit') agreeing not to harm each other (see Br. 31:44-54). Today, as well, agreements between two parties are often followed or accompanied by a lavish feast of sorts (e.g. state dinners, weddings, business mergers, etc.). Therefore, one could suggest that by offering a **zevach shlamim,** an individual demonstrates shows his loyalty as a **joint** partner in a covenantal relationship with God.]

The korban **ola** also relates to Ma'amad Har Sinai, based not only on the above parallel, but also based on a key phrase - "isheh reiach nichoach l-Hashem" - that the Torah uses consistently in its description of the korban **ola**. [See 1:9,13,17.]

This exact same phrase is also found in the Torah's description of the "**olat** tamid", the daily congregational offering, as inherently connected to Bnei Yisrael's offerings at Har Sinai:

"**Olat tamid** ha-asuya **BE-HAR SINAI**, le-reiach nichoach isheh l-Hashem" (see Bamidbar 28:6).

Similarly, in Parshat Tetzaveh, when the Torah first introduces the **olat tamid** and summarizes its discussion of the mishkan - we find the exact same phrase:

"... le-**reiach nichoach** isheh l-Hashem... **olat tamid** le-doroteichem petach **ohel mo'ed**..." (Shmot 29:41-42)

Hence, by offering either an **ola** or a **shlamim** - the efficacious reminders of Ma'amad Har Sinai - the individual reaffirms the covenant at Har Sinai of "na'aseh v'nishma" - the very basis of our relationship with God at Ma'amad Har Sinai.

[One could also suggest that these two types of korbanot reflect two different aspects of our relationship with God. The **ola** reflects "yirah" (fear of God), while the **shlamim** may represent "ahava" (love of God).]

Recall also that the last time Bnei Yisrael had offered **olot** & **shlamim** (i.e. before chet ha-egel) was at Har Sinai. But due to the sin of the Golden Calf, God's **shechina** had left Bnei Yisrael, thus precluding the very possibility of offering korbanot. Now that the mishkan is finally built and the **Shchina** has returned (as described at the conclusion of Sefer Shmot), God's **first** message to Bnei Yisrael in Sefer Vayikra is that they can once again offer **olot** & **shlamim**, just as they did at Har Sinai - at not only as a nation, but also as individuals.

This observation alone can help us appreciate why the very first topic in Sefer Vayikra is that of the voluntary offerings - of the korban ola & shlamim, and hence it makes sense that they would precede the obligatory offering of chatat & asham.

(B) KORBAN CHOVA - BACK TO CHET HA-EGEL

In contrast to the 'refrain' of 'isheh reiach nichoach' concluding each korban **nedava**, we noted that each korban **chova** concludes with the phrase "ve-chiper alav ha-kohen... ve-nislach lo". Once again, we find a parallel to the events at Har Sinai.

Recall our explanation that Aharon acted as he did at "chet ha-egel" with the best of intentions; only the results were disastrous. With the **Shchina** present, any transgression, even should it be **unintentional**, can invoke immediate punishment (see Shmot 20:2-4 & 23:20-22). Nevertheless, God's attributes of mercy, that He declares when He gives Moshe Rabeinu the second "luchot", now allow Bnei Yisrael 'second chance' should they sin - i.e. the opportunity to prove to God their sincerity and resolve to exercise greater caution in the future.

We also find a textual parallel in Moshe Rabeinu's statement before he ascended Har Sinai to seek repentance for chet ha-egel: Recall how Moshe Rabbenu told the people:

"Atem **chatatem chata'a** gedola… ulai **achapra** be'ad **chatatchem**" (Shmot 32:30; read also 32:31-33).

Later, when Moshe actually receives the thirteen /midot ha-rachamim' on Har Sinai along with the second luchot (34:-9), he requests atonement for chet ha-egel:

"... ve-**salachta** le-avoneinu u-le**chatoteinu**..." (34:9).

This key phrase of the korban **chova** - "ve-chiper alav... ve-nislach lo" - may also relate to this precedent of God's capacity and willingness to forgive. The korban **chova** serves as a vehicle by which one can ask forgiveness for sins committed "b'shogeg" and beseech God to activate His "midot ha-rachamim" [attributes of mercy] to save them for any punishment that they may deserve.

Therefore, we may conclude that the korban **nedava** highlights the mishkan's function as the perpetuation of Ma'amad Har Sinai, while the korban **chova** underscores the mishkan's role as means of atonement for chet ha-egel.

WHO NEEDS THE 'KORBAN'?

With this background, one could suggest that the popular translation of korban as a sacrifice may be slightly misleading. Sacrifice implies giving up something for nothing in return. In truth, however, the 'shoresh' (root) of the word korban is k.r.v., 'karov' - to come close. Not only is the animal brought 'closer' to the mizbeiach, but the korban ultimately serves to bring the individual **closer** to God. The animal itself comprises merely the vehicle through which this process is facilitated.

Therefore, korbanot involve more than dry, technical rituals; they promote the primary **purpose** of the mishkan - the enhancement of man's relationship with God.

In this sense, it becomes rather clear that it is the individual who needs to offer the "korban" - as an expression of his commitment and loyalty to his Creator. Certainly it is not God who needs to consume them!

For the sake of analogy, one could compare the voluntary offerings [the korban nedava] to a gift that a guest brings to his host.. For example, it is only natural that someone who goes to another family for a shabbat - cannot come 'empty handed'. Instead, the custom is to bring a small gift, be it flowers, or wine, or something sweet. Certainly, his hosts don't need the gift, but the guest needs to bring something. But the reason why they are spending quality time together is for the sake of their relationship. The gift is only a token of appreciation - nonetheless a very important act.

TEFILLA KENEGED KORBANOT

In closing, we can extend our study to help us better appreciate our understanding of "tefilla" [prayer before God].

In the absence of the Bet ha'Mikdash [the Temple], Chazal consider 'tefilla' as a 'substitute' for korbanot. Like korbanot, tefilla also serves as a vehicle through which man can develop and strengthen his relationship with God. It is the individual who needs to pray, more so that God needs to hear those prayers

As such, what we have learned about korbanot has meaning even today - as individual tefilla should embody **both** aspects of

the korban yachid: **nedava** and **chova**.

Tefilla should primarily reflect one's aspiration to come closer to God - an expression of the recognition of his existence as a servant of God. And secondly, if one has sinned, tefilla becomes an avenue through which he can amend the tainted relationship.

Finally, tefilla, just like the korbanot of the mishkan, involves more than just the fulfillment of personal obligation. Our ability to approach God, and request that He evoke His "midot ha-rachamim" - even should we not be worthy of them - should be considered a unique privilege granted to God's special nation who accepted the Torah at Har Sinai, provides an avenue to perfect our relationship. As such, tefilla should not be treated as a burden, but rather as a special privilege.

shabbat shalom,
menachem

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FOR FURTHER IYUN -

A. In regard to the nature of the laws in Parshat Vayikra; even though they primarily focus on the details of what the **owner** must do with his korban, this section also details certain procedures that can be performed only by the kohen. Even though we may have expected to find those details in Parshat Tzav (that discusses the korbanot from the kohen's perspective), one could explain that these details are included here for the kohen's functions as 'shaliach' (emissary) of the owner. Ideally, the owner should bring the korban himself. However, in light of the events at chet ha-egel, God decided to limit this work to the kohanim, who were chosen to work in the mikdash on behalf of the rest of the nation (see Devarim 10:8).

B. Although korban mincha is not mentioned at Har Sinai, it may be considered a subset of the general ola category. Namely, the mincha may be the korban ola for the poor person who cannot afford to bring an animal. Note that the 'olat ha-of' is connected to korban mincha by a parsha stuma. The olat ha-of, too, is a special provision for one who cannot afford a sheep.

C. The two basic levels of kedushat korban explain why the ola precedes the shlamim in the discussion in our parsha. The greater the portion offered on the altar, the higher the level of kedusha:

1) Kodshei Kodashim - the highest level of kedusha:
   ola: cattle, sheep, and fowl.
      The entire korban ola is burnt on the **mizbeiach**.
   mincha: the five various ways to present the fine flour.
      The 'kmitza' (a handful) is burnt on the **mizbeiach**;
      The 'noteret' (what is left over) is eaten by the **kohen**.
2) Kodashim Kalim - a lower level of kedusha
   shlamim: cattle, sheep, and goats.
   The fat surrounding the inner organs go onto the **mizbeiach**.
   The 'chazeh ve-shok' (breast and thigh) go to the **kohen**, while the meat that remains may be eaten by the **owner**.

D. Leaving aside the difficulty in pinpointing the precise difference between sins requiring a chatat and those requiring an asham, it seems clear that a korban asham comes to encourage a person to become more aware of his surroundings and actions. For example, if one is unsure whether or not he sinned, his korban (asham talui) is more expensive than the korban chatat required should he have sinned for certain. The Torah demands that one be constantly and acutely aware of his actions at all times, so as to avoid even accidental wrongdoing.

E. Note that the phrase '**reiach nichoach'** does appear once in the second (korban **chova**) section (4:31), in the context of a **chatat** brought by a layman ('**me-am ha-aretz'**).

The reason may lie in the fact that the layman may choose which animal to bring for his **chatat** - either a female goat ('**se'irat izim'**) or a female lamb. Therefore, if he chooses the more expensive option – the goat - his offering bears some **nedava** quality, thus warranting the description '**reiach nichoach'**.

Another difference between a lamb and a goat: is that a lamb has a fat tail, which prevents one from identifying the animal' gender from afar. Therefore, one looking upon this korban from a distance might mistake it for an **ola** (which is always male, as opposed to the layman's **chatat** which must be female). A goat, by contrast, has a thin tail, thus allowing one to easily determine the animal's gender and hence its status as a **chatat**. Therefore, by bringing a goat rather than a lamb, the sinner in a sense broadcasts his sin and repentance. This perhaps renders the **chatat** a nedava of sorts, in that the sinner sacrifices his honor in order to demonstrate the principle of repentance ("**lelamed derech tshuva la-rabim**").

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F. **ASHAM GEZEILOT (a mini-shiur)**

The last korban dealt with in the parsha, korban asham, atones for three general categories of sins:

5:14-16 Accidental use of 'hekdesh' - known as asham me'ilot;
5:17-19 When one is unsure if he sinned at all - known as an asham talui;
5:20-26 Several cases for which one brings an asham vadai.

Although all three categories require the transgressor to offer an asham, the final parsha (5:20-26) begins with a new dibbur! This suggests a unique quality latent in this final group. Indeed, the sins in this category all involve intentional transgressions (be-**meizid**) against someone else. The previous cases of asham, by contrast, are inadvertent sins (be-**shogeg**) against **God**.

It would be hypocritical for one who sins **intentionally** against God to bring a korban. The korban chova is intended for a person who strives for closeness with God but has inadvertently sinned. The obligation to bring a korban teaches him to be more careful. Why should the Torah allow one who sins intentionally against God the opportunity to cover his guilt? The mishkan is an environment where man develops spiritual perfection, not self-deception.

Why, then, would the Torah provide for a korban asham in cases of **intentional sin**?

This group, known as an 'asham gezeilot', deals with a thief who falsely avows his innocence under oath. The Torah grants the thief-perjurer atonement through an asham, but only after he first repays his victim with an added one-fifth penalty.

Why should a korban be necessary at all? The victim was repaid and even received a bonus. Why should God be involved?

The standard explanation is that the thief sinned against God by lying under oath. Although this is undoubtedly the primary reason for the necessity of a sacrifice, one question remains: why does he bring specifically an **asham**? All other instances of perjury require a **chatat** oleh ve-yored (see 5:4)!

A textual parallel between this parsha and a previous one may provide the answer. The parsha of "asham gezeilot" opens as follows:

"nefesh ki techeta, ve-**ma'ala ma'al b-Hashem** ve-kichesh be-**amito**..." (5:21).

This pasuk defines the transgression against one's **neighbor** as 'me'ila b-**Hashem**' [taking away something that belongs to God]! This very same phrase describes the first case - 'asham me'ilot', unintentional embezzlement of 'hekdesh' (Temple property / see 5:14-16):

"Nefesh **ki timol ma'al** b-**Hashem** - ve-chata bishgaga..."

This textual parallel points to an equation between these two types of asham: unintentional theft of hekdesh and intentional theft of another person's property. [Note that both require the return of the principal and an added penalty of 'chomesh'.]

The Torah views stealing from a fellow man with the same severity as stealing from God! From this parallel, the Torah teaches us that unethical behavior towards one's neighbor taints one's relationship with God, as well.

[See also Tosefta Shavuot 3:5!]

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

What a Piece of Work...

"When a man among you brings an offering..." (1:2)

I've just finished reading *"The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution"* by Walter Isaacson. A great read.

Isaacson traces two parallel aspirations in computer history. One, to build a computer that mimics the human brain. The other — and, to date, the much more successful goal — was to harness the vast power of the computer to work together with mankind. Think Wikipedia, Google, YouTube, Facebook, eBay and more.

"A computer's central processing unit can execute instructions much faster than a brain's neuron can fire. Brains more than make up for this, however, because all the neurons and synapses are active simultaneously, whereas most current computers have only one or at most a few CPUs," according to Stuart Russell and Peter Norvig, authors of the foremost textbook on artificial intelligence.

"So why not make a computer that mimics the processes of the human brain? Eventually we'll be able to sequence the human genome and replicate how nature did intelligence in a carbon-based system," Bill Gates speculates. "It's like reverse-engineering someone else's product in order to solve a challenge."

The authors continue: "That won't be easy. It took scientists forty years to map the neurological activity of the one-millimeter-long roundworm, which has 302 neurons and 8,000 synapses. The human brain has 86 billion neurons and up to 150 trillion synapses."

"At the end of 2013, the New York Times reported on 'a development that is about to turn the digital world on its head' and 'make possible a new generation of artificial intelligence systems that will perform some functions that humans do with ease: see, speak, listen, navigate, manipulate and control.'"

We are still waiting for that. In fact, it sounds suspiciously like the phrases the New York Times itself used in its 1958 story on the "'Perceptron," which "will be able to walk, talk, see, write, reproduce itself..." etc. etc.

"True artificial intelligence, says Isaacs, "may take a few more generations or even a few more centuries. We can leave that debate to the futurists. Indeed, depending on your definition of consciousness, it may never happen. We can leave that debate to the philosophers and theologians. 'Human ingenuity,' wrote Leonardo da Vinci, whose Vitruvian Man became the ultimate symbol of the intersection of art and science, 'will never devise any inventions more beautiful, more simple, or more to the purpose than Nature does.'"

As interesting a read as the book was, it missed the fundamental point: Only Man was created with a soul, a purpose and a destiny. And a desire to be close to his Creator: *"When a man among you brings an offering..."* Somehow I cannot see a robot doing that.

What a piece of work is Man!

- *Source: "The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution" by Walter Isaacson*

TALMUD TIPS

by Rabbi Moshe Newman

Shekalim 2-8

Monumental Words

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said, "The righteous require no monuments – their words are their memorials."

This would appear to be a revolutionary concept in terms of modern (and, perhaps, not so modern) secular thought and custom. However, the Torah teaching expressed by Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel manifests itself in Jewish custom and tradition throughout history.

First, perhaps we should ask ourselves: "Why are there people who want monuments built to themselves or for their idols? Oops, I mean to their *heroes*?"

Some great Rabbis, and even secular philosophers, offer this innate desire to be remembered as a logical proof that a person's soul and "being" does not end at the time of passing from this world. If so, they contend, why should a person care if and what anyone thinks of him after departing this world, if his fate is oblivion and nothingness. Rather, there is a human instinct — perhaps one might call it a "knowledge" — that his existence lives on, and he is therefore interested — at least to some degree — that his name be remembered in this world, as exhibited by a monument or something that will continue to exist in this world that will remind others of him. He thinks this will offer his soul, which remains after his death in this world, satisfaction and comfort for eternity. Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tuchachinsky (Belarus to Jerusalem, 1871-1955) wrote this idea, along with many Torah sources for the eternity of the soul and the eventual resurrection, in an important work called *Gesher Hachaim*. It is available in English under the name *The Bridge of Life*, and is one of the most inspiring and fascinating books I have ever read.

I have also heard this teaching of Rabban Shimon ben Gamiliel taught as a "practical application" of another fascinating statement in *Shas*. "Rabbi Yochanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: 'When any Torah scholar's words of Torah are said, he merits that his lips move/speak in the grave.'" (Yevamot 97a) While everything physical decays, the spiritual can live forever. The Torah is eternal and provides eternal life for any person connected to it. Such a person does not require a monument to signify that, although he is now gone, he was once here among the living. He is actually still living, through his connection to the Torah and Hashem, and is even continuing to speak words of Torah forever.

Some burial places may look like monuments due to their size and design, but they are only structures near gravesites that others decided to build in this manner for practical purposes, such as serving as a places for visitors to gather on the *yahrzeit* to say prayers to Hashem, and a sheltered place for reciting Tehillim for continued elevation of the soul. My dear friend and colleague Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein elaborates on the linguistics of tombstones and their significance in the following way: "Rabbi Yechiel Michel Tukachinsky writes in *Gesher HaChaim* that three different synonyms for tombstones reflect three different reasons as to why such monuments are erected. The word *matzeivah* connotes the tombstone's role in making sure that the deceased's tomb is visible and known for anyone who wishes to visit it and pray there. The term *tziyun* connotes the tombstone's function in delineating exactly where the deceased is buried so that others can refrain from exposing themselves to ritual impurity (especially pertinent for *kohanim*, who are forbidden from coming into contact with human

corpses, see Vaykra 21:1-4). Finally, the term *nefesh* conveys the tombstone's function in honoring the deceased, and especially paying homage to his soul which may loiter around the final resting place of its former body." So, we see that a tombstone is not a mere monument, but rather a construction at the burial site that serves a special, practical function.

Story Time: I will never forget an occasion some years ago, when I accompanied a few other Rabbis from Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem on a *Lag b'Omer* educational and recreational outing. A large number of mostly university-age students had come to the Yeshiva for a special experience that combined learned Torah in the classroom, and learning Torah from travelling the Land of Israel to absorb the unique historical and modern sites. First, we all walked over to the tomb of Shimon Hatzaddik, a few minutes from the Yeshiva, where *chalaka* festivities were taking place. Three-year-old boys were enjoying their first haircut, and plenty of refreshments were on hand. We also said some Tehillim together and offered personal prayers to Hashem.

Afterwards, we all headed by foot to the Silwan Cave and Spring — also known as *Mei Shiloach* in the Torah — that was located in a predominantly Arab village. While in the area, one of the Rabbis told us a story. His name is Rabbi Yisroel Gellis, and he was a teacher in the Hebrew-speaking department of Ohr Somayach. He hailed from a Yerushalmi family who had been in the city for many generations. He told us that he had made a discovery and would try to share it with us. In a rocky setting, not appearing to be in any current cemetery, after much toil, research and verification, he had located the burial site of none other than Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura. He had left his own markings there, so he could identify it at any time, without the local residents realizing its significance and without there being a risk of the site being defiled. Rabbi Ovadia of Bartenura, also known as "the Rav" or "the Bartenura," is arguably the most well-known and studied commentary on the Mishna.

One of the student participants asked, "How could it be that such a great Rabbi was buried in such an unassuming and 'unmonumental-like' way? One of the Rabbis present replied that it is not the way of Judaism to erect monuments to great and righteous people who preceded us. He quoted the teaching on our *daf*: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said, "The righteous require no monuments — their words are their memorials." The words of Torah that a person learns, speaks, writes — and words of Torah that the person originally said, that were afterwards attributed to him and said in his name — are truly the only and the best "monument" for a person.

Then, the Rabbi taught the first *mishna* of Pirkei Avot to everyone present, and explained it according to the commentary of the Bartenura. We all proceeded to dance and sing there in the valley, on this festive day, while the nearby neighbors stood in amazement on their porches. Then, together, we returned to the Yeshiva to have lunch and continue our Torah studies and experiences.

- ***Shekalim* 7a**

Q & A

VAYIKRA

Questions

1. Who does the word "*eilav*" in verse 1:1 exclude?
2. Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week's Parsha.
3. What two types of sin does an *olah* atone for?
4. Where was the *olah* slaughtered?
5. What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-*kohen* perform?
6. Besides the fire the *kohanim* bring on the altar, where else did the fire come from?
7. At what stage of development are *torim* (turtledoves) and *bnei yona* (young pigeons) unfit as offerings?
8. What is *melika*?
9. Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not?
10. Why does the Torah describe both the animal and bird offerings as a "satisfying aroma"?
11. Why is the term "*nefesh*" used regarding the flour offering?
12. Which part of the free-will *mincha* offering is burned on the altar?
13. The Torah forbids bringing honey with the *mincha*. What is meant by "honey"?
14. When does the Torah permit bringing a leavened bread offering?
15. Concerning *shelamim*, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately?
16. For most offerings the *kohen* may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the *mizbe'ach*. For which *korban* may he apply the blood using only his finger?
17. Who is obligated to bring a *chatat*?
18. Where were the remains of the bull burned while in the wilderness? Where were they burned during the time of the *Beit Hamikdash*?
19. What two things does a voluntary *mincha* have that a *minchat chatat* lacks?
20. What is the minimum value of a *korban asham*?

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated.

Answers

1. 1:1 - Aharon.
2. 1:2,14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (*torim*), and doves (*bnei yona*).
3. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
4. 1:5 - In the *Mishkan* Courtyard (*azarah*).
5. 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.
6. 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.
7. 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, *bnei yona* are too old and *torim* are too young.
8. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one's fingernail.
9. 1:16 - An animal's food is provided by its owner, so its innards are "kosher." Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with "theft."
10. 1:17 - To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.
11. 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, G-d regards it as if he had offered his *nefesh* (soul).
12. 2:1 - The *kometz* (fistful).
13. 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.
14. 2:12 - On Shavuot.
15. 3:7 - Because they differ regarding the *alya* (fat tail). The lamb's *alya* is burned on the altar but the goat's is not.
16. 3:8 - The *chatat*.
17. 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries the *karet* (excision) penalty.
18. 4:12 -
    1. Outside the three camps.
    2. Outside Jerusalem.
19. 5:11 - *Levona* and oil.
20. 5:15 - Two *shekalim*.

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Synonyms in the Hebrew Language

by Rabbi Reuven Chaim Klein

A Perfect Sacrifice

The Torah mandates that any *kohen* or animal with a *mum* (pronounced as *moom* and meaning "blemish") becomes unfit for ritual sacrifice. The animal may not be brought as an offering, and the *kohen* may not officiate in the Temple's rituals. To that end, the Torah offers two comprehensive lists which delineate exactly which sorts of physical defects are considered a *mum* (Lev. 21:16-23 for a *kohen*, Lev. 22:17-25 for an animal). In this essay we will explore the etymology of the Hebrew word *mum*, and show how it differs from two seemingly synonymous words: *pgam* and *simpon*. Ultimately, we will see that although the three words in question all relate to "blemishes" in one way or another, their literal meanings actually differ quite widely from one another.

Rabbi Sholomo Pappenheim (1740-1814) explains that the etymological source for *mum/meumah* is the two-letter root MEM-MEM, which denotes the "smallest amount." The word *meumah* ("something") usually appears in the Bible in the context of "*not even* something" (for example, Gen. 30:31; 39:23, I Kings 10:21), i.e. "nothing." Accordingly, he explains that the word *mum* refers to a "something" which is either missing or extra such that it makes the object in discussion less than perfect — either on account of it *lacking* something necessary for completion, or having something extra which makes it *more than* complete, which is also an imperfection. Thus, a body with a *mum* lacks "something" that it is supposed to have, or has an extra "something" that it is not supposed to have.

Along these lines, Rabbi Dr. Ernest Klein (1899-1983) writes that *mum* (sans the letter ALEPH) is probably derived from the word *mum* (with an ALEPH, see Iyov 31:7 and Dan. 1:4), or *meumah*, which means "something" or a "point." He explains that this word originally referred to a "dot" or "speck" on an otherwise pristine background, and was later expanded to mean any type of "blemish" or "defective imperfection." (See Rashi to Gen. 22:12 who offers an exegetical connection between *mum* and *meumah*.)

Similarly, Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) explains that *meumah* represents the smallest possible smidgen of existence. It is a "something" that is only a bit bigger than "nothing." He explains its root as ALEPH-MEM, which means "mother" (the source of all life/existence) and "if" (the precondition necessary for anything to exist).

In segue to the word *pgam*, Rabbi Eliyahu HaBachur (1469-1549) writes that this word literally means "groove" or "crevice." He points to the Talmud (*Rosh Hashana* 23b), which refers to the "*pgam* of the moon" as the dark parts of the moon that are visible only at certain phases of its monthly cycle. He also notes that *pgam* is the Talmudic term for a nick in a knife that renders the knife unfit for slaughtering (*Chullin* 10a, 17a). In light of this, Rabbi Dr. Ernest Klein's contention that the Hebrew *pgam* is probably a cognate of the Arabic word *fajama* ("to break off a bit") makes much sense. [These two words are, by the way, unrelated to the English word *pajama*, which is derived from the Persian words *pay* ("leg") and *jameh* ("garment").]

As we will see below, a slew of sources indicate that the Hebrew word *pgam* literally refers to something "lacking" or "deficient." Its appearances as a synonym to *mum* are only a borrowed meaning:

1. After the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur reads the relevant passages from Leviticus from a Torah Scroll, he then reads the passages from Numbers by heart. The Talmud (*Yoma* 70a) explains that he does not roll the Torah Scroll from Leviticus to Numbers because doing so would needlessly make the audience have to wait, and he does not take out a second Torah Scroll because people might suspect that the first Torah Scroll had a *pgam*. In that context, Rashi explains that *pgam* means "lack," such that people would think that the first Torah Scroll was rejected because it "lacked" all the requirements which would render it fit for use.

2. Rashi (to *Ketsuvot* 84a) defines a "familial *pgam*" as something embarrassing, which essentially detracts from a family's sterling reputation. When the Talmud uses the word *mum* to mean something that disqualifies a person from serving as a judge, Rashi (to *Sanhedrin* 36b) explains that this *mum* refers to a "familial *pgam*." This is a more abstract usage of the term *mum* than the Biblical usage, which refers specifically to physical blemishes, or to spiritual blemishes resulting from sin (Deut. 32:5, Prov. 9:7).

3. The Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 73a) characterizes a certain category of rapist as somebody who has caused a betrothed woman a *pgam*. Rashi explains this to mean that he "embarrassed" her and "cheapened" her. Indeed, when discussing the monetary payments which a rapist/seducer is obligated to pay his victim, the Mishna (*Ketuvot* 3:4) refers to *pgam* as one of the forms of compensation due to her. The Mishna (*Ketuvot* 3:7) explains that *pgam* is evaluated by comparing a virgin's *theoretical* price value on the slave market to a non-virgin's. Her change in value is then deemed a form of damage and is paid as *pgam.*

4. A less-than-full cup of wine is considered *pagum* and therefore unfit for *Kiddush* (*Pesachim* 106a).

5. Somebody who detracts from the value of a written loan's document by accepting partial payment of that debt is called *pogem* (male) or *pogemet* (female) that document (see *Ketuvot* 9:7-8, Tosefta *Shavuot* 6:5).

Rabbi Pappenheim traces the etymology of *pgam* to the biliteral root PEH-GIMMEL, which means "weakened." For example, when Jacob was first told that Joseph was still alive and became the ruler of Egypt, the Torah says, "His heart became weak (*vayafag)* because he did not believe them" (Gen. 45:26). As a corollary of this meaning, the word *pag* (Song of Songs 2:13) refers to unripe figs, whose sweetness is "weaker" than fully-ripe fruits. (In Modern Hebrew, *pag* refers to a baby born "prematurely" and to the "expiration date" of, say, a coupon.)

The Talmud (*Avodah Zarah* 67a) rules that "taste" from a forbidden food can render otherwise permitted food forbidden. However, if that added taste is *taam l'fgam,* meaning it does not *improve* the taste of the permitted food but actually *detracts* from it, then the taste of a forbidden food does not prohibit the permitted food. Based on this, Rabbi Pappenheim explains that the Mishnaic Hebrew word *pgam* is also derived from the PEH-GIMMEL root, as all its various meanings relate back to the concept of "weakness," whether in terms of the "weakness" of taste, "weakness" of a knife's blade or the "weakening" of a girl's worth.

We now turn to the word *simpon.* The Mishna (*Ketuvot* 5:3) relates that originally the halacha was that if a *kohen* betroths a non-*kohen* woman with *Kiddushin*, she may already begin eating *terumah* even before the marriage is fully effectuated. However, the Mishna explains that later courts decreed that a woman betrothed to a *kohen* may not eat *terumah* until she is fully married to him. The Talmud (*Ketuvot* 57b) explains that one of the reasons for this ruling is that we suspect the woman in question may have a *simpon* — ostensibly, a "blemish" — that might retroactively nullify her betrothal, such that she will have been eating *terumah* without having been married to a *kohen*. In order to avoid this situation, the Rabbis decreed that women betrothed to a *kohen* cannot eat *terumah* until the marriage is consummated in such a way that a *simpon* cannot retroactively invalidate it.

This discussion leads to the common misconception that the word *simpon* means "blemish," but as we will see below, it's not so simple. The Hebrew word *simpon* actually has three different meanings, each of which ultimately derives from a different Greek word.

In the Mishna (*Chullin* 3:1), the word *simpon* appears in the sense of a bronchial artery, which "branches" off from the lungs. In this sense, *simpon* is actually derived from the Greek word *siphon* — which refers to a "pipe" (like it does in English), and denotes the use of pipe-like blood vessels to carry blood to the lungs.

The Hebrew word *simpon* or *sumponia* is derived from the Greek word *symphonia*, and refers to some sort of musical instrument (possibly a bagpipe). Rabbi Binyamin Mussafia (1606-1675) writes that Greek words had already entered the Aramaic lexicon as early as in the times of the Biblical Daniel. To that effect, he cites the word *sumponia* in the Bible (Dan. 3:5, 3:10, 3:15) as an example of this phenomenon. This word also appears in the Mishna (*Keilim* 11:6). The *Sefer HaAruch* explains that the musical instrument in question is a type of wind instrument and comprises a hollow pipe. This explanation connects *simpon* in the sense of a "musical instrument" to *simpon* in the sense of a "blood vessel."

In another Mishna (*Bava Metzia* 1:8), the word *simpon* refers to extra clauses or conditions added to a legal document as a sort of postscript. This word is derived from the Greek word *symphoneo,* which means "agreement" or "harmony," and it refers to all those party to the agreement coming to terms with one another. The Hebrew word *simpon* was later expanded to refer to an implicit stipulation that was not actually added to the text of a legal document but could nonetheless invalidate the contract.

Rashi (to *Kiddushin* 10b, *Ketsuvot* 57b, and *Bava Metzia* 20a) explains that the word *simpon* literally means "cancel," and refers to any sort of clause that can "cancel" a deal — whether implicit or explicit. An early commentary to Targum Oneklos ascribed to Rabbi Yaakov Dienna (published under the names *Patshegen, Tzintzenet HaMan*, and *Sefer HaYair*) suggests a Semitic etymology for the word *simpon* by explaining that it is derived from the Hebrew/Aramaic root SAMECH-YUD-MEM, which means "erase" or "destroy," and *pon* which (somehow) refers to something from the past. Like Rashi, he too understands that *simpon* literally refers to the retroactive cancellation of a deal. Either way, *simpon* does not actually mean "blemish" or "defect," but rather refers to anything which can void an agreement. A physical blemish on a woman whom one is marrying is just one example of something that can cancel an agreement, but does not reflect the word's full definition.

To summarize, *mum, pgam,*and *simpon* can all mean "blemish" in some sense, but the core meanings of those words differ from one another: *Mum* means "something," *pgam* literally means "hole" or "lacking" and *simpon* literally means "cancellation."

For questions, comments, or to propose ideas for a future article, please contact the author at rcklein@ohr.edu

COUNTING OUR BLESSINGS

by Rabbi Reuven Lauffer

TO BELIEVE IS TO BEHAVE (PART 3)

(LAILAH GIFTY AKITA)

"These are the precepts whose fruits a person enjoys in this world, but whose principal remains intact in the World to Come. They are: honoring one's parents; acts of kindness; early arrival at the study hall in the morning and the evening; hosting guests; visiting the sick; providing the wherewithal for a bride to marry; escorting the dead; praying with concentration; making peace between two people; and Torah study is the equivalent of them all." (Tractate Shabbat 127a)

The second mitzvah mentioned is *Gemilut Chasadim* — acts of kindness. There is a fascinating dialogue in the Tractate Sotah (14a) that gives us insight into the potency of this mitzvah. Rabbi Chama the son of Rabbi Chanina asks, "What is the meaning of the verse that commands us to follow in the ways of G-d?" (Deuteronomy 13:5) After all, he points out, it is impossible for a human to do even a fraction of what G-d does. Obviously, the Torah is not commanding us to do things we cannot do. Rather, as our Sages explain, we are being instructed to emulate the attributes of G-d. Especially, we are taught to emulate His attribute of kindness.

Elsewhere in *Shas*, Rabbi Simlai explains that the Torah begins with an act of kindness — with G-d clothing Adam and Chava after they sinned — and the Torah concludes with an act of kindness — when G-d, Himself, buries Moses. Rabbi Chaim Pinchas Scheinberg (1910-2012), one of the foremost Torah educators and leaders in our times, points out the apparent incongruity in describing the act of G-d clothing Adam and Chava as being the *first* act of kindness that He did. After all, there are many things that G-d did for Adam *prior* to clothing him. Rabbi Scheinberg explains that true *Gemilut Chasadim* is acting kindly even towards those who offend us. G-d's creation of the world with kindness is obvious. But, Rabbi Simlai is teaching us that even after Adam and Chava sinned, Hashem continued to relate to them with kindness — even though they may not have deserved it. Rabbi Scheinberg's teaching is truly remarkable. *Gemilut Chasadim* is not reserved only for those who meet with our approval, for those who act in the correct way. *Gemilut Chasadim* is something that we are obligated to do for everyone.

What is the significance of the Torah beginning and ending with acts of kindness? The Vilna Gaon clarifies that anyone who wants to know the central theme of a book should read its beginning and its end, as they will reveal the topic that wends its way throughout the book. Accordingly, if the Torah begins with *Gemilut Chasadim* and concludes with *Gemilut Chasadim,* it is clear that the entire Torah is founded on the precept of kind deeds. In fact, the Vilna Gaon, in one of the letters he wrote to his wife while travelling, emphasized that the underlying message imparted by the majority of the Torah is to bring joy to others.

Rabbeinu Bachya ben Asher (1255-1340), one of the most brilliant and distinguished early authorities in Spain, writes in his fundamental philosophical treatise entitled *Kad Hakemach* that *Gemilut Chasadim* permeates every dimension of our existence — in both the spiritual realms and in the physical dimensions. All of these realms cannot exist without it. Everything requires kindness — and kindness has no end or limits.

The concept of *Gemilut Chasadim* is so intrinsic to the Torah that Rabbi Yishayahu Horowitz (1558-1630), an expert in the entire Torah, including its more abstruse dimensions, and the recognized rabbinic authority in Prague and Jerusalem, among other prestigious locations, writes in his magnum opus called *Shnei Luchot Habrit* that the *gematria* — a system that affords a numerical value to each Hebrew letter — of the words *Gemilut*

Chasadim and the word *Torah* are identical: 611. In the more esoteric realms, concepts sharing the same *gematria* are not coincidental. Rather, they are an indication of a deep and spiritual association. If the *gematria* of *Gemilut Chasadim* and Torah is equal, it means that they share the very same essence.

In a beautiful insight, Rabbi Moshe Wolfson, doyen of the Torah V'Daath Yeshivah in New York and spiritual mentor and teacher to thousands of students around the world, explains why the classic engagement ring given by a *chatan* to his *kallah* is a diamond. One aspect of the beauty of a diamond is that, even though its base color is white, it refracts light in a way that causes the colors of the rainbow to be seen within its different facets. In the Kabbalistic texts, every color represents a different character trait. So, too, it is in marriage. Every trait and characteristic needs to be refined so that a person can become the most attentive, respectful and loving partner to their spouse that they can be. The Kabbalists teach that white represents kindness. And it is the trait of kindness that must serve as the foundation of every Jewish home. When *Gemilut Chasadim* permeates the house, it will be the catalyst that allows the marriage to thrive and blossom. Rabbi Wolfson explains that this is the hidden and sparkling message behind the diamond engagement ring.

To be continued...

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), also known as *Torat Kohanim* — the Laws of the Priests — deals largely with the *korbanot* (offerings) brought in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called a *korban olah,* a burnt-offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards, it is slaughtered, and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the Altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the Altar.

A similar process is described involving burnt-offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal-offerings are described. Part of the meal-offering is burned on the Altar, and the remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burned on the Altar and part is eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats.

The Torah prohibits eating blood or *chelev* (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the *Kohen Gadol*, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal-offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt-offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the "questionable guilt" offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

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the students, alumni, staff and events of Ohr Somayach

by Rabbi Shlomo Simon

Rabbi Uriel Moshe Goodwin (35)

Born: London, England

Pardes House, London for Primary and Secondary School
Yeshivat Shaarei Torah, Manchester
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Rebbe in the Beis Medrash Program at Yeshivat Ohr Somayach (beginning 2018)

The history of English Jewry is embedded in our distinguished *rebbe* of the *Beis Medrash*, Rabbi Uriel Moshe Goodwin. As many of us know from the *Kinos* of *Tisha B'Av,* there was an established Jewish presence in England from at least the time of William the Conqueror in 1066 until 1290, when King Edward I expelled the remaining Jewish population. Jews were prominent merchants and financiers, and Aaron of Lincoln (1125-1186) was said to be the richest person in England during his lifetime — even richer than the king. Oxford had a relatively large Jewish community and one of the earliest colleges, Merton, was established with a grant from the learned and wealthy Rabbi Jacob of Oxford.

Jews were a major source of revenue for the Crown and the noblemen, and, as such, were afforded special protection by the Crown, but were also subjected to extra heavy taxes and property confiscation. The common English folk, although initially quite friendly to Jews, were later periodically incited by the Catholic Church's many rabidly anti-Semitic priests to kill and maim that defenseless community and steal and destroy their property. These priests also fabricated the notorious and totally false "blood libel" charge against the Jewish communities. After a series of pogroms, including the one in York in 1190, where it seems the entire Jewish population was either massacred or had committed suicide *al Kiddush Hashem*, England was *yudenrein* from the expulsion in 1290 until the end of the English Civil Wars in 1649, when Oliver Cromwell, a Protestant and the head of the Republican forces, overthrew and beheaded Charles I, the last Catholic King of England.

Sensing the winds of change, the Jewish community of the Netherlands, which consisted of descendants of Jews or *Anusim* (forced converts to Christianity) who had been expelled from Spain and Portugal centuries before, sought permission to establish a community in England and to engage in commerce. The head of the Amsterdam community, Rabbi Menashe ben Yisrael, was granted an audience with Cromwell, who was so impressed with his erudition and wisdom that he eventually approved of the request and Jews began to resettle in England.

Among those families that came in the middle of the 17th century was the Levy family — Rabbi Goodwin's paternal grandmother's ancestors.

His paternal grandfather's family came to England with a wave of immigrants from the Pale of Settlement in 1906. Like most English Jewish families at the time, strict adherence to *Halacha* was not a priority. Rabbi Goodwin's paternal grandfather became a professional accountant, and his son, Rabbi Goodwin's father, went to a well-known English private school - Haberdashers - and later to Cambridge University. A friendship with a religious student on campus eventually led him to become a *baal teshuva*. After graduation, with a degree in Economics, he studied at *Yeshivat Dvar Yerushalayim* in Jerusalem. After his return to England, he learned as a *bochur* and then as a young *avreich* in Rabbi Hager's Kollel in Golders Green for a number of years. Eventually, he joined his father's accounting firm and is today at its head.

Reb Uriel's maternal grandfather's family arrived in England from Germany shortly before the start of the Second World War. His maternal great-grandfather, Rabbi Moshe Rottenberg, for whom he is named, had been the Rav of Nuremberg before the war. He was a first-hand witness to the rise of the Nazi Party in Germany. Uriel's grandfather spent the war years in the recently formed Gateshead Yeshiva.

Reb Uriel's maternal grandmother escaped Germany with her mother and sister in 1942. In exchange for all their worldly possessions, a smuggler led them over the Tyrol Mountains to temporary safety in Northern Italy. But as the war progressed and the Jews in Italy were rounded up and sent to the Death Camps in Poland, they escaped again by hiding in a cattle truck to Montreux, Switzerland, where they remained until the end of the war.

Reb Uriel grew up in Hendon and then Golders Green, two Jewish neighborhoods in London, as the oldest of four siblings. He attended Pardes House, a *Charedi*-oriented primary and secondary school with an excellent secular curriculum. Reb Uriel excelled at both Torah and secular studies. By the age of fifteen, he completed his GSCE's (General Certificate of Secondary Education), and by sixteen he had completed his A Levels (Advanced Levels), which are required for placement in university. He did well enough that he could have gone to any university in the United Kingdom. His secular Head Teacher encouraged him to follow "in his father's footsteps" and attend Cambridge University. Uriel, however, wanted to continue in his father's "other footsteps" and attend Yeshiva Gedola.

At the age of sixteen, Reb Uriel left Pardes House to go to Manchester to study Torah under Rabbi Knopfler at the *Shaarei Torah Yeshiva.* There he learned for four years, including one and a half years as *a chavrusah* of the *Mashgiach*, Rabbi Shmuel Goldberg, who was a *talmid* of Rav Chazkal Levenstein.

His next stop was the Mir Yeshiva in Yerushalayim and to the top *Gemara* shiur of Rav Osher Arieli. Reb Uriel's questions and passion so impressed his *rebbe,* that after only a year he became his *rebbe's* morning *chavrusah*. He describes his experience as follows:

> "Reb Osher is known for his building the *sugya* (topic material) as a whole unit; for his *diukim (*inferences), *lomdus (*depth in learning)*,* tremendous clarity and bringing out the *yesodos* (underlying principles) from the *sugya* instead of inserting them. His *shiur* is unusually fast in the Yeshiva world and can cover thirty *daf, b'iyun,* during a *Zman*.
>
> Learning with him, I experienced and learned firsthand his *Derech Halimud* (method of learning), profundity, *yishuv hada'as* (clarity of thinking) and preparedness to relearn, as well as experience his exceptional *middos* (personal character) — in particular, his humility. Attending his *shiur*, one can observe his mastery of the *Gemara* and the swiftness with which he can summarize a *sugya*. When learning, however, despite this clarity, he would carefully contemplate and reflect on the material as well as consider alternative approaches. He would frequently relearn a text the following day. He always learned in a manner that was calm and almost serene, albeit very focused. He has

tremendous *yashrus* (correctness) and 'demanded' that leaning be *yosher* even when saying *a chiddush* (novel idea). A tremendous *masmid*, (serious and focused learner), he never spoke any words not relevant to learning whilst in the *Beis HaMedrash* during all the time I spent with him. Out of the *Beis HaMedrash,* I would discuss with him many other matters. The *shiurim* I give are very much influenced by the learning, *shuirim* and *derech* I learned from him."

In all, Reb Uriel learned for four and a half years in Rav Osher's *shiur*. During that time, and afterwards, Reb Uriel also attended *shiurim* given by HaGaon HaRav Rafoel Shmulevitz, Rav Nosson Zvi Finkel, Rav Aryeh Finkel and Rav Chaim Zev Schneider.

Not only was Rav Arieli, Reb Uriel's *rebbe*, mentor and *chavrusah*, he was also his *shadchan*. Rav Arieli introduced him to the daughter of his first cousin, Rav Wasserman, a *Rav* and *Mashgiach* at a yeshiva in Bnei Brak. They married and now Rav Arieli is also his relative.

During his more than twelve years at the Mir, Reb Uriel gave classes on many subjects, including *Gemara*, *Hashkafa*, *Siddur*, and *Chumash*. He also took courses in counseling and teaching methods. And he has published a number of articles in Torah journals.

A few years ago, Reb Uriel was asked to substitute teach in the Ohr Somayach Intermediate Program. He was already familiar with Ohr Somayach because his uncle, Reb Dovid Speyer, *z'l*, was a *rebbe* and the head of the Beis Medrash Program.

Three years ago, when a position opened up in the *Beis Medrash*, the Yeshiva asked Reb Uriel to give the *shiur*. He has taken to his position with an enthusiasm and warmth that has made a major contribution to the *Beis Medrash* and to the entire Yeshiva.

When asked about his philosophy of teaching, Reb Uriel responded as follows:

"The great Rav Yeruchum Lebovitz, *Mashgiach* of the Mir Yeshiva, is often quoted as having said: 'It is not good when one does not know his or her faults, but even worse is someone who does not recognize his or her good qualities. A person who does not understand his strengths and talents is like a craftsman who is unfamiliar with his tools.'

"This is equally true from the perspective of an educator. A *rebbe* must view his students with genuinely high esteem. He should recognize their strengths, abilities and achievements, and believe in them. Equally important is to empathize with and sincerely understand the struggles and weaknesses they may have.

"Indeed, it is told that a few months after joining the Mir Yeshiva, Rav Yeruchum said that he already studied and recognized the unique talent of each of the 400 students. He then added that he had now started to study their weaknesses so he could direct them in self-improvement.

"A *rebbe* should also be concerned with all other areas of the students' welfare, such as physical health, financial stability, social connections and so on. The genuine love,

respect and care of a *rebbe* for the student is an essential part of the *rebbe*-student relationship, and a catalyst for growth.

"Achievement in learning is often related to emotional equilibrium. Spiritual growth can often be directly interlinked to emotional tranquility. When talking with or counseling a student, you have to see and address the full person you are speaking to. His parents, his broader family, his upbringing, experiences, talents and challenges all make up his uniqueness."

As to his thoughts on his experience so far at Ohr Somayach, Reb Uriel said:

"Ohr Somayach is a most remarkable Yeshiva. Jews from very different spiritual backgrounds find the Yeshiva a home, whilst benefiting from a true Yeshiva experience. I find the beautiful synthesis of the different backgrounds incredible. The atmosphere of spiritual growth, the aspirations of the students, and the love of the *Rabbeim* stimulate this fusion.

"The *bochurim* of the *Beis Medrash* are unique in their thirst for knowledge, diligence and desire to grow. The *Beis Medrash* is set up to enable the students to experience high-level *Iyun Gemara* learning, and the *shiurim* are built to facilitate this. It is somewhat astonishing to see *bochurim* transforming into *lamdonim* — able to understand and accurately build *a sugya* with its *yesodot* in just a few months of being in the *Beis Medrash*. After leaving our program, the students graduate to the highest level *shiurim* in other renowned yeshivos, where they excel."

The Yeshiva is proud to have Reb Uriel on its staff and looks forward to the contributions he will surely make in the coming years, *b'ezrat Hashem Yisborach.*

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Duty of Conscientiousness

The *parsha* ends with commandments that find their atonement through the same offering — the *korban asham*, the guilt offering. These include *meilah* – mundane use of a sacred object - and *safek* – uncertainty with regard to certain severe transgressions. The common denominator of these three mitzvahs is that the offender displays indifference about the legality of his property and actions.

If a person inadvertently commits *meilah* — by using a sacred object or by transferring it to another's possession — this shows that he has not distinguished properly between the sacred and the profane in his possession. The duty of guarding a sacred object should have moved him to make an exacting and careful separation. Interestingly, *inadvertent* misappropriation of a sacred object profanes it, whereas *willful* misappropriation does not. In that case, the object maintains its sanctity.

Safek, which makes one liable to bring a guilt offering, reveals the same attitude of indifference. The typical example of this *safek* is when one has two pieces of meat before him, where one is forbidden *cheilev*, punishable by *karet*, and the other is permissible — and he eats the forbidden meat, thinking it is the permissible one. The very existence of the uncertainty proves that he lacked a proper measure of conscientiousness, for he failed to separate properly between the permitted and the prohibited so as to keep far from sin. Interestingly, when one is uncertain whether a *single* piece before him is prohibited or forbidden, he is not liable to bring a guilt offering. The fact that the forbidden and permissible could be placed side by side evidences a greater carelessness.

From these laws, we learn that both the Sanctuary and the Law fear indifference more than transgression. The Sanctuary is exalted far above transgressors — they will never be able to detract from its sanctity. Indeed, their very opposition attests to sanctity. But the inadvertent acts that result from indifference — thoughtless inattentiveness — are a far greater threat.

In mitzvah observance, uncertainty that perhaps a transgression was committed is more serious than certainty of it! When the carelessness is a product of extreme indifference, Torah observance is at the height of vulnerability.

The Torah expects us to watch our step, and take reasonable precautions to safeguard the commandments. If we are careless and haphazard about our actions — so that doubt arises as to whether or not we have acted lawfully — then we already "bear sin." But if we are conscientious and vigilant, we have been true to our duty.

- *Sources: Commentary, Vayikra, 5:26*


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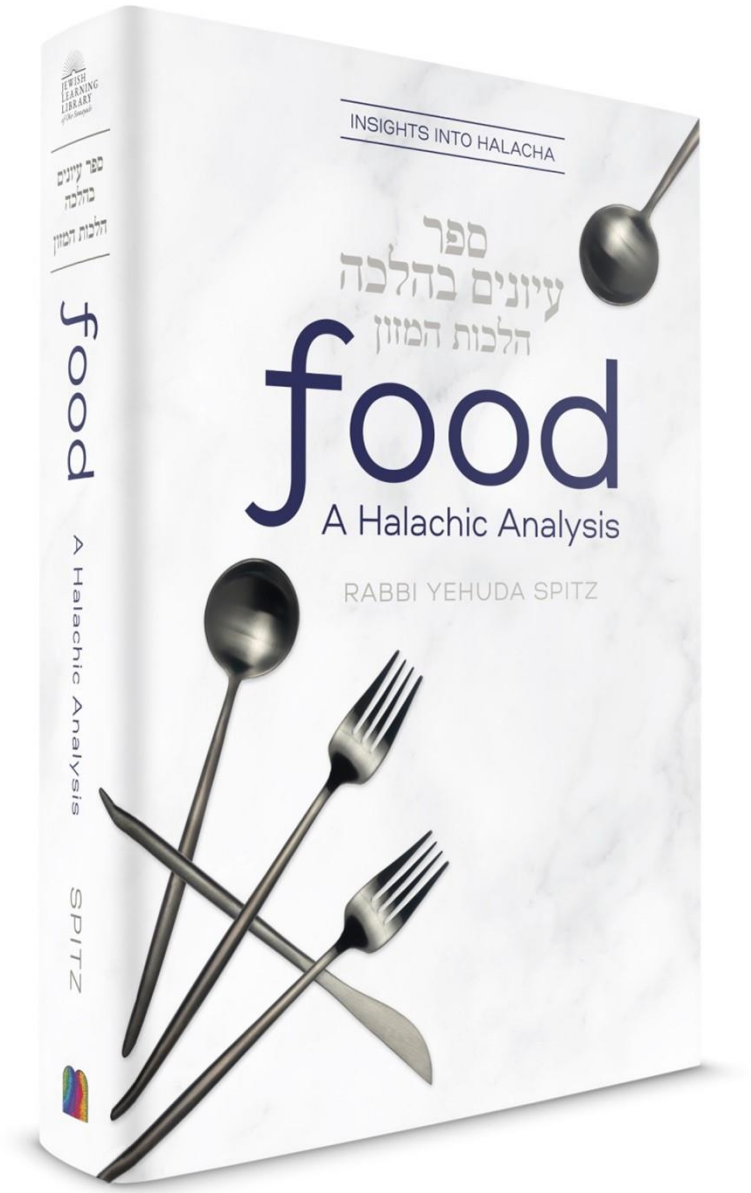

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Smelling Good…

by Rabbi Dov Linzer (Posted on March 19, 2021)

"The priest shall bring it all, and burn it upon the altar: it is a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, a sweet savor unto the Lord" (Vayikra, 1:13). We are told eight times in this week's parasha that the sacrifices are a "sweet savor" to God. This graphic anthropomorphism of God is challenging to modern ears, but we can understand the power that it held for people in the past. It communicates the idea that our sacrifices rise up to God: the smoke rises to heaven, bringing with it the smell of the burning meat, and God is pleased by our offering. The message is clear: God desires our sacrifices.

Rambam believed otherwise. He was bothered by the institution of sacrifice and claimed that God only commanded it as a concession to human weakness. In his Guide to the Perplexed, Rambam suggests that God used sacrifices as a way of weaning the people off idolatry (III:32). As the method of worship for all the pagan gods, sacrifice was the only form of worship the people of the time could conceive of; they would not have been able to worship God solely through prayer. Thus, God moved them away from idolatry and commanded that they redirect their worship – with sacrifices – to God. God may have desired sacrifices as a temporary concession, but God certainly does not desire the practice as an ideal form of religious worship.

Ramban rejects Rambam's position, pointing out that sacrifices were used to worship God even in situations free from a context of idolatry. Indeed, Kayin and Hevel offered sacrifices that were acceptable and pleasing to God, as did Noah. Furthermore, Ramban states that it is religiously offensive to suggest that the entire institution of sacrifice was not God's true will:

> *His [Rambam's] statements are preposterous. They "heal the great hurt superficially" and render "the table of the Lord disgusting" by limiting its use to placate the wicked and the foolish. But the Torah states that they are "…a sweet savor"* (commentary on Vayikra, 1:9).

This debate – and the significance of sacrifices as a "sweet savor" – becomes central in the context of Pesach: Should we still bring a korban Pesach today? Starting with the Hatam Sofer (19th century, Hungary), there have been those who have argued for continuing the practice, even in the absence of a Temple. Putting aside questions of politics and practicality, is such a thing even halakhicallypossible?

On the one hand, one could argue that we are all considered temei met, impure due to contact with a corpse. We recently read Parshat Parah, named after the special maftir from Bamidbar 19 detailing the laws of impurity of corpses and the purification ritual involving the ashes of a red heifer. This reading reminds us how the people had to purify themselves in order to bring the Pesach sacrifice. But this is not an obstacle today. Given that we are all impure, we could bring the sacrifice regardless, based on the principle of tumah hutra bi'tzibbur, communal impurity is set aside for communal sacrifices.

But what about the absence of the Temple? This also need not be a halakhicbarrier. The Gemara in Megilah (10a) states that the original kedusha, the sanctity, of Jerusalem and the Temple from the time of Joshua remains today. Rambam rules this way, explaining that the kedusha of the Temple and Jerusalem never departed, for once God's Presence rests in a place it remains there for all eternity (Laws of the Temple, 6:14-16). One might argue that this does not sufficiently address the lack of a physical Temple, but the Gemara Megilah (10a) also says "makrivim af al pi she'eyn bayit," "one can offer sacrifices even without a Temple." Rambam also rules in accordance with this.

So, even though we are ritually impure and without a Temple, it would seem that we could still offer sacrifices. (And the priestly garments could be easily manufactured – there is an institute in Israel that has already done so!) This position was argued by Hatam Sofer in a responsum, but for him the discussion was merely theoretical (YD 2:236). In the following generation, his student, Rav Tzvi Hirsch

Kalisher, tried to make the theory a reality.

Rav Kalisher wrote an entire book, Drishat Tzion, arguing for the obligation to bring the korban Pesach. In writing the book, he hoped to put the bringing of the korban Pesach at the top of the communal agenda. Rav Kalisher's initiative and his motivation for it can be better understood in a larger historical context. He began it when the Reform movement was just starting. The rejection of both the significance of the Land of Israel and the concept of shivat Tziyon, the return to the Land of Israel, was high on the agenda of the budding Reform movement, and the repudiation of the whole institution of sacrifices went hand-in-hand with this. It was thus important for Rav Kalisher to reassert the centrality of the Land of Israel, the Temple, and the sacrifices.

In hopes of getting other rabbis to sign on to his initiative, Rav Kalisher sent his book to Rav Yaakov Ettlinger, a staunch opponent of the Reform movement in Altona, Germany, for approval. Rav Ettlinger did not sign on. Instead, he offered a surprising counter-text to the passage in the Talmud allowing one to bring sacrifices without a Temple, and his response brings us back to the phrase, "a pleasing smell" (Teshuvot Binyan Tzion 1).

Rav Ettlinger quotes a Biblical verse at the end of Vayikra that prophesizes the destruction of the Temple. That verse states: "And I will lay waste to your Sanctuaries, and I will not smell the sweet savor of the sacrifices" (Vayikra, 26:31). According to Rav Ettlinger, this verse is telling us that, although the Sanctuary retains its sanctity even after its destruction, and one can technically still bring sacrifices, God declares that God no longer desires such sacrifices, that they will not be considered li'rayach nichoach, as a sweet savor. And it is a halakhic principle that a sacrifice that is not considered to be for a sweet savor is invalid. In an astounding move in the context of a halakhic, Torah she'b'al Peh argument, Rav Ettlinger states that, "although the Talmud says that one can still bring sacrifices, God states: 'I will not smell their sweet savor.'" God trumps the Talmud!

But what about the statement that sacrifices can still be brought? This, answers Rav Ettlinger, is only when God is no longer "laying waste to the Sanctuary." At any time in which the Temple is being actively rebuilt but has not yet been completed – such as the beginning of the Second Commonwealth or as will be in Messianic times – one can bring sacrifices without a Temple. But as long as the Temple is laid waste, then God is telling us that God does not want our sacrifices.

Rav Ettlinger's approach is of great importance. It speaks to how we deal – theologically and practically – not only with the destruction of the Temple, but with other historical developments that the Jewish people have had to face. He argues that God sends us messages through historical events, and in our responses, we should not try to recreate previous realities in today's world. Rather, we should respond in a manner appropriate to the context of contemporary realities.

The question of how to respond to the destruction of the Temple, and along with it the corresponding transition to a Judaism in which prayer and Torah learning are the central forms of worship, is actually debated in Hazal. There are those that see our contemporary forms of worship as mere substitutes for a more ideal, sacrificial order – "nishalma parim si'fateinu," "let our lips be a substitute for oxen" (Hoshea, 14:3) – and there are those who state that prayer and Torah are greater than sacrifice. The latter approach can be seen in a verse from Tehillim, a verse that follows the opening of the Shemoneh Esrei itself: "God, open up my lips, and let my mouth speak of Your praise. For You do not desire a sacrifice, that I should give it. A burnt offering you do not want" (Tehilim, 51:16-17).

As we approach Pesach and prepare to celebrate the seder with all its rituals, we can reflect on the meaning of the seder night and how it has transformed from the time when we had a Temple and the entire people gathered together to sacrifice and eat the Paschal lamb. While our sedarim are certainly less bloody, and while we may believe as Rav Ettlinger did that such sacrifices are no longer desired, we can still be saddened by the loss of the sweet savor that came from a truly communal, nationwide

celebration of the chag of Pesach. Without sacrifices, it is up to us to identify how our worship, on the seder night and throughout the year, can bring us together as a people and connect us to God, so that it may rise up and be received by God as a sweet savor.

Shabbat Shalom!