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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 more than 50 years ago and was our family Rebbe and close friend until his 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 archives.

I seem to return over and over again to the same themes in my weekly messages. A primary theme is man's search for a way to come as close as possible to Hashem. Adam and Chava have ready access to God in Gan Eden – until they sin by eating from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. After their exile, they and their descendants have been trying for more than five thousand years to find a way to come close to our Creator.

The Torah frequently uses a chiastic structure – parallel short sections in a pattern of A, B, C, D, C', B', A'. This pattern points to the center as the key of the section. One example is that Sefer Vayikra is the third of five books of the Torah, and the other books point to Vayikra as the key. Within Sefer Vayikra, the center is Acharei Mot, the parsha whose central section is the Kohen Gadol's ceremony on Yom Kippur, the only time when a human may approach God's presence and survive. The climax of this ceremony is when the smoke from the Kohen Gadol's incense rises and mingles with Hashem's cloud above the Ark of the Mishkan. Since leaving Gan Eden, this is the only way in which a human (other than Moshe) has been able to approach God and survive.

After the dedication of the Mishkan, God brings His presence (in a cloud by day and a pillar of fire at night) to rest above the Ark of the Mishkan. From Shemot ch. 18 to Bemidbar ch. 9, more than a third of the Torah, B'Nai Yisrael remain in their camp at the base of Har Sinai. Since the Mishkan rests by the camp (until Hashem forgives the people for the sin of Egel Zahav) or in the middle of the camp (other times), the people must learn and observe the special regulations required to survive close to Hashem's "physical" presence. Kedusha, the holiness of being tahor (ritually acceptable to come close to Hashem's presence), requires special rules for all parts of a human body, such as mouth (speech and eating), legs (permitted and forbidden travel), arms (lifting), ears (listening and reacting), eyes (looking). This kedusha also requires special rules of time (Shabbat and Yom Tov) and place (near the Mishkan).

Rabbi David Fohrman characterizes the korbanot in three basic types. **Chatat** (sin offering) involves a person bringing an offering to be shared between Hashem (part burned so the smoke goes up to to heaven) and Hashem's representative (Kohenim). **Shlamim** (peace or completeness) is a korban of a large animal with parts burned for Hashem, parts reserved for the Kohenim, and most of the meat shared among the person bringing the korban, his family, and many members of the community. **Olah,** entirely burned so the entire offering goes up to Hashem in smoke, involves the person bringing the korban giving the entire offering back to Hashem.

Do B'Nai Yisrael really learn how to live near Hashem's presence? Sefer Bemidbar opens with great anticipation. Moshe is so certain that the people will reach and enter the land soon that he invites his father-in-law to join the people and go with them. Unfortunately, as soon as the people leave the base of Har Sinai, some of the people who have joined B'Nai Yisrael start complaining, looking for a reason to be unhappy. This sour mood spreads, and complaints soon arise. The people look for a reason to complain, and they sin several times. The people of the generation of the Exodus cannot rid themselves of the evil spirit of Egypt within them, and they must die out to make room for the next generation to merit entering the land.

Bereishis and the first half of Shemot are almost entirely narrative. These sections of the Torah are more exciting to a new or casual reader. The last half of Shemot and virtually all of Vayikra, in contrast, are legal sections. My beloved Rebbe, Rabbi Leonard Cahan, z"l, enjoyed teaching the legal sections of the Torah more than the narrative sections. Although some of the legal sections of the Torah are less accessible to modern readers than the narrative sections, I have come to agree with Rabbi Cahan. Sefer Vayikra offers compelling depth and continues to fascinate me. In a traditional yeshiva, instruction in the Torah would start with Sefer Vayikra. Generations of our children started their Torah education with the korbanot that we start reading this week. A person bringing a korban is to put his hands on the animal, feel some of the blood thrown at him during the ceremony, and realize that the animal is dying in his place. A korban is a very physical and immediate experience. While we do not experience the physical aspects today, we should study the history of the korban system and try to understand how it felt to our ancestors. May we make the lessons vivid and share this understanding with our children and grandchildren.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah and 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 Yoram Ben Shoshana, Leib Dovid ben Etel, Asher Shlomo ben Ettie, Avraham ben Gavriela, Mordechai ben Chaya, Hershel Tzvi ben Chana, Uzi Yehuda ben Mirda Behla, David Moshe ben Raizel; Zvi ben Sara Chaya, Eliav Yerachmiel ben Sara Dina, Reuven ben Masha, Meir ben Sara, Oscar ben Simcha; Sharon bat Sarah, Noa Shachar bat Avigael, Kayla bat Ester, and Malka bat Simcha, who need our prayers. Please contact me for any additions or subtractions. Thank you.

Shabbat Shalom,

Hannah & Alan

Dvar Torah: Vayikra: Eliminate All the Bugs in the Pesach Program!

By Rabbi Label Lam © 5767

> *For seven days you shall eat unleavened cakes, but on the preceding day you shall clear away all leaven from your houses, for whoever eats leaven from the first day until the seventh day that soul shall be cut off from Israel.* (Shemos 12:15)

These words strike fear in the hearts of Jewish Mothers and entire families for the last 3335 *[updated]* years. It propels the entire household into a frenetic search for that stuff called Chametz whether it's liquid or solid, whether visible or even microscopic. It's a good thing! We are looking to arrest and destroy that which represents negativity in our lives so we can be free.

However, this is no mere morality play with symbolic figures playing metaphoric roles. It's as real as real can be. The Torah warns those who dare to violate the prohibition of eating Chametz on Pesach with a "punishment" of "Kores" -- being cut off. It sounds to the untutored ear too serious for such a seemingly slight misstep. Why would the Merciful One throttle His people with fearful warnings? Why are we so responsive?

A group of students this week were involved in a special pre-Pesach project that involved checking *[Romaine]* lettuce (that qualifies for Marror at the Pesach Seder) for bugs. Besides my offering a bounty of ten cents for every bug discovered, I was asked by the Rebbe to give a brief pre-activity introduction. It was a gruesome experience and in the end it cost me megabucks. In the beginning, I shared the following scenario:
Imagine, please, there is a father who owns a gas station but not just a regular gas station. It's one of those places that serves coffee and donuts too. One day the son joins his father at work. The father entrusts his son with the task of pumping gas while the father manages the coffee sales. When people enter the store for their coffee the father asks, "How do you like it? (the coffee) One lump of two?" The father dutifully makes the coffee with milk or not according to the customer's specifications and with one or two or more cubes of sugar.

The sun wants to emulate his father's style of customer service and so every customer who wants gas is asked, "One lump or two?" It usually gains a smile from the customer and afterward they drive away. By the end of the day, though, the phone is ringing off the hook with complaints and eventually police cars are crowding the otherwise sleepy gas station. What has happened?

Every car that left the station that day broke down. The boy was not just joking when he inquired about the lumps of sugar. He wrongly reasoned that if sugar sweetens coffee it can sweeten an engine. Just the opposite is true. The quickest and easiest way to destroy a car is to put sugar into the tank of a car. That's what happened. Imagine now the horror of the father and fright of the son who realizes he just brought grief and financial ruin upon his dear father.

The gas tank does not care if the boy had sweet intentions. I recently saw a cartoon. A man is staring curiously at a sign, *"Law of gravity strictly enforced!"* Neither the physical nor the spiritual laws of the universe need our enforcement. They work continuously and are reliably indiscriminant.

The Torah, therefore, in its abundant mercy forewarns us of the gravity of eating Chametz on Pesach or bugs in Romaine lettuce. It clogs the spiritual arteries of the consumer like sugar ruins the engine of the car. It desensitizes and blocks the Jewish soul from perceiving the panoramic sweep of history from the origin of this species, the Jewish People, to the end of times, a scene that's available at the Pesach Seder He thereby by default "opts out" of the picture -- an aspect of being cut off!

We are warned, not a as a cruel dictatorial threat but as a benevolent doctor warns a diabetic patient to curb their consumption of sweets. "I am HASHEM your doctor!" You know what the results, the cause and effect will likely be! I'm looking out for your good! I want you to be healthy and successful. Therefore rid yourself of Chametz like a poison and eliminate all the bugs in the Pesach program!

Good Shabbos.

https://torah.org/torah-portion/dvartorah-5775-vayikra/

What Is Most Dear to Us that We Bring to God?

by Rabbi Dov Linzer, Rosh HaYeshiva, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah © 2010, 2023

Parshat Vayikra introduces us into the world of korbanot. The institution of sacrifices is a very difficult concept for many today. How do we understand why God would want or need sacrifices? And even if they are for us, as a way to connect to God, the acts involved in bringing sacrifices – slaughtering, sprinkling the blood, burning of the fats – seem much too bloody, gory, and smelly to constitute an elevated religious experience. [This is not even to address the question of whether it is proper to take an animal's life for this purpose – a questionable critique when voiced by people who are not vegetarians. If one could understand sacrifices as a meaningful religious experience, then use for religious ends would certainly be as legitimate as use to satisfy our physical cravings.]

Rambam, like many moderns, was also bothered by the institution of sacrifices, and stated that God had only commanded them as a concession to human weakness. In his *Guide to the Perplexed* (III:32), he states that God commanded them as

a way of weaning the people away from idolatry. The people of that time would not have been able to worship God just by prayer, and could only conceive of sacrifices as a true form of worship, since that was how all of the pagan gods were worshiped. Thus, God moved them away from idolatry, and commanded that they redirect their worship – with sacrifices – to God.

Ramban rejects Rambam's position, and demonstrates that sacrifices were a form of worshiping God even absent a context of idolatrous worship. Indeed, Kayin and Hevel offered sacrifices, as did Noah, and they were all acceptable and pleasing to God. In addition, it would be religiously offensive to suggest that the entire institution of sacrifices 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 to Vayikra 1:9)

What then is their purpose? While Ramban indicates that their true meaning can only be understood based on Kabbalah, he gives a rational explanation as well. Focusing on the chatat, the sin offering, Ramban states that when a person sins he owes his life to God. The way to atone for this is to bring a surrogate – an animal. The person will identify with the animal and through the process of slaughtering the animal, sprinkling its blood, and offering up its innards, the person will see him or herself as if he or she underwent this same process. The person will take to heart how he or she has sinned against God, owes God his or her own life, and recognizes God's mercy, that God has accepted this as a substitute. This will be a catalyst for teshuva, and thus the means of achieving atonement.

Ramban's explanation is limited, however. It focuses on one sacrifice – the chatat – and on a negative emotional experience – the sense of death and destruction of life. Our parsha, in contrast, opens with the olah, the burnt offering, which is offered freely, not based on sin. And the words used suggest a more positive resonance. The sacrifice will be li'rzono, for his favor. And he shall be makriv, bring his sacrifice close. Indeed, the very word sacrifice, korban, comes from the word karev, which means to bring forward. It is the bringing forward of the animal to God, but also the bringing forward of oneself to God, the drawing close with God.

Let us also not forget that Vayikra follows Shemot, follows the construction of the Mishkan. The purpose of the Mishkan was veshakhanti bi'tokham, "and I – God – will dwell in their midst." Shemot ended with this being fulfilled, with the Glory of God filling the Mishkan. The book of Vayikra, then, is what one does in the Mishkan, how one connects to this Presence of God. The sacrifices are clearly more than just a form of atonement. They are a primary form of connecting – they are the avoda, the act of worship of God.

How, then, are we to understand how such a bloody process can be an appropriate worship of God? The first step is to realize that we are far removed from a real connection to the natural, physical world. Not too long ago, when our great-grandparents wanted a chicken dinner, they would not go to the supermarket and buy a packaged chicken that had no smell and was immaculately clean. They would take a live chicken to the back yard, slaughter it, pluck it, gut it, clean it, and then cook it. Sacrifices were no more bloody or unusual than their everyday experiences.

Still, what was their purpose? It seems clear that sacrifices – animals, but also grain (remember that the first sacrifice in the world was that of Kayin's – "the fruit of the ground") – were the primary forms of wealth in those days. Not only were they valuable property, they were also the product of one's own labor. People had a deep, personal connection to the flock that they had tended, and the crops that they had raised. By offering them to God, they were giving God the labor of their hands. They were recognizing that their wealth, and their labor, were in fact God's gift. They were also, in this process, forging a deep connection to God. For what is a greater way to connect with someone that to give that thing which is most dear, most valued by you to that other? This is the meaning of the olah, the sacrifice that was fully burnt, and that was a free-will offering. It is the giving over of oneself fully, the giving back to God that which is God's, the forging of a deep connection with God.

We, today, do not have sacrifices. But have we really successfully replaced them with prayer? Are we able to recreate this experience of giving over of that which is most important to us in the service of God? Are we able to act in way that we recognize that the fruit of our labor is really God's, to give to God in a way that we give that which is most dear, and in so

doing, forge a deep connection with God?

We need to ask ourselves what it is that is most dear to us. For many it is our time – the most precious commodity in today's world. How much of our time do we dedicate to serving God? To prayer, to learning, to doing mitzvot? And it is not just time that is important, it is our effort and our work. When we work at something – be it growing crops, or working at computers, or providing legal advice or medical service – we feel invested and connected. If we do not have sacrifices to give to God, let us find ways to give our labor to God. To invest our energies in learning Torah, in working at a soup kitchen or a homeless shelter, in providing medical services to those in need, in helping build a shul, in providing hospitality for Shabbat, in volunteering at the chevra kadisha.

Let us all work to find ways that we can offer up that labor of our hands to God, so that we may draw close, so that we can bring ourselves to God.

Shabbat Shalom!

https://library.yctorah.org/2010/03/what-is-most-dear-to-us-that-we-bring-to-god/

Honest Confession --Thoughts for Parashat Vayikra

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

"One who transgresses any positive or negative commandment of the Torah, whether intentionally or unwittingly, must confess before God when repenting and turning from sin" *(Laws of Repentance* 1:1). In this statement, Maimonides echoes the passage in this week's Parasha calling for confession of sins by those who bring sin offerings.

But why is confession so important? Why not allow the penitent to atone silently without actually verbalizing the sins?

Oral confession compels one to actually articulate the sins. Until one is able to state things specifically, it is likely that the atonement will remain vague. To say something aloud requires forethought.

But there can be (and often is) a gap between our words and what's in our hearts. We may say "I'm sorry," but not really feel sorry inside ourselves. For confession to be real, it has to be honest.

Confession isn't intended primarily to make us feel guilty for our shortcomings. Rather, it is intended to help us face up to personal responsibility. God doesn't need our confession: we do! Among the most difficult statements to make are: I erred. I sinned. I should have done better. It's my fault.

Human beings tend to excuse themselves for their shortcomings. I failed because others caused me to fail; I fell short because the system is unfair. It's someone else's fault that I didn't do well.

Not only do individuals transfer responsibility to others, but communities tend to do so also. If our group isn't doing as well as others, it must be because of discrimination, racism, or systemic injustice. It's not our fault: it's yours, it's theirs; we aren't responsible. But such an attitude is self-defeating. Instead of blaming outside sources for our problems, we first need to evaluate our own deficits and how we can improve our own situation.

The first step for real advancement — personal and communal — is to confess our own shortcomings. Until we come to grips with our attitudes and behaviors, we cannot be spiritually healthy human beings. Yes, there are others who may contribute to our personal failures; but ultimately it is our responsibility to do our best to be our best.

Maimonides points out that confession is not only an expression of regret for past sins. It also entails a commitment to do better in the future. Confession is intended to be a moral "cleanser": it is to be an honest evaluation of where we've strayed and how we can move forward in a constructive, healthy way.

Honest confession is not a simple matter. But without it, we undermine our own spiritual and ethical development.

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

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https://www.jewishideas.org/article/honest-confession-thoughts-parashat-vayikra

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The Golden Age in Spain: How golden was it?

By Rabbi Marc D. Angel *

In 2006, Oxford University Press published a book by Chris Lowney, *A Vanished World: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Medieval Spain.* The author asked me to write a blurb, and it was included on the back cover of the book. Here is what I wrote:

> *"Chris Lowney has written a meaningful book about interfaith cooperation and interfaith antagonism in medieval Spain. While it points to the many failures of those days, it also suggests important triumphs of the human spirit. Can we learn from this story and shape a better, more harmonious world? Can we afford not to learn from this story?"*

An underlying theme of Lowney's book, like so many publications dealing with Islamic Spain, is that Jews and Christians fared reasonably well under enlightened Islamic rule. While life was not always perfect, it was much better for religious minorities in Islamic Spain than in Christian Europe.

Historians refer to a "Golden Age" for Jews of Spain. The Wiki Encyclopedia entry for the Golden Age states: "The nature and length of this 'Golden Age' has been a subject of much debate, as there were at least three Golden Ages interrupted by periods of oppression of Jews and non-Jews. A few scholars give the start of the Golden Age as 711–718, the Muslim conquest of Iberia. Others date it from 912, under the rule of Abd-ar-Rahman III. The end of the age is variously given as 1031, when the Caliphate of Cordoba ended, 1066, the date of the Granada massacre, 1090, when the Almoravides invaded, or the mid-12th century, when the Almohades invaded."

Many authors laud "convivencia" — the generally peaceful co-existence in Medieval Spain that allowed Muslims, Christians and Jews to live in harmony. It is clear that Jewish culture blossomed in Islamic Spain, with the emergence of great poets, grammarians, Bible scholars, talmudists, philosophers, scientists, mathematicians and more.

The blurb I wrote for Chris Lowney's book reflects my doubts about the extent of Islamic tolerance of Jews and Christians. I wanted to be sure to mention that interfaith antagonism existed and that there were lapses in tolerance. But I also indicated that there were important triumphs of the human spirit, and that we today can learn much of value for maintaining a convivencia in our own times, a respectful and mutually beneficial harmony among people of various religions.

I was right about the failures that occurred under Islamic Spain. But was I right in pointing to that era as a positive model for religious co-existence? Was I too optimistic? Was I engaging in wishful thinking? Was I influenced by the overwhelming praise, by many authors and teachers, of the tolerance of Islamic Spain, and by the ubiquitous lauding of convivencia?

These questions have come to mind as I've been reading a newly published book, *The Myth of the Andalusian Paradise: Muslims, Christians, and Jews under Islamic Rule in Medieval Spain,* by Dario Fernandez-Morera, (ISI Books, Wilmington,

2016). The author is Associate Professor in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese at Northwestern University.

While various scholars have pointed to problems and low points during Islamic rule in Spain, Dr. Fernandez-Morera goes much further. His bold argument is that the notion of Islamic tolerance of Jews and Christians is a myth — it is simply not true. The idea of convivencia — the mutual cooperation and harmony among Muslims, Christians and Jews in Medieval Spain — belongs more to the realm of propaganda than to history.

The author quotes numerous scholars who shower praise on Islamic tolerance, on the remarkable "Golden Age" in interreligious cooperation. But he argues that these authors were engaging in "political correctness," the fashionable presentation of a tolerant and benevolent Islam. He draws on writings of people who lived in Islamic Spain, people who described what life was actually like in their times. He draws on extensive scholarly sources, on archaeological discoveries, as well as on the abundant secondary literature of more recent scholars.

Dr. Fernandez-Morera notes that the famed Umayyad dynasty were followers of the Maliki school of Islam which had little love for non-Muslims. The early Muslim conquerors of Spain and their successors systematically razed churches or turned them into Mosques. They imposed Islamic law on Christians and Jews — known as People of the Book — which made it very clear that the minorities were to be subservient to Muslims. Although granted relative freedom to conduct their communities according to their own religious traditions, Christians and Jews were "dhimmis" — an underclass of "protected people" who had to pay a special tax for the privilege of living under Islamic hegemony.

Dr. Fernandez-Morera writes:

> *"In short, Islamic Spain enjoyed no harmonious convivencia; rather, Muslims, Christians, and Jews had a precarious coexistence. Members of the three communities had to come into contact now and then. Sometimes they did business, or collaborated with one another, or dwelled near one another." (p. 117) Of course, as in all societies, kinder people interacted more kindly with those of the other groups. And of course, there are examples of periods of relative quiet. And there were individual Jews and Christians who rose to positions of power and influence. Nonetheless, the massive reality was that "dhimmis" were subject to ongoing humiliation, segregation, and violence.*
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> *The "dhimmi" regulations imposed a special tax on Christians and Jews. Various rules were intended to humiliate "dhimmis" and remind them of their subservient positions. Writing about restrictions placed on Jews in Islamic Spain, Dr. Fernandez-Morera notes that Jews "must not ride horses. They must show deference to Muslims. They must not give court evidence against a Muslim…They must not proselytize….They must not dress in such an ostentatious manner as to offend poorer Muslims…." (p. 180)*
>
> *While Jewish communities continued to exist in Islamic Spain, Christian communities declined and ultimately disappeared. "By the end of the twelfth century, as a result of flight (or 'migration') to Christian lands, expulsions to North Africa, executions and conversions, the Christian "dhimmi" population had largely disappeared from al-Andalus. When Christians entered Granada in 1492, there were no Christian "dhimmis" in the city." (p. 208).*

Professor Fernandez-Morera's book has a clear point of view. He is especially interested in highlighting the strengths and virtues of Visigothic Spain before the arrival of the Muslims in 711. He praises the Christian re-conquest of Spain. Had it not been for the "Reconquista," Islamic rule might not only have prevailed over all of Spain, but might have spread further into Europe. This would have led to the fostering of religious discrimination, the low status of women, the inhibiting of intellectual freedom; it would have precluded the emergence of the Renaissance, and would have left the Western world in the same general condition as the rest of the Muslim world.

While some of the arguments of Dr. Fernandez-Morera seem over-stretched and even polemical, the overall impact of his research and his book must make one stop to think more carefully about the "Andalusian Paradise" and convivencia. Are scholars and politicians perpetuating this myth because it serves a useful purpose, because they — and we — want to

believe it? How nice it would be to know that there was a time and place when Muslims, Christians and Jews worked side by side in mutual respect and kindness. How nice to think that it is possible for Islamic rule to be tolerant and benevolent.

President Barack Obama, in a speech at Cairo University, June 4, 2009, stated: “Islam has a proud tradition of tolerance. We see it in the history of Andalusia and Cordoba during the Inquisition [sic].” Prime Minister Tony Blair wrote (“Foreign Affairs, January/February 2007): “The standard-bearers of tolerance in the early Middle Ages were far more likely to be found in Muslim lands than in Christian ones.”

These politicians, relying on wishful and mythological thinking, seek to appease the Muslim countries and to glorify Muslim achievements. Perhaps they think they will thereby convince current day Muslim leaders to embrace the myth of Islamic tolerance, thereby creating bridges between the Muslim world and the West.

Dr. Fernandez-Morera has pointed to the unpleasant and politically incorrect reality that Muslim rule was “tolerant” to Christians and Jews, but only if the "dhimmis" were in a clearly defined inferior position, subservient to Muslims. This is hardly a framework for mutual respect and equal rights.

When I wrote my blurb for Chris Lowney’s book, I wondered: “Can we learn from this story and shape a better, more harmonious world? Can we afford not to learn from this story?” When I wrote those words, I obviously harbored the belief — the hope — that there was a period of convivencia that can be a model for us today. I thought that it would be foolish for us to ignore the positive aspects of life in Medieval Spain.

After reading Dario Fernandez-Morera’s book, I could write these same words, but with a very different meaning. Rephrased, my blurb for today would read: Can we learn from the story of religious persecution and humiliation that characterized Islamic Spain? Can we learn to shape a better, more harmonious world by insisting on genuine respect, equality, decency, and theological humility among all religions? Can we afford not to learn these lessons?

* Founder and Director, Institute for Jewish Ideas and Ideals.

https://www.jewishideas.org/article/golden-age-spain-how-golden-was-it

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Korbanos: Sacrifices that Bring Us Closer

by Rabbi Mordechai Rhine *

With the Mishkan built and operational, the topic of Korbanos is the theme of many of the upcoming Parshiyos. While the word “Korban” is often translated as “sacrifice” the actual root word of Korban is related to the word Likareiv -- to come close. So, while bringing an animal may indeed be a costly strain or sacrifice on the wallet, it is really the result of that sacrifice that we are focused on. Through a Korban a person was able to come closer to Hashem.

We can understand Korbanos through the basic awareness that the human being is made up of two dimensions — the physical and the spiritual. Being that Hashem is spiritual, it is when we downgrade our physical focus that we best connect to Hashem. For example, when we take money)an asset to buy physical things in this world,(and choose to use it for a higher mitzva purpose or give it to tzedakah, we are recognizing that there is something more worthwhile in the mitzva we have done. When we recognize the physical as a vehicle to get us to a spiritual high, we become more spiritual and closer to Hashem.

The Malbim)Bireishis 8(explains that bringing a Korban)which is purely physical, an animal(is an act which is infused with the person’s desire to lower his focus on physicality and soar in spirituality. If a person were to downgrade or ignore his physical dimension in his own person, he could not function properly. Instead, a person can express himself by bringing a korban, and then meditate on the Korban. The person views giving up of the physical as an expression of physical self-sacrifice. As we strive to diminish our focus on the physical, we bond with Hashem.

This easily explains the Korbanos which were brought by those who wanted to come close to Hashem and achieve great

spiritual heights. However, many Korbanos were sin offerings brought for atonement. These too are called Korbanos because the purpose of atonement from sin is not just to avoid punishment. The purpose of the sin offering, like an apology, is to try to restore trust and a relationship to those who have become distant. Indeed, the Torah view of reconciliation is not merely to avoid punishment, but “Teshuva” which means to return. As bad as a fallout or distancing may be, it is our hope that the Korban will not only atone, but actually bring the person closer to Hashem.

In a broader sense, a person can make a physical sacrifice without bringing a conventional Korban. Any time that we choose to downgrade our physical, and instead live up to our personal values, we soar in spirituality. Examples of this include a person who chooses to eat healthy and exhibits self-control to do so or refrains from making a harsh comment even as he so desires to. Living to a higher calling is a sacrifice; most importantly it brings us closer to our spiritual side and to Hashem.

So, when we think of a Korban or any mitzva that we extend ourselves for, we can think “sacrifice.” But we can just as easily think of the blessing and closeness which, through the sacrifice, we are striving to achieve. So often in life we extend ourselves for that which we think is valuable. We buy things, invest in things, even take money out of our hard earned paycheck towards retirement funds to be enjoyed at a later date. Thinking of a Korban and any mitzva as a catalyst for closeness — now and in the future — enables us to savor our spiritual dimension and the closeness with Hashem that it helps us achieve.

With best wishes for a wonderful Shabbos!

* Rabbi Mordechai Rhine is a certified mediator and coach with Rabbinic experience of more than 20 years. Based in Maryland, he provides services internationally via Zoom. He is the Director of TEACH613: Building Torah Communities, One family at a Time, and the founder of CARE Mediation, focused on Marriage/ Shalom Bayis and personal coaching. To reach Rabbi Rhine, his websites are www.care-mediation.com and www.teach613.org; his email is RMRhine@gmail.com. **For information or to join any Torah613 classes, contact Rabbi Rhine.**

Parshas Vayikra – Believing in Those Who Failed

by Rabbi Yehoshua Singer* © 2022

When describing the different types of meal offerings, the Torah instructs us to include salt in our offerings. This is followed by a special warning to be sure to always include salt, AAnd all of your meal offerings should be salted with salt and do not cease salt of the covenant of your Lord from on your meal offering on all of your offerings you should bring salt.@ (Vayikra 2:13) Why is it so important to include salt in the offerings, and what is the meaning of the phrase Asalt of the covenant@?

The Da=as Zekainim mi=Ba=alei Tosfos explains that the salt is called Asalt of the covenant,@ because it is intended to remind us of a covenant Hashem made with us regarding the sacrifices. This is a covenant that the sacrifices will bring us forgiveness for sins we have committed. Salt was chosen to represent this covenant because it is an everlasting preservative. Just as salt is everlasting, so too G-d=s covenant with us, that He will accept our sacrifices and forgive our sins, is an everlasting covenant.

The Da=as Zekainim explains that this forgiveness is critical to G-d=s purpose in the world. G-d wishes to provide us with merit and reward for all we do right in our lives. However, once a person sins, they can lose faith in themselves and lose interest in doing mitzvos. As the Gemara in Kiddushin says, AOnce a person has sinned and repeated it, it becomes to him as if it=s permissible.@ (Kiddushin 20a) He explains this to mean that although one who has sinned knows that the sin is wrong, he no longer cares and feels that since he has already sinned, it=s okay for him to do so again. We mistakenly say to ourselves, AI messed up already, so what=s the point?@ He explains this with a parable. A person who has dirty clothing won=t be careful to avoid the dirt. Whereas, a person with nice, clean clothes will be cautious to avoid any dirt at all.

This, says the Da=as Zekeinim, is what Shlomo Hamelech meant when he said, AAt all times your clothing should be white.@ (Koheles 9:8) We must always view ourselves as wearing nice, clean, white spiritual clothes. In this way, we will understand that our mitzvos do matter and be careful not to sin.

The words of the Da=as Zekeinim speak for themselves. Hashem believes in us, and He wants us to believe in ourselves, too. However, I believe there is a much more profound message here.

The person who sinned and now needs forgiveness, sees himself as a failure. He has tried to do what=s right but failed and sinned. He has failed in a way that he now understands that his spiritual clothes are no longer clean. He seemingly correctly says to himself, AWhat difference does another small stain make?@ It is for this person that Hashem provides the sacrifices as a means for forgiveness, because Hashem wants to reward this person and doesn=t want them to give up. Even before they have been forgiven, even before the covenant of sacrifices existed in the world, Hashem already wants to bring merit and reward to this individual. Even while he sees himself as a failure, Hashem is anxiously waiting for his next mitzvah. It is for this reason that Hashem created the covenant of the forgiveness of sacrifices.

However, even this covenant wasn=t good enough for Hashem. Hashem wanted to ensure that we would be able to recognize and appreciate that we are still forgiven. He therefore instructs us B and firmly warns us B to include salt in our sacrifices so we can be reminded that sacrifices have an everlasting component and always remember His everlasting covenant to forgive us. All so we can believe in ourselves, and see in ourselves, what Hashem sees even when we think we are Afailures.@

It is so easy to fall into the trap of allowing our past to shackle our future. Hashem is teaching us with the sacrifices that our past doesn=t even shackle the past. Even after we have erred and failed, Hashem still believes in us, cherishes us and yearns for the next mitzvah we will do and the opportunity to reward us.

* Rabbi, Am HaTorah Congregation, Bethesda, MD. Rabbi Singer's new Dvar Torah did not arrive before my deadline. Since I did not receive his Dvar Torah in time, I am running his message from 2022.

Vayikra: Priests and Kings: Religion and State

by Rabbi Herzl Hefter

Surprisingly, an analysis of the sin offerings in *Parashat Vayikra* will teach us some very important principles regarding the ideal relationship between religion and state. In this week's *parasha*, we read of the sin offerings (*Hatat*) which one must bring to atone for various crimes. There are two personages who stand out as distinct from the general population and must bring "custom offerings" so to speak. Whereas the simple citizen's offering is a female goat or lamb (4:28, 32), the anointed *Kohen* must bring a male bullock (4:3), and the ruler must bring a male goat (4:23).

When a leader (the *Kohen* or the ruler) transgresses the Law, the ramifications are national and require special atonement. The status of the two leaders seems to be analogous. Upon closer examination of the sources from *chazal*, however, significant differences emerge. The Mishnah in *Horayot* 3:1 states that an anointed *Kohen* who no longer occupies his official position would still bring the custom offering of the anointed *Kohen*. In contradistinction, the past ruler reverts back to his previous status and brings the offering of a simple citizen.
The Talmud Yerushalmi explains this as follows:

> *"'He shall be holy to thee'* (Vayikra 21:8) *Just as I* [namely God], *so to speak, remain holy, so does Aharon remain holy."*

The status of the anointed *Kohen* is one of intrinsic and immutable holiness while the status of the ruler (the king) is merely instrumental; as long as the monarch possesses authority, he enjoys a special status. If the monarch should lose

his authority for one reason or another, his special status is revoked. The Talmud Yerushalmi (*Horayot* 3:2) states this very clearly. *"R. Huna said, all those six months that David had fled before Abshalom a she-goat would have atoned for him as a simple citizen."* Simply put, the king is only the king when he is king, but once a *Kohen Gadol*, always a *Kohen Gadol*.

A hint to the meaning behind this distinction can be found in a rejected possibility in the *Torat Kohanim Parshat Emor*. *"'And **he** [the Kohen Gadol] shall marry a virgin.' **He** - and not the king."* This *midrash* finds it necessary to exclude the king from the law requiring the *Kohen Gadol* to marry a virgin. Just in case one might think that the king has a holy status like the *Kohen Gadol*, we are reminded that only the *Kohen Gadol* must marry a virgin; only he has *kedushah* – not the king.

Professor Ya'akov Blidstein in his book, *Political Concepts in Maimonidean Halakha* points out that in the ancient world the king was a sacral personality – in other words, a god. Our sages go out of their way in the Mishnah, the Talmud and the midrash halacha to reject this idea. Sanctity belongs to the *Kohen*, not to the king.

This insight has important ramifications for us today. Though no one in their right mind would attribute divinity to a head of state, we do find, particularly in religious Zionist circles, those who have attributed sanctity to the State itself. (I have written elsewhere concerning the ramifications of this conception from which we are suffering today. https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-religious-zionist-community-has-some-soul-searching-to-do/)

By extension, the relationship between the *Kohen* and the king can be applied to the relationship between religion and state. Rabbenu Nissim of Gerona (1320-1380) (*Drashot ha Ran* number 11) says that the function of Torah laws is ritualistic and, on the societal level, theoretical. There are simply too many loopholes in the halacha (for example if we would follow the rigorous laws of evidence, then all criminal law would be eliminated). The Torah created the institution of monarchy – a secular authority -- because the halacha is not a practical way to run a civil society.

A close look at the opening chapters of the Book of *Vayikra*, which seems to deal with laws that are so not relevant today, yields important insight for the present day State of Israel. The challenge that all the citizens of our state face is to build a society inspired by our Torah heritage and founded upon principles of fairness and equality which are indispensable for the running of a modern state in the Twenty First Century.

* Founder and dean of the Har'el Beit Midrash in Jerusalem. Rabbi Hefter is a graduate of Yeshiva University and was ordained at Yeshivat Har Etzion. For more of his writings, see www.har-el.org. To support the Beit Midrash, as we do, send donations to America Friends of Beit Midrash Har'el, 66 Cherry Lane, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

The Future of Sacrifices

By Rabbi Haim Ovadia *

The rebuilding of the Temple, and the reestablishment of the sacrifices in it, are central themes in our prayers and rituals, including the Haggadah, but have you ever tried to visualize yourself making the pilgrimage to that Third Temple, with the animal for sacrifice in tow? Imagine yourself walking uphill, pulling a goat, lamb, or ox, behind you. You are surrounded by thousands of revelers, each with his own animal. You arrive at the gates of the Temple, where you wait in line for your turn. Hundreds of Cohanim hurry across the Temple grounds to perform the ritual slaughtering, while choirs of Levites chant and sing. When your turn comes the Cohen skillfully slits the animal's throat, as he has done thousands of times before. He deftly collects the blood in a vessel and hands it to a human chain which ends at the altar, on which the blood will be sprinkled.

How will you feel? Will you be elated and inspired by the frenzied action, the smell of blood, the burning animals, the clamor of the multitude, and the music in the background, or will you feel disconcerted and confused? Do you expect all other aspects of your life to remain the same when the Temple is built? If so, would you be able to walk away from the

Temple Mount, barefoot and with blood soiled garments, check into your hotel, change, and be back the following day at your office? You don't need to be a vegetarian to feel uncomfortable with the description of the sacrifices at the temple, just try to spend a couple of hours at a butcher's shop, preferably in the summer. Most of us have never seen an animal being slaughtered, except maybe for chicken for Kapparot)a practice forbidden by the Shulhan Arukh(. The process happens away from us and we receive the clean, sterilized meat, packed with absorbent pads to save us the discomfort of the sight of blood. Honestly, in the twenty-first century, do people still believe that God demands animal sacrifices of us?

The scholar who best represents this dilemma is Maimonides. In his *Guide of the Perplexed* he argues that the system of the sacrifices was a concession, made by God to accommodate the Israelites, who knew no other way to worship their gods. According to that explanation, in a Temple built in modern times, there will]not[be room for sacrifices, since our society has changed and matured. On the other hand, in his Halakhic work, Mishneh Torah, there are over a dozen sections dedicated to detailed legislation of the Temple, its vessels, and the sacrifices. Which Maimonides do you follow? The rationalist who understands that sacrifices belong in the past, or the legalist who must present the full spectrum of Jewish Law? While many Jews choose to side with one of the options Maimonides offers, others prefer to live with the cognitive dissonance, feeling that the idea of sacrifices does not excite or inspire them, but adhering to the law as presented by Maimonides.

I believe that we pray for the restoration of the Temple and the sacrifices because we long for the past and this is what we have lost, and that the future may hold for us a different way of life. One might argue that one of Maimonides' Principles of Faith is the Torah is eternal and will never change, so it would be impossible to entertain an idea of a Temple in any other way than is described in the Torah. The answer to that is the Torah will never be changed by humans, but if God, through the word of the prophets, or maybe by speaking directly to all of us, informs us that a new system is in place, it is hard to imagine that we will reject His orders and say that we adhere to the Principles of Maimonides)though I can think of some colleagues who will do just that.(

In the meantime, if we look for guidance in the Tanakh itself, we will see that the concept of sacrifices was approached with great caution, and even criticism, from the very beginning. There are the scathing prophecies and sermons of Samuel, King David, Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, Amos, and Jeremiah,]1[and there are the failed attempts of Aaron's sons and of Balaam to appease God through sacrifices. In a subtler way, the Torah informs us of the true purpose of the sacrifices in this week's Parasha, simultaneously with the introduction of the concept of sacrifices. The Torah does so by intertwining laws of impurity and protecting the Temple's possessions with laws of business ethics, honesty, and civic responsibility.

The section starts with the responsibility of citizens to report crimes to the judicial branch, and continues to discuss impurity, a powerful word which conjures images of banishment and contamination. The equation of the two is not coincidental. It is meant to plant in our mind the importance of fulfilling our civic duty. The next transgression is embezzlement of the Temple, another looming taboo, from which we go to a general statement on the transgression of any mitzvah. Following that, the Torah speaks of one who betrays God trust. And who is that person who defies God's authority, who is embezzling, as it were, God's possessions? It is the one who unlawfully took money or goods from another person.

The Torah makes it clear that there is no distinction between embezzling the Temple or your fellow man, and that being unethical and dishonest is tantamount to impurity. All these can be cured by a thorough process which includes repenting, paying damages and fines, bringing a sacrifice, and confessing publicly, but it is obvious that if only the ritual is conducted, while reparations were not made, and one did not change his ways, that the sacrifice is meaningless.

We should therefore focus on teaching these values to the next generation and on practicing them ourselves. This might lead to redemption and to the construction of the future Temple, which according to Micah)4:1-2(will be a center not for animal sacrifices, but for the dissemination of the Torah and its values:

Micah 4:1-2:

)1(In the days to come,
The Mount of the LORD's House shall stand
Firm above the mountains;
And it shall tower above the hills.
The peoples shall gaze on it with joy,

)2(And the many nations shall go and shall say:
"Come,
Let us go up to the Mount of the LORD,
To the House of the God of Jacob;
That He may instruct us in His ways,
And that we may walk in His paths."
For instruction shall come forth from Zion,
The word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

ENDNOTE:

]1[1 Sam. 15:22-23; Psalms 51; Is. 1:10-18; Micah 6:6-9; Hos. 4:1-5:7; Amos 5:21-26; Jer. 7:1-19;

Leviticus 5:1-26:

>)1(If a person incurs guilt — When one has heard a public imprecation ....)2(Or when a person touches any impure thing ...)3(Or when one touches human impurity...)4(Or when a person utters an oath to bad or good purpose...)15(When a person commits a trespass, being unwittingly remiss about any of H's sacred things...)17(And a person who, without knowing it, sins in regard to any of H's commandments about things not to be done...)21(When a person sins and commits a trespass against H' — by dealing deceitfully with another in the matter of a deposit or a pledge, or through robbery, or by defrauding another,)22(or by finding something lost and lying about it; if one swears falsely regarding any one of the various things that someone may do and sin thereby...)26(The priest shall make expiation before H' on behalf of that person, who shall be forgiven for whatever was done to draw blame thereby.

Shabbat Shalom.

* Torah VeAhava. Rabbi, Beth Sholom Sephardic Minyan)Potomac, MD(and faculty member, AJRCA non-denominational rabbinical school(. **New: Many of Rabbi Ovadia's Devrei Torah are now available on Sefaria: https://www.sefaria.org/profile/haim-ovadia?tab=sheets** . The Sefaria articles include Hebrew text, which I must delete because of issues changing software formats.

Let Go and Let God!

By Rabbi Dr. Eli Yoggev *

Parsha Vayikra opens up with Hashem calling out to Moshe: "Vayikra el Moshe")Vayikra 1:1(. In the word vayikra there is a small letter aleph. This is a unique occurrence because we only find small letters in eight other places in the Torah. So, when this happens, our rabbis attempt to understand the deeper meaning.

One explanation I found very impactful, and helpful in our modern world is the idea that God is calling out and helping us even if we don't always see it. Sometimes Hashem calls out and helps in a loud way and sometimes in a quiet, more gentle manner. The aleph in vayikra symbolizes Hashem, the number one Being in the universe. It's smallness alludes to Hashem being there for us in a quiet, hidden manner.

This “quiet-aleph” idea is highlighted in a favorite story of mine from the Maggid of Dubno. He shares about a poor person who was walking along the way, famished and tired, with all of their possessions on their shoulder. They were about to give up hope when suddenly, in the distance, they saw a small speck getting larger and larger as it drew near. It was a wagon being driven by a nobleman.

As the wagon approached, the nobleman saw the poor man struggling. He asked, “Why don’t you hop on my wagon? Relieve your burden, get some rest, and I will help you get to where you need to go.” The poor person was ecstatic. He could now take a much needed break. He hopped on the wagon, excitedly sat down, and began to relax as the wagon took off.

A little bit into the ride, the nobleman looked back and saw something peculiar. The poor person was still holding all his possessions on his shoulder! The nobleman asked, “Why don’t you put that down? Make it easy on yourself. Take a rest!” The poor man immediately responded, “Oh, no! You’ve already done so much for me. I wouldn’t want to put my possessions onto your wagon and cause any more burden to the cattle leading the wagon.” The nobleman was startled by this silly response, but he continued on, nevertheless, and the poor person arrived where they needed to go.

This story shares the idea that sometimes we think we need to carry all of the burden on our own when really Hashem is calling out to us, offering help. At times this help may be in a hidden manner, with a “small aleph,” but Hashem is there. In these moments we must let go and let God help us with our struggles and our burdens.

This valuable lesson appears at the beginning of our parsha because at this juncture Am Yisrael begins their active involvement in the Mishkan. They will need a lot of divine help in this service and they could mistakenly think they are doing it all alone. Therefore, Hashem opens our parsha with vayikra, with a small aleph, to remind Moshe and Am Yisrael in their time, and us in our time, that Hashem is with us. We just need to let go and make space for Hashem’s help and allow Hashem, and Hashem’s messengers in our lives, to help carry the burden.

Shabbat shalom!

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https://library.yctorah.org/2023/03/let-go-and-let-god/

Shavuon Vayikra

By Rabbi Moshe Rube *

Rabbi Rube is on vacation and will resume his weekly Devrei Torah when he returns.

* Senior Rabbi of Auckland Hebrew Congregation, Remuera)Auckland(, New Zealand.

Rav Kook Torah
Vayikra: Sacrifices vs. Fasting

When the fourth-century scholar Rav Sheshet fasted, he would add the following request to his Amidah)Standing(prayer:

> *“Master of the Universe! You know that when the Temple stood, a person who sinned would bring a sacrifice. Although only the fats and blood would be offered on the altar, the person would be granted atonement.*

Now I have fasted, and my fat and my blood have diminished. May it be Your Will that the decrease in my fat and my blood should be considered as if I offered them on the altar, and my offering was accepted.")Berachot 17a(

Rav Sheshet's prayer is inspiring, but it makes one wonder: Why should one go to the trouble of bringing a sacrifice if the same atonement may be achieved through fasting?

His prayer draws our attention to a second issue. Why were only the fats and blood of sin sacrifices)chatat and asham(offered on the altar?

Two Types of Sin

Regarding the offering of fats and blood, Rav Kook explained that there are two major inducements to sin. Some sins are the result of overindulgence in sensual pleasures and excessive luxuries. These wrongdoings are appropriately atoned by offering the fats.

The second category of transgressions is motivated by actual need: hunger and poverty. Great pressures can tempt one to lie, steal, even murder. The corresponding atonement for these sins is through the blood of the offering.

The Disadvantage of Fasting

By fasting, we can attain atonement in a way similar to the sacrifice of fats and blood in the Temple service. However, there is an important distinction between fasts and sacrifices. Offering a sacrifice in the holy Temple instilled the powerful message that it should really be the offender's blood spilled and body burned, were it not for God's kindness in accepting a substitute and a ransom. This visceral experience was a humbling encounter, subduing one's negative traits and desires.

Fasting, on the other hand, weakens all forces of the body. Just as chemotherapy treatment poisons other parts of the body as it fights the cancer, so too, fasting saps both our positive and negative energies. Fasting has the unwanted side effect of weakening our strength and energy to help others, perform mitzvot, and study Torah.

Therefore, Rav Sheshet added a special prayer when he fasted. He prayed that his fasting would achieve the same atonement as an offering in the Temple, without the undesirable effect of sapping positive energies.

)Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 177-178. Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. I, p. 82.(

https://www.ravkooktorah.org/VAYIKRA59.htm

The Call: Vayikra (5778)

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

It was never my ambition or aspiration to be a rabbi. I went to university to study economics. I then switched to philosophy. I also had a fascination with the great British courtroom lawyers, legendary figures like Marshall Hall, Rufus Isaacs and F. E. Smith. To be sure, relatively late, I had studied for the rabbinate, but that was to become literate in my own Jewish heritage, not to pursue a career.

What changed me, professionally and existentially, was my second major yechidut – face-to-face conversation – with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, in January 1978. To my surprise, he vetoed all my career options: economist, lawyer, academic, even becoming a rabbi in the United States. My task, he said, was to train rabbis. There were too few people in Britain going into the rabbinate and it was my mission to change that.

What is more, he said, I had to become a congregational rabbi, not as an end in itself but so that my students could come and see how I gave sermons)I can still hear in my mind's ear how he said that word with a marked Russian accent: sirmons(. He was also highly specific as to where I was to work: in Jews' College)today, the London School of Jewish Studies(, the oldest extant rabbinical seminary in the English-speaking world.

So I did. I became a teacher at the College, and later its Principal. Eventually I became – again after consulting with the Rebbe – Chief Rabbi. For all this I have to thank not only the Rebbe, but also my wife Elaine. She did not sign up for this when we married. It was not even on our horizon. But without her constant support I could not have done any of it.

I tell this story for a reason: to illustrate the difference between a gift and a vocation, between what we are good at and what we are called on to do. These are two very different things. I have known great judges who were also brilliant pianists. Wittgenstein trained as an aeronautical engineer but eventually dedicated his life to philosophy. Ronald Heifetz qualified as a doctor and a musician but instead became the founder of the School of Public Leadership at the John F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. We can be good at many things, but what gives a life direction and meaning is a sense of mission, of something we are called on to do.

That is the significance of the opening word of today's parsha, that gives its name to the entire book: Vayikra, "He called." Look carefully at the verse and you will see that its construction is odd. Literally translated it reads: *"He called to Moses, and God spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying …"* The first phrase seems to be redundant. If we are told that God spoke to Moses, why say in addition, "He called"?

The answer is that God's call to Moses was something prior to and different from what God went on to say. The latter were the details. The former was the summons, the mission – not unlike God's first call to Moses at the burning bush where He invited him to undertake the task that would define his life: leading the people out of exile and slavery to freedom in the Promised Land.

Why this second call? Probably because the book of Vayikra has, on the face of it, nothing to do with Moses. The original name given to it by the Sages was Torat Cohanim, "the Law of the Priests"]1[– and Moses was not a priest. That role belonged to his brother Aaron. So it was as if God were saying to Moses: this too is part of your vocation. You are not a priest but you are the vehicle through which I reveal all My laws, including those of the priests.

We tend to take the concept of a vocation – the word itself comes from the Latin for a "call" – for granted as if every culture has such an idea. However, it is not so. The great German sociologist Max Weber)1864-1920(pointed out that the idea of vocation, so central to the social ethic of Western culture, is essentially "a religious conception, that of a task set by God."]2[

It was born in the Hebrew Bible. Elsewhere there was little communication between the gods and human beings. The idea that God might invite human beings to become His partners and emissaries was revolutionary. Yet that is what Judaism is about.

Jewish history began with God's call to Abraham, to leave his land and family. God called to Moses and the prophets. There is a particularly vivid account in Isaiah's mystical vision in which he saw God enthroned and surrounded by singing angels:

> *Then I heard the Voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"* Isaiah 6:8

The most touching account is the story of the young Samuel, dedicated by his mother Hannah to serve God in the sanctuary at Shiloh where he acted as an assistant to Eli the priest. In bed at night he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed it was Eli. He ran to see what he wanted but Eli told him he had not called. This happened a second time and then a third, and by then Eli realised that it was God calling the child. He told Samuel that the next time the Voice called his name, he should reply, *'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'* It did not occur to the child that it might be God summoning him to a mission, but it was. Thus began his career as a prophet, judge and anointer of Israel's first two kings, Saul and David)1 Samuel 3(.

These were all prophetic calls, and prophecy ended during the Second Temple period. Nonetheless the idea of vocation remains for all those who believe in Divine Providence. Each of us is different, therefore we each have unique talents and skills to bring to the world. The fact that I am here, in this place, at this time, with these abilities, is not accidental. There is a task to perform, and God is calling us to it.

The man who did more than anyone to bring this idea back in recent times was Viktor Frankl, the psychotherapist who survived Auschwitz. There in the camp he dedicated himself to giving people the will to live. He did so by getting them to see that their lives were not finished, that they still had a task to perform, and that therefore they had a reason to survive until the war was over.

Frankl insisted that the call came from outside the self. He used to say that the right question was not "What do I want from life?" but "What does life want from me?" He quotes the testimony of one of his students who earlier in life had been hospitalised because of mental illness. He wrote a letter to Frankl containing these words:

> *But in the darkness, I had acquired a sense of my own unique mission in the world. I knew then, as I know now, that I must have been preserved for some reason, however small; it is something that only I can do, and it is vitally important that I do it… In the solitary darkness of the "pit" where men had abandoned me, He was there. When I did not know His name, He was there; God was there.]3[*

Reading Psalms in the prison to which the KGB had sent him, Natan Sharansky had a similar experience.]4[

Frankl believed that "Every human person constitutes something unique; each situation in life occurs only once. The concrete task of any person is relative to this uniqueness and singularity."]5[The essence of the task, he argued, is that it is self-transcending. It comes from outside the self and challenges us to live beyond mere self-interest. To discover such a task is to find that life – my life – has meaning and purpose.

How do you discover your vocation? The late Michael Novak argued]6[that a calling has four characteristics. First, it is unique to you. Second, you have the talent for it. Third, it is something which, when you do it, gives you a sense of enjoyment and renewed energy. Fourth, do not expect it to reveal itself immediately. You may have to follow many paths that turn out to be false before you find the true one.

Novak quotes Logan Pearsall Smith who said, *"The test of a vocation is the love of the drudgery it involves."* All real achievement requires backbreaking preparation. The most common estimate is 10,000 hours of deep practice. Are you willing to pay this price? It is no accident that Vayikra begins with a call – because it is a book about sacrifices, and vocation involves sacrifice. We are willing to make sacrifices when we sense that a specific role or task is what we are called on to do.

This is a life-changing idea. For each of us God has a task: work to perform, a kindness to show, a gift to give, love to share, loneliness to ease, pain to heal, or broken lives to help mend. Discerning that task, hearing God's call, is what gives a life meaning and purpose. Where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.

FOOTNOTES:

]1[Hence the Latin name Leviticus, meaning, "pertaining to the Levites," i.e. the priestly tribe.

]2[Quoted in Michael Novak, Business as a Calling: work and the examined life, Free Press, 1996, 17.

]3[Viktor Frankl, The Unconscious God, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1975, 11.

]4[Natan Sharansky, Fear No Evil, New York : Vintage Books, 1989

]5[Viktor Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul, Souvenir Press, 1969, 57.

]6[Michael Novak, Business as a Calling, Free Press, 1996, 17-40.

Life Changing Idea #23

For each of us God has a task. Discerning that task, hearing God's call, is what gives a life meaning and purpose.

https://www.rabbisacks.org/covenant-conversation/vayikra/call/ 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.

Why Is Hard Good?

By Aharon Loschak * © Chabad 2023

In "Inner Game," the classic book about the internal state of mind required for peak athletes, author Timothy Gallwey describes:

> *In tennis, who is it that provides a person with the obstacles he needs in order to experience his highest limits? His opponent, of course! Then is your opponent a friend or an enemy? He is a friend to the extent that he does his best to make things difficult for you. Only by playing the role of your enemy does he become your true friend. Only by competing with you does he in fact cooperate!*
>
> *No one wants to stand around on the court waiting for the big wave. In this use of competition, it is the duty of your opponent to create the greatest possible difficulties for you, just as it is yours to try to create obstacles for him. Only by doing this do you give each other the opportunity to find out to what heights each can rise.*

The point is a universal one: difficult doesn't mean bad, opposition isn't the enemy, and challenge is more often than not the best that could happen to you.

Full of Laws

This week we begin the third book of the Torah, Vayikra, Leviticus. Unlike the epic stories of Genesis and Exodus, this book is distinct in that it's full of sacrificial law without many stories.

When discussing the story of Creation at the beginning of Genesis, the Midrash says something interesting about Leviticus:

> *Rabbi Simon said: The word "light" is stated here five times, corresponding to the five books of the Torah. The words, "And G d said 'let there be light' correspond to the book of Genesis in which the Holy One, blessed be He, busied Himself and created the world. . . The words "And G d saw the light that it was good" corresponds to the book of Leviticus, which is full of laws*.1

Two questions come to mind when reading this Midrash. Number one, "Full of laws" is not necessarily unique to Leviticus; the book of Deuteronomy has plenty of laws as well. And secondly, why is the only time light is described as "it was good" associated with the book of Leviticus? What's particularly good about the fact that it's full of laws? Is it that there's simply more to learn, more laws to follow? Why does that make it "good" per se, more than any of the other books that also contain stories, lessons, values?

Hard Is Good

When reading the words, “full of laws,” the immediate understanding is that it is a description of quantity, namely that this book has many laws. But that doesn’t capture the uniqueness of Leviticus, nor the reason it’s so particularly “good.” Rather, it is a description of quality, meaning that the laws enumerated within are uniquely complex and challenging to comprehend.

So yes, Deuteronomy has many laws, but most of them are not nearly as complex as those in Leviticus; the sacrificial laws, mitzvot concerning the priests and Levites, and details of the Temple are all somewhat obscure and definitely challenging to understand.

This, then, is why specifically the book of Leviticus is referred to as “good” — because hard work is good. Sure, it’s great to plow through the easy laws compared to the grind required to work through some of the more obscure stuff, but as everyone knows, the benefit is commensurate with the amount of effort one puts in. After successfully navigating a complicated piece about the olah sacrifice, the feeling is both rewarding and satisfying.

Don’t Shy Away From a Challenge

Herein lies a valuable life lesson that’s as simple as it is critical: don’t shy away from something just because it’s difficult. It’s true about which Torah subject you choose to study, and it’s true about pretty much everything else. In fact, it’s quite possible that it’s precisely the thing you need — and that’s why it’s so hard for you: so you can sweat at it and earn it.

Sometimes, you get dumped with a certain responsibility that just seems “too much.” Your boss leaves you with a project that he really should have done himself. Your children are giving you a hard time and you feel like you simply can’t handle the load. Your friend is in a rut and asks you for something you can’t do. Your parents want you to do something that feels beyond your capabilities.

In all of these moments, it’s seductive to think, “It’s not for me; it’s too hard,” or to get frustrated and cry, “It’s not fair! Why me?”

It’s a tough question, and there aren’t always easy answers. But one thing is for sure: If you’re being tasked with it, that means you can do it, and the harder you work at it, the greater the satisfaction when you get to the other side.

The complex book we will be learning for the next couple months challenges us to think differently. It’s difficult indeed, but difficult doesn’t mean bad. In fact, it’s the best thing that can happen.2

FOOTNOTE:

1. *Midrash, Bereishit* Rabah 3:5.

2. This essay is based on *Likutei Sichot,* vol. 4, p. 1306; *Torat Menachem* 5749, vol. 3, p. 181.

* Writer, editor, and rabbi; also editor of JLI's popular Torah Studies program**.**

https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/5416734/jewish/Why-Is-Hard-Good.htm

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Vayikra: The Power of Apology

by Rabbi Moshe Wisnefsky *

Or anything else regarding which he had sworn falsely: he must pay for it its principal, adding its fifth to it, to its rightful owner on the day of his guilt.)Lev. 5:24(

The Torah stipulates that a 25% fine be paid to a robbery victim to make up for the loss of income that he could have earned with the stolen money during the interim. If the thief does not make restitution for this lost income, we cannot consider him to have "returned that which he had stolen," since something is still missing.

This serves as a lesson for all interpersonal dealings. When we have wronged someone, it is tempting to invoke Divine providence as an excuse for neither paying him back nor apologizing, noting that he would have undergone both the same loss and the same pain over the loss in any case. This approach acknowledges that, as the agent of damage, we have committed a sin and must repent, but sees no reason to apologize to the other person.

The truth, however, is that Divine providence only ordained that our victim suffer temporarily. Therefore, just as a thief has to pay not only for what he stole but for the results of the loss that he caused, so must we not only make restitution to those whom we have wronged but sincerely apologize to them – in order to lessen the pain that we caused.

– From Kehot's Daily Wisdom #3 *

Gut Shabbos,
Rabbi Yosef B. Friedman
Kehot Publication Society

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Covenant and Conversation
Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l

The Prophetic View of Sacrifice

Sacrifices, the subject of this week's parsha, were central to the religious life of biblical Israel. We see this not only by the sheer space devoted to them in the Torah, but also by the fact that they occupy its central book, Vayikra.

We have not had the sacrificial service since the destruction of the second Temple almost 2000 years ago. What is deeply relevant today, however, is the critique of sacrifices we find among the Prophets of the first Temple. That critique was sharp and deep and formed many of their most powerful addresses. One of the earliest was delivered by the Prophet Samuel: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obedience to the Lord's command? Surely, obedience is better than sacrifice, compliance than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22).

Amos said in the name of God: "If you offer Me burnt offerings—or your meal offerings—I will not accept them; I will pay no heed to your gifts of fatlings … But let justice well up like water, righteousness like a never-ending stream" (Amos 5:21-24). Likewise Hosea: "For I desire goodness, not sacrifice; obedience to God, rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6).

We find a similar critique in several Psalms. "Were I hungry, I would not tell you, for Mine is the world and all it holds. Do I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats?" (Ps. 50:8-15). "Lord, open my lips, and let my mouth declare Your praise. You do not want me to bring sacrifices; You do not desire burnt offerings. True sacrifice to God is a contrite spirit; God, You will not despise a contrite and crushed heart" (Ps. 51:17-19).

Jeremiah seems to suggest that the sacrificial order was not God's initial intention: "For when I freed your fathers from the land of Egypt, I did not speak with them or command them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice. But this is what I commanded them: Do My bidding, that I may be your God and you may be My people; walk only in the way that I enjoin upon you, that it may go well with you" (Jer. 7:22-23).

Strongest of all is the passage at the beginning of the book of Isaiah that we read on Shabbat Chazon (before Tisha b'Av): "'What need have I of all your sacrifices?' says the Lord. 'I have more than enough of burnt offerings, of rams and the fat of fattened animals; I have no pleasure in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of My courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to Me'" (Is. 1:11-13).

This entire line of thought, sounded by many voices and sustained across centuries, is extraordinary. The people were being criticised not for disobeying God's law but for obeying it. Sacrifices were commanded. Their offering was a sacred act performed in a holy place. What then aroused the Prophets' anger and rebuke?

It was not that they were opposed to sacrifice as such. Jeremiah foresaw the day when "People shall come from the towns of Judah and from the environs of Jerusalem … bringing burnt offerings and sacrifices, meal offerings and frankincense, and bringing offerings of thanksgiving to the House of the Lord" (Jer. 17:26).

Likewise Isaiah: "I will bring them to My sacred mount and let them rejoice in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and sacrifices shall be welcome on My altar, for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56:7).

They were not criticising the institution of sacrifices. They were criticising something as real now as it was in their time. What distressed them to the core of their being was the idea that you could serve God and at the same time act disdainfully, cruelly, unjustly, insensitively or callously toward other people. "So long as I am in God's good graces, that is all that matters." That is the thought that made the Prophets incandescent with indignation. If you think that, they seem to say, then you haven't understood either God or Torah.

The first thing the Torah tells us about humanity is that we are each in the image and likeness of God Himself. Therefore if you wrong a human being, you are abusing the only creation in the universe on which God has set His image. A sin against any person is a sin against God.

In the first mission statement of the Jewish people, God said about Avraham, "For I have chosen him that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is just and right" (Gen. 18:19). The way of the Lord is to act justly and righteously toward your fellow human beings. In context, this meant that God was inviting Avraham to pray on behalf of the people of Sodom, even though he knew that they were wicked and sinners.

It is specifically in the book of sacrifices, Vayikra, that we find the twin commands to love your neighbour as yourself, and love the stranger (Lev. 19:18, 33-34). The sacrifices that express our love and awe of God should lead to love of the neighbour and the stranger. There should be a seamless transition from commands between us and God to commands between us and our fellow humans.

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah all witnessed societies in which people were punctilious in bringing their offerings to the Temple, but in which there was bribery, corruption, perversion of justice, abuse of power and the exploitation of the powerless by the powerful. The Prophets saw in this a profound and dangerous contradiction.

The very act of bringing a sacrifice was fraught with ambiguity. Jews were not the only people in ancient times to have temples, priests and sacrifices. Almost everyone did. It was precisely here that the religion of ancient Israel came closest, outwardly, to the practices of their pagan neighbours. But the sacrificial systems of other cultures were based on totally different beliefs. In many religions sacrifices were seen as a way of placating or appeasing the gods. The Aztecs believed that sacrificial offerings fed the gods who sustained the universe. Walter Burkert speculated that the ancient Greeks experienced guilt when they killed animals for food, so they offered sacrifices as a way of appeasing their consciences.

All these ideas are alien to Judaism. God cannot be bribed or appeased. Nor can we bring Him anything that is not His. God sustains the universe: the universe does not sustain Him. And wrongs righted by sacrifice do not excuse other wrongs. So intention and mindset were essential in the sacrificial system. The thought that "If I bring a sacrifice to God, He will overlook my other faults" – in effect, the idea that I can bribe the Judge of all the earth – turns a sacred act into a pagan one, and produces precisely the opposite result than the one intended by the Torah. It turns religious worship from a way to the right and the good, into a way of easing the conscience of those who practice the wrong and the bad.

To serve God is to serve humanity. That was the point made memorably by Micah: "He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: To do justice, to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God."(Micah 6:6-8). Jeremiah said of King Josiah: "He judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well with him: was not this to know Me? says the Lord" (Jer. 22:16). Knowing God, said Jeremiah, means caring for those in need.

Maimonides said essentially the same at the end of The Guide for the Perplexed (III, 54). He quotes Jeremiah: "Only in this should one glory: that they have the understanding to know Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,' says the Lord" (Jer. 9:23). To know God is to know what it is to act with kindness, justice and righteousness.

The danger of the sacrificial system, said the Prophets, is that it can lead people to think that there are two domains, the Temple and the world, serving God and caring for one's fellow humans, and they are disconnected. Judaism rejects the concept of two disconnected domains. Halachically they are distinct, but psychologically, ethically and spiritually they are part of a single indivisible system.

I believe that to love God is to love our fellow humans. To honour God is to honour our fellow humans. We may not ask God to listen to us if we are unwilling to listen to others. We may not ask God to forgive us if we are unwilling to forgive others. To know God is to seek to imitate Him, which means, said Jeremiah and Maimonides, to exercise kindness, justice and righteousness on earth.

Shabbat Shalom: Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

"Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them: When any person of you brings an offering unto God, you shall bring from the cattle, the herd or the flock " (Leviticus 1:2)

The book of Leviticus continues where the book of Exodus left off: after the exquisite description of the complexity of the Sanctuary's components, the Torah is ready to introduce the priestly duties of sacrifices described in the verse above.

Undoubtedly, the entire sacrificial system, replete with whole burnt offerings, sin offerings, guilt offerings and peace offerings, has a rather raucous ring to the modern sophisticated ear.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch attempts to provide a symbolic significance for each of the sacrifices, and etymologically suggests that the essence of korban (Hebrew for sacrifice) is to bring the individual close (karov) to God.

For our purposes, I'd like to approach the entire holy Temple ceremony by analyzing a rather striking midrash which emphasizes an otherwise innocuous pronoun in our opening verse: "When any person of you (mikem) brings an offering unto God…." The fact is that if the purpose of our verse is to issue a command to bring offerings, it could just as easily have been transmitted without the word mikem. Indeed, this particular pronoun in this particular context never appears in the Bible again. Teaches the midrash:

Why does [the biblical text] state mikem [of you]? From here we derive that whoever fulfils the obligation to recite one hundred blessings each day is considered as if he/she offered a sacrifice. How do we know this? From the Hebrew word mikem [of you], which has the numerical equivalent of one hundred [mem-kafmem=40+20+40]. (Midrash Yalkut Ma'ayan Ganim, ad loc.)

Why does the midrash link these 100 daily blessings with an offering to God? Presumably, if we understand the connection, the world of blessings may very well illuminate the world of sacrifice.

Let us examine the essence of a blessing. Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi in his classic work The Kuzari, teaches that the laws of proper blessings enhance our pleasure, create heightened awareness and a more sensitized appreciation of every object in the world; indeed the necessity of our making a blessing precludes the possibility of our taking for granted God's many bounties. After all, pleasure demands awareness, and a blessing sharpens our senses, leading them to appreciate what we have and are about to enjoy: a glorious sunrise, a burst of lightning, the children around the Sabbath or festival table, a bright, red strawberry.

But what then should we do with our awareness? How do we channel our new-found awakenings to the gifts of the world around us? A comment of Rabbi Aaron Soloveitchik, of blessed memory, on a passage in Tractate Berakhot, can provide us with an interesting insight.

Rabbi Levi asked concerning two contrasting texts. It is written: The heavens are the heavens of God but the earth has He given to the children of men,' (Ps. 115:16), and it is also written, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof" (Ps. 115:16). There is no contradiction: in the one case it is before a blessing has been said, in the other case after. (Berakhot 35a)

The usual interpretation explains that before I make a blessing, everything belongs to God; the blessing is my request for permission to partake of God's world. Hence, partaking of something without a blessing is in effect committing thievery against God; it is as a result of our blessing that the Almighty grants us permission to partake of His physical world. In effect, before the blessing, the world is God's, and after the blessing, He gives the world's bounty to us humans.

In a unique twist, Rabbi Soloveitchik turns this interpretation on its head: "The heavens are the heavens of God, but the earth has He given to the children of men." (Ps. 115:16) is the description of the world before blessings, and the verse, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," is after the blessing!

Why? A world devoid of blessing is a world without any divine connection, a neo-platonic world with an iron curtain separating the human and godly realms.

Suddenly, earth and heaven are no longer enemies, strangers in a strange universe, but all of God's creations magnificently and miraculously come together. If the Torah has one urgent message, it is the sancitification of our physical world. For Jews, the divine and the physical meet in an eternal dialogue, and the first expression of that dialogue is the blessings we make.

An additional and related aspect of the significance of blessings is the Hassidic-Kabbalistic nation. Early in the book of Genesis, God becomes disappointed with His world and decides to destroy it (except for the righteous Noah, that is): and God said, "I will blot out the human being whom I have created…. both humans, and beast, and creeping things, and fowl of the air…." (Genesis 6:7)

Rashi asks why God's anger is directed toward animals? After all, these brute creatures are innocent of any wrongdoing. Rashi then presents us with two possible interpretations. First, that all of creation including animal life had become so depraved that nothing could be called innocent – a perversity that pervaded all of reality. But his second answer is the one that concerns us here: Everything was created for the human being. When he ceases to be, what need have I for them (beasts, creeping things, fowl)! (Rashi, ad loc.)

This is a profound idea that looks at God's creation as a hierarchy, starting with inanimate rocks, ascending toward living plant life, and from there to animal creatures of mobility and then reaching upward to the communicating human being. All the mobility of an animal cannot alter the fact that animals are ruled by the earth and the waters and the skies, into the mold of each individual species. Only the human being's gift of communication enables him to relate to God – if indeed he utilizes his freedom of choice properly.

Now when the human being takes the objects of the world around him, and he makes blessings over the world he lives in, he brings all of existence – including plant life, animal life, and every worldly object into a relationship with God. In effect he is giving a higher purpose to all of these realms, thereby bringing everything back to its ultimate divine source. By uplifting the world, by restoring it to its divine dimension, the human being repairs a world broken by iniquity and despair, alienation and materialism And without this potential for uplifting the world, without a lofty and up-reaching human being, all of creation becomes short-circuited, the universe

has no purpose for being, a reverse "bang" takes place.

Now we are ready to return to our midrash, the rabbinic concept which identified the daily blessings with the sacrifices that brought humanity close to the divine. What God wants from us is not only to build a Sanctuary, but to transform the entire world into God's Sanctuary, God's Temple. "You shall make for Me a Sanctuary so that I may dwell in your midst," commands God. And so the sacrifices bring cattle, grain and fruits back to the Almighty who created them, enlisting the world – inanimate, vegetative and the human facilitators – in the service of the divine.

Just as Temple sacrifices brought God and all of His creations into the world, so do the daily 100 blessings bring God into the world – suffuse the material world with divine spirituality – in our world today. By means of daily blessings we have the potential of making the entire universe a divine sanctuary.

Torah.Org: Rabbi Yissocher Frand

The Little Aleph and Lessons In Humility

Sefer Vayikra begins with the pasuk "He called to Moshe and Hashem spoke to him from the Ohel Moed saying:" [Vayikra 1:1]. The Aleph of the word VaYikra (He called) is written with a small letter. According to Chazal, this was at Moshe Rabbeinu's insistence because the word Vayikra connotes endearment. It showed the love of the Ribono shel Olam for Moshe and so Moshe in his great humility wanted to lessen the effect of this word. Therefore, this Aleph is called an Aleph Zeira (a small Aleph), in deference to the humility of the great prophet.

I saw a question raised by Rav Schach, zt"l. A famous Gemara [Menachos 29b] says that Rabbi Akiva was able to expound "piles and piles of laws over each and every 'crown' of the letters in the Torah." We are not privy to these drashas that Rabbi Akiva made over these special strokes that crown certain letters of the Torah, but Rabbi Akiva inferred laws from those "tagim."

If Rabbi Akiva was able to expound from even the "tagim," he was certainly able to expound from the letters themselves. The fact the Moshe lessened the Aleph and made it smaller, seemingly deprived Rabbi Akiva from all the halachos he could have darshened from the full-size Aleph. What gave Moshe the license to reduce the size of this letter, thereby depriving us of the Halachos that Rabbi Akiva could have derived therefrom?

Rav Schach answered that teaching the attribute of humility is itself a lesson worthy enough to miss out on any other lessons that might have been inferred from the full-size letter. It is important for us to know that the master of all the prophets was, at the very same time, the humblest of all individuals.

Moshe Rabbeinu's humility is not only evident here. It is evident throughout Torah. A Medrash Tanchuma teaches: For seven days, Hashem attempted to convince Moshe to accept his mission by the Burning Bush. Moshe Rabbeinu did not want the job. It took seven days of going back and forth, before Moshe reluctantly accepted. This is Moshe talking to G-d! He felt he was not worthy of the task. He pleaded "Send, please, by the hand of whom You will send." [Shmos 4:13]

Once Moshe finally took the job. He went to Pharaoh and said "Send forth My nation that they may serve Me." Pharaoh asked "Who is Hashem?" When Moshe Rabbeinu heard that, he felt that he had already completed his job. He was prepared to go sit on the sidelines and retire from his mission." The Medrash then says that Hashem saw Moshe sitting on the sidelines and told him "Get up, go speak again to Pharaoh…" Hashem again needed to convince Moshe Rabbeinu to take on the role of being the Redeemer of the Nation."

In short, Moshe Rabbeinu deferred and deferred, declined and declined and declined. He felt he was not worthy for the job. It always strikes me, when American politicians get up and declare their candidacy for President of the United States of America, they all say "I am the person who is most fitting for this job. This job is for me and I am for this job." It is so ludicrous. This is the polar opposite of what we find by Moshe, who says "I do not want this job. I am not good enough for the job. I will not be successful at this job." This is just an aside and I cannot say enough "L'Havdil"s separating the two personality types we are discussing.

Moshe Rabbeinu was the prime example of the well-known rule "He who seeks honor, honor runs away from him and he who runs away from honor, honor chases after him." [Eruvin 13b].

There was a Jew in the Yeshiva in Radin, the Chofetz Chaim's Yeshiva, who was a big Talmid Chochom but who apparently liked Kavod and he let it be known that he was a big Talmid Chochom. He let it be known that he wanted people to honor him. Yeshiva Bochrim, being able to discern this, did not give him the Kavod that he sought. The more he wanted it and the more he demanded it, the less they treated him with honor.

Finally, this Jew came to the Chofetz Chaim and asked the following shaylah: I am a Talmid Chochom and I am worthy of Kavod, but nobody gives me my due respect. What is going on? I know more than these people but they do not treat that fact with importance. They do not give me the deference due a Torah scholar!

The Chofetz Chaim told him that Chazal say "Whoever runs after honor, honor will flee from him." (Kol ha'Rodef achar haKavod…) Now we know the usage of the word Kol always comes to include something (l'Rabos). It teaches that even someone who is worthy of Kavod, if he chases after it – it will flee from him! The Chofetz Chaim then added that there is also a Ribui (inclusion) at the end of this statement: Whoever flees from honor (Kol ha'boreach min haKavod..), honor will chase after him." This inclusion teaches that even if someone does not deserve honor, if he acts humbly and runs away from honor, honor will pursue him." The Chofetz Chaim said that he personally witnessed fulfillment of this second Ribui. "Just like me. I am not worthy of the Kavod people give me, but they give it to me anyway because I try to escape it."

The Sefas Emes asks an interesting question: If a person sincerely flees from honor (there are some people for whom Kavod is abhorrent to them), why does the Almighty punish by causing him to receive Kavod? He is a praiseworthy fellow. He honestly flees from Kavod because he doesn't want it. What happens to him? He gets the Kavod, anyway.

It is hard for us to imagine this, because we all want kavod. But at least theoretically – what are Chazal saying? Why should his "good deed" of fleeing from Kavod wind up providing him with something he truly abhors? The Sefas Emes gives a very profound answer. In nature, things always return to their source. Who is the Source of all Kavod? It is the Ribono shel Olam. So Kavod will naturally flow back to the Melech HaKavod. Who is the Melech HaKavod? It is the Ribono shel Olam!

A person who gets to the elevated status of being one who flees honor gets there because he realizes sincerely that whatever he achieves in this world is only because the Ribono shel Olam has given it to him. Of course, Rav Moshe Feinstein knew who he was. Of course, he told someone "I have learned Yoreh Deah 150 times." And yet, why was he the humble person that he was? It was because he said "It is not me. It is the Ribono shel Olam. He gave me that intellect. He gave me that memory. He gave me the patience. He gave me the opportunity. The honor does not belong to me. It belongs to Him."

A person who flees honor attributes his achievements to the Almighty. As such, he is joining himself with the Almighty. If Kavod will flow automatically to its original source, then by the laws of nature Kavod will flow back to one who runs away from it, who has joined himself with the Ribono shel Olam.

Ultimately, Kavod flows back to its Source – the Master of the Universe.

Dvar Torah: Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

Adding salt to bread helps us to improve our characters. How can this be the case? The Torah in Parshat Vayikra introduces us to the mincha, the 'meal' offering which everyone could afford. With regard to the mincha the Torah tells us that it was not to become chametz. No honey nor any yeast was to be

added. Salt, however, was to be added to all offerings.

Rav Mordechai Gifter zt"l who was Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Telz gives a beautiful peirush. He explains that when yeast is added to dough, it helps the dough to rise but the yeast is an external additive. Honey gives food a sweeter taste but the honey too is an external additive. Salt however is different. When salt is added to food it becomes an integral part of that food and it draws out the flavour which was already there and enhances that flavour. Character

Therefore, said Rav Gifter, we have here a powerful message from the Torah with regard to the building of our characters. In order for us to achieve our korban, to come closer to Hashem, let us not 'add yeast' – let us not add certain dimensions to our character which will distort who we are. Neither should we strive to 'add honey' whereby we will make ourselves sweeter but we only do so by borrowing from an outside source.

Instead, let's work on what we already have. Let's 'add salt' to our characters to bring out the talent that Hashem has given us, and succeed by enhancing what we have in a latent form.

Reminder - This is something which we're reminded of every single time we sit down to have a meal. When we make hamotzi, the blessing over the bread, salt is added. Every single day, this gives us a reminder of how we truly have a daily opportunity to enhance and to improve our characters. And the best way to do that is to thank Hashem for what he has given us and to maximise the potential that is within each and every one of us.

Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel
Encyclopedia of Jewish Values*

Why is Moses So Special

This week's Torah portion begins the third book of the Torah, *Vayikra*-Leviticus, with three strange words: "*Vayikrah El Moshe*-God called out to Moses." If these three words we eliminated from the text, we would understand the rest of the book in exactly the same manner, as the next Torah words "God spoke to Moses" occurs dozens of times in the Torah as a prelude to many laws. Since we know there are no "extra" Torah letters, what, then, do these three words add, and why here? We might have expected that God would be calling out to Aaron, Moses' brother, if anyone, since so many of the laws in this book of *Vayikra* pertain to *Kohanim*-Priests, Aaron's family. And why the strange verb "*Vayikra*-He called", as if God did not know where Moses was located? This specific three-word expression is used by God in only one other place in the Torah, when God "calls" to Moses to enter the deeper recesses of the heavens in giving him the Torah for forty days (Exodus 24:16). God also calls Moses from the Burning Bush and to come closer to Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:4, 19:20). But no one else in the entire Torah is called by God – except Moses. Thus, God calling someone must signify something special.

Rashi (Rashi commentary to Leviticus 1:1) says that the special use of the verb "*Vayikra*-He called" demonstrates God's special love for Moses. Perhaps it is here, before Aaron takes "center stage" in the Book of Leviticus, that God reminds us how special Moshe is, and of God's great love for Moshe. This expression may also be a continuation from the end of the previous Torah Book of Exodus, to remind us that Moses descended the mountain with the Two Tablets as his face shone with a heavenly glow (Exodus 34:29). If so, we should then ask ourselves: what, indeed, are the qualities of Moses that were so particularly beloved by God? Why was Moses so special that he merited to go up to the heavens and spend forty days on Mt. Sinai receiving the Written and Oral Torahs? While we cannot know the specifics of God's love, if we examine the personality of Moshe throughout his life, both in the Torah text and the comments of the Rabbis, we may discover those multiple qualities that were so cherished by God, and that each Jew could try to emulate in his or her life today. We will list those special characteristics of Moshe's personality and actions through chronological events. In just 32 chapters, we will discover 10 characteristic of Moses that made his so special.

From the Very Beginning, Moses was Special - When Moses was born, the Torah describes that his mother saw the infant as being especially "good" (Exodus 2:2). Since, as Nachmanides asks, every mother sees her child as good, there was no need for the Torah to tell us this, unless there was something, indeed, unique about the child. Nachmanides writes that his mother could see that he was special, and would become an especially good human being, and, thus, was worthy of salvation from the Egyptians, who were commanded to kill all Jewish male infants. Perhaps this is why Rashi, based on the Talmud, says that this "goodness" was displayed, iI,.e, that the entire house lit up (Rashi commentary on Exodus 2:2, Sotah 12a), a more objective way of showing the infant's specialness (it is also when the Torah first used this expression "*Ki Tov*," it was referring to light). And, perhaps, this is also an allusion to later on, when Moses' face glowed when he descended Mount Sinai, as mentioned above.

1 - Moses was saved and brought up in the Pharaoh's home, as is known, but that was the doing of his sister and mother, not his. But a few years later, the Torah first mentions that Moses first grew physically and in the very next verse "he grew" (again), which can only signify non-physical growth of personality, of spirituality and values (Exodus 2:10-11) (non-physical growth in the Torah is only mentioned by Moses and Isaac). Thus, the Torah, from the very beginning, was stating that Moses was a great person with very special values. But what exactly did Moses do to demonstrate this greatness is revealed in the next few Torah verses.

2, 3, 4 - The Torah, in a very short span, describes the three separate actions that set Moses apart from every other person in Egypt. All people undoubtedly saw Egyptians beating Jews on a daily basis, but only Moses acted when he first witnessed this. Why? The Torah (Exodus 2:11) tells us that Moses felt the pain of his brothers, as it uses the word "brother" twice in the verse. This empathy and need to help the downtrodden was stronger than every value that he had experienced and been taught for years in the palace, and also stronger than Moshe's desire to continue to live a life of a prince by remaining in the palace. Thus, for Moses, acting upon this feeling of the need to help others (and his brothers in particular), was going to cost him more than it would cost any other Jew in Egypt. Growing up in the palace as an adopted son of the princess, Moses undoubtedly was destined for greatness in Egypt as a prince, perhaps even king. When Moses had to decide which value is more important, remaining in the luxurious life he had always known, or giving it all up to help someone downtrodden, Moses did not hessite. He knew that by killing the Egyptian taskmaster, his life would be in danger, and he might have to run away. But he killed the Egyptian when no one else would (Exodus 2:12).

This set the pattern. Moses would always help the disenfranchised. The next day, as one Jew was about to slap another Jew, Moses tried to intervene to prevent it. Instead of appreciating the gesture, these two people revealed to the Egyptians where Moses was and that he had killed the Egyptian, and Moses, thus, was forced to flee the country (Exodus 2:12). Moses should have learned his lesson – do not get involved, especially when you do not know the people. Nevertheless, upon arriving in the distant land of Midian, he saw that a group of women were being "punished" for being women, as the stronger male shepherds did not open the well for them. After suffering greatly for trying save people in trouble in Egypt, Moses should have "learned his lesson" and not let himself get involved. In this case, especially, since all were non-Jews, there was no feeling of brotherly love, and Moshe knew none of them. Nonetheless, the character of Moshe did not allow him to ignore this situation, and he saved the daughters of Yitro, and opened the well for them (Exodus 2:16-17). As Professor Nechama Leibowitz points out, all three possible scenarios are recorded in a row (Jew vs. Non-Jew, Jew vs. Jew, and non-Jew vs. non-Jew), but it makes no difference to Moshe. He "must" save anyone in need.

5 – In the next Torah chapter, Moses is described as a shepherd (Exodus 3:1). The Midrash (Exodus 2:12) comments that Moses has such pity on a tired, runaway sheep, that he

carried it back to the other sheep. For this, God said, a man who can have that kind of compassion and lead animals, can certainly lead men (Midrash, Shemot Rabbah 2:2).

6 – When, forty years later, God asked Moses to return to Egypt and lead the Jewish people to freedom, Moses first asks permission from his father-in-law, whether he should leave and go to Egypt on his mission (Exodus 4:18). This seems almost "impertinent." God, the Master of the World, commands Moses to return, and Moses afterwards asks permission from Jethro to leave Midian (what if Yitro had said "no"?). However, the Rabbis defend this action of Moses. Already in the desert, says the Midrash (Midrash, Shemot Rabbah 4:2), Moses had informed God that he could not leave unless Jethro allowed him to do so. This is an act of appreciation and decency, for taking someone into one's home. Moses needed to ask permission to leave. Moses's gratitude to his father-in-law did not stop there and was not quickly forgotten. Forty years later, the people of Midian sinned against the Jewish people. God commanded Moses to take revenge on the Midianites for profaning God and His name (Numbers 31:1-6). Although Moses makes the preparations, he sends Pinchas to do what Moses had been commanded, in essence defying God's command. Rabbi Shmeulevitz of the Mir Yeshiva (Sichot Mussar, 5732:32), based on the Midrash, explains that Moses still felt deep appreciation to Yitro-Jethro, and, even forty years later, could not bring himself to do battle against Yitro's people who had sinned.

Rabbi Shmeulevitz brings several other, more famous, situations where Moses showed appreciation and gratitude. When God asked Moses to begin to carry out the plagues, for the first plague, God asked Moses to speak to Aaron and, and for Aaron take his (Aaron's) staff to strike the Nile River, which would change into to blood, and, again to strike the Nile from which would emerge the plague of Frogs. Why didn't God ask Moses to take his own staff, and for Moses, not Aaron, to strike the water? Rashi explains (Exodus 7:7 with Rashi commentary) that since it was the Nile that saved Moses from death as an infant, he could not be an ingrate to this river, and cause it damage. That would be ingratitude. Similarly, says another Midrash (Midrash Tanchuma, Va-era 14), that Aaron and not Moses, who was commanded to strike the land before the Plague of Lice. This was because it was the land in which Moses buried the Egyptian that Moses had killed for beating a Jew, that (temporarily) saved him from the wrath of Pharoah and the Egyptians. The verse and Rashi commentary (Exodus 8:12, with Rashi commentary) spell this out in detail: God asks Moses to, once again, take his (Aaron's) staff and smite the ground to bring the plague. Rashi explains that it would show "ingratitude" by Moses to smite the ground that saved him by "hiding" the dead Egyptian. Thus, God, once again, commands Aaron, and not Moses, to strike the land, to prevent Moses from showing ingratitude. From the fourth plague onward, Moses "took over" the plagues, as there was no more striking of the river and the earth.

7 – The very fact that Moshe thought that he could not lead (Exodus 3:11, 4:1, 10), shows that he was worthy of leadership. Despite his great and unusual values and character, Moses remained the most modest man in the world (Numbers 12;3). And when some Jews (mistakenly) wanted to replace Moses as leader of the Jewish people, God says to them that Moses is the only person worthy of leadership (Baalei Tosafot commentary on Exodus 34:30).

8 – Moses cared so much about the Jewish people. When God informed him that the people had sinned by the Golden Calf, and that he should go down the mountain to the people, Moshe refused to leave, and pleaded to God to forgive the people, even before he knewhow they sinned, until God relented and did not kill them at that moment. (Exodus 32:7-14). Even though Moshe was so holy that he spent 40 days alone with God on Mount Sinai learning the Torah (Exodus 34:28), and even though his face shone (Exodus 34:29) from that spiritual encounter, Moses never lost his caring and feeling for his people.

9- Moses cared about the people much more than he cared about himself. God wanted to destroy the entire Jewish people and start again with Moses (Exodus 32:10). But Moses asked that if that was God's plan, then God should kill him, Moses, and erase him, Moses, from the Torah, rather than harm the Jewish people (Exodus 34:32).

10 - The greatest characteristic of a leader and of every Jew is the ability to grow and become better. The Jewish people are named as the "Children of Israel/Jacob" because Jacob was able to learn from his mistakes and grow into a "person of truth". Jews today are called "Jews" after Judah, who, like his father, grew into the Jewish leadership after learning from his numerous mistakes. Moses, too, transformed himself, from a man who is uncomfortable with himself because he is not a man of words (Exodus 4:10), into the man of many words who personally spoke and wrote all the words of Deuteronomy (Deuteronomy 1:1), which God approved of and made part of the Torah. The Midrash points out this transformation of Moses (Midrash, Devarim Rabbah 1:1, Midrash Tanchuma, Devarim 2).

11- Even with all of these values and characteristics, the greatest manner in which the Jewish people refer to Moses, is "*Moshe Rabbeinu*-Moses, our teacher," which is his appellation in the entire Rabbinic literature, and how this man is referred to until today. As we know, Moses received both the Written and Oral Torah from God (Mishna Avot 1:1), and then taught each small segment of Torah to the leaders of the people, and then to the people themselves over the for forty years, each section taught by Moshe four times (Eiruvin 54b, Maimonides, first part of his "Introduction to the Mishna"). Whenever a Jew learns Torah, that learning ultimately traces back to Moses Our Teacher.

The Torah itself ends by calling Moses the "servant of God" (Deuteronomy 34:5), and the last three verses describe how Moses was different from any human being before him or since (Deuteronomy 34:10-12). It is no wonder that our Parsha begins with the unique words of God calling to Moses.

*** This column has been adapted from a series of volumes written by Rabbi Dr. Nachum Amsel "*The Encyclopedia of Jewish Values*" available from Urim and Amazon. For the full article or to review all the footnotes in the original, contact the author at nachum@jewishdestiny.com**

Ohr Torah Stone Dvar Torah

Blood, Fire and Smoke

Rabbi Dr. Reuven HaCohen Oriya

There are a myriad of laws pertaining to the korbanot, the sacrifices. In reference to the verse in our portion – "…and Aaron's sons, the kohanim, shall present the blood, and throw the blood against the altar, all around" (Vayikra 1, 5) – our Sages teach us that when one offers a sacrifice, the ultimate atonement is achieved when the "blood is thrown upon the altar", which is, in fact, the essence of the offering.

Why is this act of "blood-throwing" considered to be the most important part of the offering and not, for instance, the burning of the animal?

Blood is also mentioned in reference to the exodus from Egypt: "And the blood shall be for you as a token upon the house…". This blood protected against the "evil forces" that were then on the loose. And why is that? Our Sages in Midrash Mechilta explain the verse from Yechezkel – "And when I passed by you, and saw you wallowing in thy blood"- as follows: "In merit of 'two kinds of blood' – the blood of the Pesach sacrifice and the blood of circumcision – the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt."

But why?

In the book of Vayikra (17, 10-11), the Torah tells us that blood may not be eaten:

"And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that eats any manner of blood, I will set My face against that soul that eats blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life."

Rashi explains that the reason for this is that the nefesh, the living spirit and vitality existing in all living beings, is found in the blood. The blood of animals is offered on the altar instead of man's blood. In other words, when one throws the animal's "life-liquid" upon the altar, it is as if he were throwing his own blood and sacrificing himself. As such, the blood of the offering is what atones for human sin. By throwing the animal's blood, we are, in fact, redeeming human blood. Blood for blood, as it were!

One might say that "a balance of terror" is what keeps us all in check. Man's actions have repercussions and impact reality. What is known as The Law of Attraction refers to the idea that negative actions attract negative energy. When such energies accumulate, they threaten the equilibrium of the entire cosmos. This is in keeping with the verse in Bereishit (4, 10) – "The voice of your brother's blood cries to Me from the ground", or the verse in Bamidbar (35, 33) – "…and no atonement can be made for the land for the blood that is shed therein…".

In such instances when life is robbed, the blood of the one depriving life must appease the blood of the one deprived of life. It is as though the blood that was shed wishes to avenge its honor and shed more blood; the life that was devastated desires to cause devastation. The blood of the murdered can only find peace, or become appeased, by seeing the blood of the murderer shed in return. Blood for blood. In much the same way that the blood of the heifer beheaded in the wadi (egla arufa) is a substitute for the blood of the unknown murderer. Similarly, the blood placed on the doorposts in Egypt was a substitute for the blood of the firstborns. This blood served as an inhibitor of the "evil forces", and in so doing, maintained cosmic equilibrium, by offering 'blood for blood'.

In Hebrew, the word for atonement is kapparah, which is derived from the same root as the word kofer which means both "ransom" and "covering up something." The act of throwing the blood upon the altar is a ransom of sorts, which aims to cover up the blood that cries out against the violation of the fine cosmic balance. The blood that is thrown appeases the spilled blood, so to speak, and removes the threat hovering above the perpetrator's head. This not only a symbolic act, as might be understood from Rashi's words, but a practical measure taken against the very real powers and forces at play, which can either make or break the harmony.

Man was permitted to eat the flesh of animals after the Flood, but this concession came with a caveat – the prohibition to eat blood: "Only flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall you not eat" (Bereishit 9, 4). Following this prohibition, Noach and his sons were also warned against bloodshed: "…and at the hand of man, even at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man. Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made He man" (ibid. 5-6).

Animals may be slaughtered and eaten by man. The blood of animals need not "avenge its honor", as it is not eaten. Furthermore, animals were not created in the image of God, so God need not avenge the one who spills their blood.

Notwithstanding the above, in extenuating circumstances, an animal's blood, which is the core of its existence, may serve as a substitute for the blood of a man deserving of death. In fact, the blood of such animal, which grants life to man by protecting him from the "destructive forces" when placed at the base of the altar, may not be eaten. We must remember that the consumption of animal flesh is not void of cruelty. Such consumption is in itself an act of such enormous ingratitude that it begs to be avenged in its own right.

The animal and its blood give life twice: the flesh of animals is eaten by man for his sustenance; the animal's blood serves as a substitute for man's blood. At first, man was a vegetarian. But after humankind sinned, God had no choice but to bring upon mankind the "great destructive force" – the Flood, a creation that came into being in wake of the sins of mankind. When the Almighty resolved to never bring about such devastation upon mankind again, He had to provide man with a place of refuge, whereto man could escape from the destructive effect of his own sins, and his insatiable desire to devour other flesh.

This "place of refuge" prepared especially for mankind is none other than the blood of the sacrificed animal, the first of which was offered to God by Noach following the flood.

This is what the Ramban says:

"And since the blood is the living spirit, and it is inappropriate for one living spirit to consume another living spirit, I took mercy upon the soul of man, and provided mankind with the altar upon which the living spirit of the animal might atone for the soul of man."

Perhaps the consumption of animal flesh was prohibited at the start, since all living beings were initially created to assist man and live alongside him (although this ultimately did not come to be). Hence, killing an animal is much like killing a human being, since all beings are connected through their living spirits, and both man and beast have blood! However, from the moment man was permitted to take the life of an animal, man also had to find atonement for such action, and this is done by taking the blood of the sacrifice and placing it "upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement by reason of the life."

The Ramban explains: "A being with a soul [=man] should not eat another living being because all living beings belong to God, humans and animals alike, as is written: 'For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them; as the one dies, so dies the other; they have all one breath; so that man has no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity'" (Kohelet 3, 19). The Ramban goes on to say: "The flesh of animals was permitted to man because animals exist for the benefit and the enjoyment of mankind, and that their blood might serve as an atonement for man."

The same God that permitted man to eat the flesh of animals, prohibits man from eating the latter's blood. This special permission was given due to man's immanent inclination to do evil and act in violence. However, the license to eat the flesh of animals was given to prevent man from becoming completely indifferent or utterly cruel. God was supposedly saying to man: "I am allowing you to exercise violence towards animals, while I Myself am holding back from lashing out in violence against you. Thus, every time you sacrifice the flesh of an animal or eat it, its blood shall be prohibited to you because you have shed its blood. And all of this with the aim of protecting you from what you yourself have done to the animal. I deny Myself of what I permit you. I do so because I am compassionate and considerate of your human condition."

Every time blood is thrown upon the altar, there is also a great revelation of mercy. The one throwing the blood is like one throwing his own soul and begging that his fate will not be like that of the slaughtered animal. This is all done in the hope of maintaining nature's harmony and fine equilibrium.

Mizrachi Dvar Torah

Rav Doron Perz: Giving it Everything

King Solomon says that "Anything that comes your way to do in life, give it with all your might." If you want to succeed in anything in life, you have to give it 110%.

That's what Vayikra is about – korbanot. The first korban – olah – is the burnt offering which is entirely burnt for Hashem. The basis of our relationship with Hashem is being fully and completely committed. To succeed in anything in life, we need to commit our heart, body and soul.

Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's Derashot Ledorot*

Show and Tell

One of the offenses for which the Torah, in this morning's sidra, declares the sin offering obligatory is that of shevuat ha'edut, that is, one who is under oath to testify and fails to do so. If a man witnessed some significant matter, either seeing or knowing of some facts important to some other individual who asks him to testify, then, "im lo yagid," if he withholds his testimony and refuses to testify,

"venasa avono," "he shall bear the burden of sin" (5:1).

To those many amongst us whose first reaction, upon witnessing an accident, is to escape the scene quickly so as not to be bothered by innumerable court appearances, the Torah addresses its reminder that offering up truthful testimony on behalf of another person is not only a legal obligation, but also a religious and ethical one. There are three types, the Talmud tells us (Pesaĥim 113b), whom God despises, and one of them is he who withholds testimony needed by another. The truth is destroyed not only by outright falsehood, but also by failing to report the true facts.

In a larger sense, the sin of "im lo yagid" refers not only to a trial currently in session in some courtroom, but to keeping your peace and remaining silent in the face of obvious injustice. To withhold testimony means to suppress your righteous indignation when by all standards of decency it should be expressed, and expressed vigorously. For even if there is no human court willing to hear the facts and correct an unjust situation, there is a Heavenly Judge before whom we are required to testify. He, therefore, who suppresses the truth and chooses silence in the presence of evil, shows his contempt for God, who is the King who "loves righteousness and justice" (Psalms 33:5). To a generation which lived through the Hitler era, and saw millions of Germans remain submissively silent while six million Jews were butchered, we need not stress the teaching of today's sidra that "im lo yagid," if one fails to cry out and bear witness, then "venasa avono," that individual bears guilt and sin.

Need we look far for sufficiently compelling examples against which simple decency requires us to declare our protest? There is the perennial problem of man's cruelty to man – and on scales both large and small. In all these cases, "im lo yagid," if we fail to testify to our deeply held conviction that mankind is created in the image of God and hence sacred, we share in the guilt.

For instance: In the past year there were two cases, one of them only this past week, in which a prize-fighter was pummeled to death in front of large audiences who paid handsome prices to be permitted to be spectators to this act of athletic homicide. Is it not about time that our country civilized itself and outlawed this public barbarism? Is it not stretching the point, to say the least, when the governor of this state defends this "sport" by calling it a "manly art"? Is it not a deep source of embarrassment to our country that the prize fighter who dealt the death blow came to this country from Cuba, given that in that country, ruled by tyrants and infested by Communists, boxing is outlawed?

Or more importantly: The Israeli government brought to the attention of the world this week the shocking news of West German scientists working in Cairo on developing "unconventional" weapons, including nuclear missiles. Dare the world keep silent and refrain from testifying to the sordid story of what German scientists once did to the Jewish people? The West German government recently showed, in the Der Spiegel case, that it can act decisively where its interests are concerned. It must do no less now. "Im lo yagid" – if the Western countries, ours included, suppress their protests, then "venasa avono," they shall compound the guilt of two decades ago.

Most especially does this principle of "im lo yagid" apply to the Jew. Our very reason for being Jews is to testify to the glory of the Creator. Our essential function as the people of Torah is to bear witness to the truth of Torah in word and deed. In the words of Isaiah (43:21) at the beginning of today's haftara, "I have created for Myself this people so that they might relay my praises"; or, with even greater cogency, the famous words later in the same haftara, "ve'atem eidai," "and you are My witnesses" (44:8). That means that every Jew must ever be self-conscious, must realize that we represent Torah, that everything that we do and say is an eidut, a testimony offered up on behalf of God and Torah. If a Jew acts shamefully, he disgraces his faith. If that individual acts meritoriously, that person brings credit upon Torah and its Giver. "Im lo yagid" – the Jew who, no matter how honorable his intentions, does not act with the dignity and respectability of a ben Torah, who fails to bear witness to the glory of Torah, "venasa avono," bears the guilt of having failed the most important mission in life. To the Jew, all of life must be – to use the name of the schoolchildren's game – "show and tell," an opportunity to show by example and tell by words that Torah civilizes man and raises him to unprecedented heights of nobility.

Parents of young children, those who have the opportunity of seeing most directly the effect and influence of one generation upon another, know well the secret of eidut. Children are not nearly as impressed by expression as they are by example; they emulate rather than obey. Only if a parent bears living testimony to his convictions will it be meaningful to a child. That is why it is of no avail to send a child to shul or school. You must bring the child to shul and school. Otherwise the child may go through yeshiva, but the yeshiva will not go through the child. "Im lo yagid" – if parents do not, in practice, live the kind of lives they want their children to lead, then "venasa avono," the children bear the burden of their parents' guilt.

Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch has maintained that the word "eid," "witness," is related to the word "ode," "yet" or "still." To testify means to continue, to keep alive, to make permanent. To be the eidim for God means to keep alive faith in Him, to make the Torah ethic permanent, to continue the Jewish tradition into the future.

It is for this reason that we Orthodox Jews in particular ought to be so very concerned not only by the impression we make upon outsiders, but also how we appear to our fellow Jews who have become estranged from our sacred tradition. We have labored long and hard and diligently to secure an image of Orthodox Judaism which does not do violence to Western standards of culture and modernity. But at times the image becomes frayed, and another, less attractive identity is revealed. All too often of late we have been careless and coarse. Sometimes we have made it appear that we are barely emerging from the cocoon of medievalism. If we are to be witnesses to Torah, then Orthodox Jews must have a more impressive means of communicating with non-observant segments of our people. Saadia Gaon pointed out a thousand years ago that the best way to make a heretic, an apikores, is to present an argument for Judaism that is ludicrous and unbecoming. Orthodoxy cannot afford to have sloppy newspapers, second-rate schools, noisy synagogues, or unaesthetic and repelling services. When you testify for God and for Torah, every word must be counted – and polished!

It is highly significant, in this connection, that the Torah groups two other sins together with the one of "im lo yagid" as requiring one type of sacrifice for atonement. The other two, in addition to the sin of withholding testimony, are tumat hamikdash vekadashav, that of defiling the Sanctuary or other holy objects when we are in a state of impurity as a result of contact with a dead body, and shevu'at bituy, the violation of an oath. What is the relation between these three?

There is, I believe, an inner connection that is of tremendous significance. The person who violates "im lo yagid," who suppresses the truth, especially one who fails to proclaim by example and expression the greatness of Torah and Torah life, is, as it were, acting as if all that individual believed in and all that individual represents were a corpse – a dead body of uninspired doctrines, irrelevant laws, and meaningless observances. The committed Jew, who, by acting cheaply or meanly, withholds testimony to the holiness of Torah, acts as if Torah were a dead letter insofar as it has no influence on character and conduct. By concealing this testimony that person has introduced an element of tuma, of deadly impurity, into the community. Furthermore, that person has also violated his shevua, for every Jew, by virtue of being born Jewish, is under prior oath to represent God, to stand for the Torah He gave at Sinai. We were commissioned to be a "segula," a "treasure" of God (Deuteronomy 7:6), by being a "mamlekhet kohanim," a "kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:6), and that means, according to the Seforno, that we must directly and

indirectly teach the entire world to call upon God and be faithful unto Him. Any Jew, therefore, who acts disgracefully, unethically, or irreligiously, misrepresents his mission, and violates his sacred oath.

It is for this reason that the Halakha was concerned not only with inner realities but also with outer appearances. A breakdown in our functioning as eidim means the introduction of tuma and the violation of shevua. It is for this reason, too, that the Halakha establishes a special and more taxing code of behavior upon the talmid ĥakham, the scholar – and, we may add, what is true for the scholar amongst laypeople is equally true for the observant or Orthodox Jew among the non-observant. That is why a Jew strongly identified with Torah must not accumulate bills but pay them at once; must not associate with unworthy people; must not be loud and abusive; must be respectful and courteous; must be scrupulously fair and ethical in business; and must be beloved and respected by all. When a Jew, especially a Torah Jew, or any Jew connected with a synagogue and especially an Orthodox synagogue, acts in conformity with this kind of code, that individual bears witness to the loftiness of Torah, to its divine origin, and demonstrates that Torah is a living reality, not a corpse which emanates tuma; that individual keeps the millennial oath, administered at Sinai, by which God is represented to the world. No wonder Maimonides, in codifying the special laws of which we have mentioned several examples, places them in his Laws of the Foundations of the Torah – for indeed, these are fundamental to the whole outlook of Torah.

Perhaps all that we have been saying is most succinctly summarized in two letters in the Torah. In the words “shema Yisrael, hear O Israel, Hashem Elokeinu, the Lord is our God, Hashem eĥad, the Lord is One” (Deuteronomy 6:4), the ayin of “shema” and the dalet of “eĥad” are written in the Torah larger than usual. These two letters spell “eid” – witness. For indeed, just as “im lo yagid venasa avono,” suppressing this testimony on behalf of Torah is sinful, so if we are eidim, and do testify to Him by our lives – that is the greatest tribute to the One God, Lord of Israel, and Creator of heaven and earth.

**Excerpted from Rabbi Dr. Norman J. Lamm's Derashot Ledorot: A Commentary for the Ages – Leviticus, co-published by OU Press and Maggid Books*

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Sage Advice

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser - 1 Nisan 5783 – March 23, 2023 0

"When a person will sin unintentionally … " (Vayikra 4:2)

The Talmud (Shabbos 12b) tells of an incident where a sin was done unintentionally. Our sages taught that one may not read on Shabbos by the light of the candle lest he adjust it. R' Yishmael ben Elisha said: I will read and I will not adjust. However, once he read and did adjust the wick. He then said: How great are the words of the sages who said that one may not read by candlelight, as even a person like me adjusted the wick. Afterward he wrote in his notebook: I, Yishmael ben Elisha read and adjusted the candle on Shabbos. When the Temple will be rebuilt, I will bring a fat sin-offering as an atonement for my sin.

The question is asked: What did R' Yishmael ben Elisha mean when he said he would bring a "fat sin-offering"? Although one must bring a sin-offering for chillul Shabbos (desecrating the Shabbos), the Torah does not stipulate that the sacrificial animal must be either fat or lean.

The Chasam Sofer cites his Rebbi, R' Nosson Adler, who says that R' Yishmael ben Elisha actually transgressed two aveiros. He adjusted the wick of the candle on Shabbos, which is a Torah prohibition and he violated a rabbinic injunction against reading by the light of a candle on Shabbos. Indeed, one must bring a sin-offering for the transgression of a Torah prohibition, but one does not bring a sacrifice for the violation of a rabbinic prohibition. Nevertheless, R' Yishmael ben Elisha wanted to atone for his secondary transgression. He therefore chose to bring a large animal to symbolically indicate his desire for atonement.

The Vilna Gaon highlights a correlation to R' Yishmael's statement, "How great are the words of the sages who said…" in Sanhedrin (21b), where R' Yitzchak asks why the rationales of the Torah commandments were not revealed. In response, the Talmud cites two examples where such a revelation was counterproductive. The Torah states (Devarim 17:16), "The king shall not accumulate many horses for himself so that he will not return the people to Egypt in order to increase horses." Shlomo HaMelech said, "I will accumulate many horses, but I will not return." We learn later (Melachim I, 10:29), "A chariot was brought out of Egypt for six hundred pieces of silver and horses for a hundred and fifty …"

The Talmud tells us (ibid.) that Shlomo HaMelech had 40,000 large stables, and each one had in it 4,000 stalls for horses.

It also says (Devarim 17:17), "The king shall not add many wives for himself so that his heart should not turn away." Shlomo HaMelech said: I will add many but I will not turn away," yet we learn later (Melachim I, 11:4), "… when Shlomo was old his wives turned away his heart …" The Talmud tells us that one of Shlomo's wives was the daughter of Pharaoh. When he married her, says the Yad Rama, King Shlomo lost some of his wealth. The Talmud (Shabbos 56b) relates that Pharaoh's daughter brought him a thousand musical instruments which had been used for idolatry, and Shlomo did not protest. Also, the Angel Gavriel put a pole in the sea when Shlomo married the daughter of Pharaoh. A sandbar grew around it, growing larger each year and creating new, dry land, upon which the great city of Rome was built. It was the Romans who were instrumental in the destruction of the Temple.

The fact that Shlomo HaMelech was provided with a rationale for the Torah prohibitions actually contributed to his undoing.

It is brought down in the Shulchan Aruch that during the days before Pesach it is important to engage in the mitzvah of ma'os chitim. This is in order to ensure that everyone who is in need has the necessary provisions to celebrate the Yom Tov of Pesach properly with food, matzah and wine.

I was recently approached for Pesach funds on behalf of a widow with young children. She had never needed to be at the receiving end of assistance, but she was now in a position where she needed money simply to feed her family for Pesach. Her dire circumstances were overwhelming for her, and I was asked to offer the young widow divrei chizuk. I readily agreed to the request and awaited the woman's call.

When the widow called, she was practically in tears. I explained to her that she was, in fact, doing more for us – by giving us the opportunity to dispense tzedakah and provide for Hashem's children – than we were doing for her. The Medrash Vayikra Rabbah tells us that more than the wealthy person does for the poor, the poor man does for the wealthy. Moreover, I said gently, the money one gives to tzedakah not only serves as an eternal merit in this world and the next, but it also has the power to atone for our sins and to be a source of increased parnassah. It would be my greatest simcha, I told her, to meet her children and give them a bracha. She expressed a strong desire and interest in this offer, but said she was just too embarrassed to come over with them in person. Nevertheless, I suggested that she keep my number in the event that she changed her mind.

To my surprise, she called a few days later and asked if she could take me up on my offer. The children were well-behaved and respectful and definitely excited to get a bracha. As I gave each one a candy with a small prize, the mother stood by with tears in her eyes, as the children jumped with delight.

I invite all our loyal readers of the Jewish Press and friends of Klal Yisroel to share in this great mitzvah and give chizuk to families, individuals, and children in need. In the zechus of your contribution, may you merit blessing and success, a year of good health, nachas, happiness and prosperity.

Please send your contribution to Khal Bnei Yitzchok Yom Tov Fund, c/o Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, 1336 E. 21 Street, Brooklyn, NY 11210. If you wish, you can Zelle your payment to 718-954-4343. If you would like any special tefillos to be offered for a shidduch, shalom bayis, parnassah, or a refuah, please include the person's name and the mother's name.

Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, a prominent rav and Torah personality, is a daily radio commentator who has authored over a dozen books, and a renowned speaker recognized for his exceptional ability to captivate and inspire audiences worldwide.

From: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>
to: ravfrand@torah.org
date: Mar 22, 2023, 12:35 PM
subject: **Rav Frand - Parshas HaTamid and Akeidas Yitzchak**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1242 Seder with the Zayde – Not as Simple As You Think and Other Seder Issues. Good Shabbos!

Appending a Pasuk from Parshas Vayikra onto Parshas HaTamid Invokes Akeidas Yitzchak

Parshas HaTamid, which is contained in the "Korbonos" section of Shachris (the morning daily prayers) is from Parshas Pinchas. The Parshas HaTamid as it is written in Parshas Pinchas (Bamidbar 28:1-8), concludes with the pasuk: "and the other lamb shall you present at dusk; as the meal-offering of the morning, and as the drink-offering thereof, you shall present it, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Hashem." (Bamidbar 28:8). However, after quoting the eight pesukim from Parshas Pinchas, the Parshas HaTamid that we recite daily, concludes with one additional pasuk from Parshas Vayikra: "He is to slaughter it on the north side of the Mizbayach before Hashem, and Aharon's sons, the Kohanim, are to dash its blood upon the Mizbayach all around." (Vayikra 1:11).

This last pasuk, from this week's parsha, is not even referring to the Korban HaTamid! It therefore seems very strange that it is appended to our daily recital of Parshas HaTamid. It is true that the Korban Tamid, as well as other "Kodshei Kodashim" offerings, are all slaughtered on the north side of the Mizbayach. But why do we append this pasuk to Parshas HaTamid?

The Mishna Berurah explains that this pasuk is appended to our daily recital of the Parshas HaTamid based on the teaching of a Medrash. The Medrash states that the Ribono shel Olam invokes Heaven and Earth as His witnesses that "Whenever this particular pasuk is recited—whether by Jew or Gentile, man or woman, freeman or slave—I will remember Akeidas Yitzchak." In other words, mention of this pasuk is our way of sneaking in, so to speak, another remembrance of Akeidas Yitzchak. This also seems strange because this pasuk seems to have nothing to do with Akeidas Yitzchak! What is the connection between this pasuk and Akeidas Yitzchak?o

The Maharal Diskin makes a very interesting point: In Biblical times, when they slaughtered an animal for a korbn, it was slaughtered on top of the Mizbayach, rather than the later-prevalent practice to slaughter the animal on the side of the Mizbayach. Why?

Avraham put his son Yitzchak on top of the Mizbayach, as was common practice, in order to offer him as a korbon. Yitzchak wanted to be bound on the Mizbayach because he was afraid that he would jerk and invalidate himself as a korbon. That is why it is called Akeidas Yitzchak (the Binding of Yitzchak). Avraham Avinu bound Yitzchak to the Mizbayach, and was about to slaughter him when the malach came forth and said, "Do not send forth your hand against the lad, do not do anything to him…." (Bereshis 22:12). We might think that at that point Avraham would say to his son, "Okay, Yitzchak, let's untie the ropes. Let's get out of here." But no, Avraham Avinu leaves him bound. Why does Avraham leave him bound? The Maharal Diskin explains: Avraham traveled all the way to Har Hamoria. He had to offer some kind of korbon. So he looked up and saw that a ram was caught by its horns in the thicket. Okay, so now Avraham had his ram – so why was Yitzchak STILL bound on the Mizbayach? It was because Avraham was not yet sure that this animal was kosher for a korbon. "Maybe it has a mum (blemish). Maybe it is a ba'al mum," he feared. After all, it was caught up in the thorns! Avraham Avinu was afraid to unbind Yitzchak because he was not sure that the ram would be an acceptable substitute offering. Therefore, what does he do? He slaughters the ram ON THE NORTH SIDE of the Mizbayach.

That is why from that day forward, all the major korbonos – the Olah, the Chatas, and the Asham – are slaughtered on the north side of the Mizbayach. This reenacts what Avraham Avinu did. He was the first person to slaughter an animal on the north side of the Mizbayach rather than on the Mizbayach itself. Therefore, when we recite the pasuk "He slaughtered it on the northern side of the Mizbayach…" we are once again invoking the merit and the memory of Akeidas Yitzchak. This is why we say it as part of the daily Parshas HaTamid, as the Mishna Berura indicates.

The Roptshitzer Rebbe on Doing Mitzvos Correctly

Rav Naftali Tzvi Horowitz, known as the Roptshitzer Rebbe, gives a chassidishe insight into a pasuk in this week's parsha. The Torah uses the following pasuk to introduce the halacha of the bull brought as a sin offering by the Sanhedrin as an atonement for an erroneous ruling: "And if the whole congregation of Israel shall err, the thing being hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and do any of the things which the L-rd has commanded not to be done, and are guilty." (Vayikra 4:13)

The wording of this pasuk seems strange: "…and do any of the things which the L-rd has commanded not to be done…" does not refer to doing an aveira (sin). It says they did something which Hashem commanded not to be done. The Roptshitzer Rebbe says that the pasuk is not referring to doing aveiros. It is referring to not doing mitzvos correctly. "One of the mitzvos of Hashem … asher lo sei'asena" – that you are not doing it the way you are supposed to be doing it! That in itself is sinful.

We are now on the threshold of Pesach. Leil haSeder is a night full of mitzvos. There is no other night like it throughout the year. There are so many mitzvos, both D'Oraisa (Biblical) and D'Rabanan (Rabbinic). Matzah and Sipur Yetzias Mitzraim are D'Oraisa; Maror and Arba Kosos are D'Rabanan. A person needs to be careful not only to perform the mitzvos, but to perform the mitzvos correctly – with the proper intentions, meticulousness, and enthusiasm that this once-a-year situation merits.

The Roptshitzer Rebbe quotes a story involving two chassidim of the Baal Shem Tov. They were talking with each other: One chossid said, "Oy, what will be with me? After 120 years, I will approach the Kisei haKavod and I will need to give an accounting on all the aveiros that I did during my lifetime." The other chossid answered back: "I am not worried about my aveiros. When the Ribono shel Olam will call me on the carpet and ask me why I did this and that aveira, I will explain that I had this lust and that lust and I could not control myself. However, I am really worried about the mitzvos that I did. I am worried that perhaps I did not do them properly. What is my excuse for that?

We may have lapses and fall down spiritually by transgressing certain prohibitions. That may be understandable. But once we are already doing a mitzvah – do it correctly! That was his worry: "hamitzvos asher lo sei'asena" – the mitzvos that he was not performing correctly.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com
Edited by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit http://www.yadyechiel.org/ for further information.

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Rav Kook Torah

Vayikra: Animal Sacrifices in the Third Temple?

Rabbi Chanan Morrison

Rav Kook's views on the Temple service are sometimes misconstrued. A superficial reading of a passage in Olat Re'iyah (vol. I, p. 292) indicates that only grain offerings will be offered in the reinstated Temple service. To properly understand Rav Kook's approach, it is necessary to read a related essay from Otzarot HaRe'iyah. What will the rebuilt Temple be like? Will we really offer animal sacrifices once again?

Protecting Animals Some people object to the idea of sacrifices out of concern for the welfare of animals. However, this objection contains a measure of hypocrisy. Why should compassion for animals only be expressed with regard to humanity's spiritual needs? If our opposition to animal slaughter is based not on weakness of character, but on recognition of the issue's fundamental morality, then our first step should be to outlaw the killing of animals for food, clothing, and other material benefits. In the

world's present state, the human race is weak, both physically and morally. The hour to protect animal life has not yet arrived. We still need to slaughter animals for our physical needs, and human morality requires that we maintain clear boundaries to distinguish between the relative value of human and animal life. At this point in time, to advocate the protection of animals in our service of God is disingenuous. Is it moral to permit cruelty towards animals for our physical needs, yet forbid their use for our spiritual service, in sincere recognition and gratitude for God's kindness? If our dedication and love for God can be expressed - at its highest level — with our willingness to surrender our own lives and die al kiddush Hashem, sanctifying God's name, then certainly we should be willing to forgo the life of animals for this sublime goal.

The Return of Prophecy Currently, however, we are not ready for an immediate restoration of the sacrificial service. Only with the return of prophecy will it be possible to restore the Temple order. In a letter penned in 1919, Rav Kook explained: "With regard to sacrifices, it is more correct to believe that all aspects will be restored to their place.... We should not be overly troubled by the views of European culture. In the future, God's word to His people will elevate all the foundations of culture to a level above that attainable by human reason. "It is inappropriate to think that sacrifices only reflect the primitive idea of a worship of flesh. This service possesses a holy inner nature that cannot be revealed in its beauty without the illumination of God's light to His people [the return of prophecy] and a renewal of holiness to Israel. And this will be recognized by all peoples. But I agree with you that we should not approach the practical aspects of sacrifices before the advent of revealed divine inspiration in Israel." (Igrot HaRe'iyah vol. IV p. 24)

The Future World In the writings of the Kabbalists, we find a remarkable description of how the universe will look in the future, a world vastly changed from our current reality. All aspects of the universe will be elevated. Even the animals in that future era will be different; they will advance to the level of people nowadays (Sha'ar Hamitzvot of the Ari z"l). Obviously, no sacrifice could be offered from such humanlike animals. At that time, there will no longer be strife and conflict between the species. Human beings will no longer need to take the lives of animals for their physical, moral, and spiritual needs. It is about this distant time that the Midrash makes the startling prediction, "All sacrifices will be annulled in the future" (Tanchuma Emor 19, Vayikra Rabbah 9:7). The prophet Malachi similarly foretold of a lofty world in which the Temple service will only consist of grain offerings, in place of the animal sacrifices of old: "Then the grain-offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to God as in the days of old, and as in ancient years." (Malachi 3:4)

Hints to the Future Even in the current reality, we may feel uncomfortable about killing animals. This does not mean that the time for full animal rights has already arrived. Rather, these feelings come from a hidden anticipation of the future that is already ingrained in our souls, like many other spiritual aspirations. Hints of these future changes may be found in the text of the Torah itself. Thus, it says that offerings are slaughtered on the northern side of the altar. Why this side? The north traditionally represents that which is incomplete and lacking, as it is written, "Out of the north, the evil shall break forth" (Jeremiah 1:14). In other words, the need to slaughter animals is a temporary concession to life in an incomplete world. Furthermore, the Torah stipulates that sacrifices must be slaughtered לִרְצֹנְכֶם — 'willingly' (Lev. 19:5). The Temple service must correspond to our needs and wants. As the Talmud in Erchin 21a explains, one must be able to say, "I want to bring this offering." When the slaughter of animals is no longer generally acceptable to society, this condition will not be fulfilled. Finally, the Torah describes a person offering an animal sacrifice as adam (Lev. 1:2). This word indicates our current state of moral decline, a result of the unresolved sin of Adam, the first man. An individual offering a grain offering, on the other hand, is called nefesh, or soul (Lev. 2:1). The word nefesh implies a deeper, more essential level of humanity, independent of any temporary failings. (Gold from the Land of Israel pp. 173-176. Adapted from Otzarot HaRe'iyah, vol. II, pp. 101-103; Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 292)

Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ou.org>

Thu, Mar 23, 2023 at 8:13 PM

OU Torah Rabbi Sacks on Parsha

The Pursuit of Meaning

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l

The American Declaration of Independence speaks of the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Recently, following the pioneering work of Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology, there have been hundreds of books published on happiness. Yet there is something more fundamental still to the sense of a life well-lived, namely, meaning.

The two seem similar. It's easy to suppose that people who find meaning are happy, and people who are happy have found meaning. But the two are not the same, nor do they always overlap. Happiness is largely a matter of satisfying needs and wants. Meaning, by contrast, is about a sense of purpose in life, especially by making positive contributions to the lives of others. Happiness is largely about how you feel in the present. Meaning is about how you judge your life as a whole: past, present, and future.

Happiness is associated with taking, meaning with giving. Individuals who suffer stress, worry, or anxiety are not happy, but they may be living lives rich with meaning. Past misfortunes reduce present happiness, but people often connect such moments with the discovery of meaning. Furthermore, happiness is not unique to humans. Animals also experience contentment when their wants and needs are satisfied. But meaning is a distinctively human phenomenon. It has to do not with nature but with culture. It is not about what happens to us, but about how we interpret what happens to us. There can be happiness without meaning, and there can be meaning in the absence of happiness, even in the midst of darkness and pain.[1]

In a fascinating article in The Atlantic, "There's More to Life Than Being Happy,"[2] Emily Smith argued that the pursuit of happiness can result in a relatively shallow, self-absorbed, even selfish life. What makes the pursuit of meaning different is that it is about the search for something larger than the self.

No one did more to put the question of meaning into modern discourse than the late Viktor Frankl, who has figured prominently in these essays on spirituality.[3] In the three years he spent in Auschwitz, Frankl survived and helped others to survive by inspiring them to discover a purpose in life even in the midst of hell on earth. He knew that in the camps, those who lost the will to live died. It was there that he formulated the ideas he later turned into a new type of psychotherapy based on what he called "man's search for meaning." His book of that title, written in the course of nine days in 1946, has sold more than ten million copies throughout the world, and ranks as one of the most influential works of the twentieth century.

Frankl used to say that the way to find meaning was not to ask what we want from life. Instead we should ask what life wants from us. We are each, he said, unique: in our gifts, our abilities, our skills and talents, and in the circumstances of our life. For each of us, then, there is a task only we can do. This does not mean that we are better than others. But if we believe we are here for a reason, then there is a tikkun, a mending, only we can perform; a fragment of light only we can redeem; an act of kindness, or courage, or generosity, or hospitality only we can perform; even a word of encouragement or a smile only we can give, because we are here, in this place, at this time, facing this person at this moment in their lives.

"Life is a task," he used to say, and added, "The religious man differs from the apparently irreligious man only by experiencing his existence not simply as a task, but as a mission." He or she is aware of being summoned, called, by a Source. "For thousands of years that source has been called God."[4]

That is the significance of the word that gives our parsha, and the third book of the Torah, its name: Vayikra, "And He called." The precise meaning of this opening verse is difficult to understand. Literally translated it reads:

"And He called to Moses, and God spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying…" Vayikra 1:1

The first phrase seems to be redundant. If we are told that God spoke to Moses, why say in addition, "And He called"? Rashi explains as follows:

And He called to Moses: Every [time God communicated with Moses, whether signalled by the expression] "And He spoke," or "and He said," or "and He commanded," it was always preceded by [God] calling [to Moses by name]. Rashi on Vayikra 1:1.

"Calling" is an expression of endearment. It is the expression employed by the ministering angels, as it says, "And one called to the other." (Isaiah 6:3)

Vayikra, Rashi is telling us, means to be called to a task in love. This is the source of one of the key ideas of Western thought, namely the concept of a vocation or a calling, that is, the choice of a career or way of life not just because you want to do it, or because it offers certain benefits, but because you feel summoned to it. You feel this is your meaning and mission in life. This is what you were placed on earth to do.

There are many such calls in Tanach. There was the call Abraham heard to leave his land and family (Gen. 12:1). There was the call to Moses at the Burning Bush (Ex. 3:4). There was the one experienced by Isaiah when he saw in a mystical vision God enthroned and surrounded by angels:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" Is. 6:8

One of the most touching is the story of the young Samuel, dedicated by his mother Hannah to serve in the sanctuary at Shiloh where he acted as an assistant to Eli the Priest. In bed at night he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed it was Eli. He ran to see what he wanted but Eli told him he had not called. This happened a second time and then a third, and by then Eli realised that it was God calling the child. He told Samuel that the next time the voice called his name, he should reply, "Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening." It did not occur to the child that it might be God summoning him to a mission, but it was. Thus began his career as a prophet, judge, and anointer of Israel's first two kings, Saul and David (see I Samuel 3).

When we see a wrong to be righted, a sickness to be healed, a need to be met, and we feel it speaking to us, that is when we come as close as we can in a post-prophetic age to hearing Vayikra, God's call. And why does the word appear here, at the beginning of the third and central book of the Torah? Because the book of Leviticus is about sacrifices, and a vocation is about sacrifices. We are willing to make sacrifices when we feel they are part of the task we are called on to do.

From the perspective of eternity, we may sometimes be overwhelmed by a sense of our own insignificance. We are no more than a wave in the ocean, a grain of sand on the seashore, a speck of dust on the surface of infinity. Yet we are here because God wanted us to be, because there is a task He wants us to perform. The search for meaning is the quest for this task.

Each of us is unique. Even genetically identical twins are different. There are things only we can do, we who are what we are, in this time, this place, and these circumstances. For each of us God has a task: work to perform, a kindness to show, a gift to give, love to share, loneliness to ease, pain to heal, or broken lives to help mend. Discerning that task, hearing Vayikra, God's call, is one of the great spiritual challenges for each of us.

How do we know what it is? Some years ago, in To Heal a Fractured World, I offered this as a guide, and it still seems to me to make sense: Where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.

[1] See Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs, Jennifer Aaker, and Emily N. Garbinsky, "Some Key Differences between a Happy Life and a Meaningful Life," Journal of Positive Psychology, vol. 8, issue 6 (2013): pp. 505–16.

[2] Emily Smith, "There's More to Life Than Being Happy," The Atlantic, 9 January 2013.

[3] See in particular the essay from earlier in this series for entitled "Reframing."

[4] Viktor Frankl, The Doctor and the Soul: from Psychotherapy to Logotherapy (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1965), p. 13.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l was a global religious leader, philosopher, the author of more than 25 books, and the moral voice for our time. Until 1st September 2013 he served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, having held the position for 22 years. To read more from Rabbi Sacks, please visit www.rabbisacks.org.

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman's Weekly Chumash Shiur
Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>
...
Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Vayikra 5774

1. A couple of thoughts on the Parsha. The first has to do with the Korban Minchas Nedava which we find at the beginning of Perek 2 (וְנֶפֶשׁ, כִּי-תַקְרִיב קָרְבַּן מִנְחָה לַיהוָה). It is the only place that we find the expression Nefesh in regard to one of the Korbanos. Chazal Darshun from here that Korban Zeh Ba Leratzos Al Hanefesh that there is a Kapparah involved in the Mincha just as there is in the Olah, Chatos, and the Asham. All Korbanos are connected to Kapparah and that a Minchas Nedava (donated Mincha) is something which comes for Kappara. However, we don't find anywhere, not in the Gemara, not in the Midrashei Chazal what the specific Kappara of a Mincha is. We find regarding the Olah, the Chattas, and the Asham, but nothing regarding the Mincha.

The Netziv in the Hameik Davar on the Parsha makes a suggestion. It is absolutely incredible the Gadlus of the Netziv. He comes to a conclusion based on Pesukim (Pesukim all over Tanach). Normally we find that Gedolim say Nir'e Misugya D'shas or Nir'e Misugya D'shmaytsa. They take a Sugya, but the Netziv from Diyukim from the word Mincha in assorted places comes to a conclusion. His conclusion is the following. He says, this (Korban Mincha) comes for a Kappara for Aveiros that are done due to Middos. Middos here doesn't mean Middos in the sense of Middos Tovos. It means misbehavior which is due to depression, due to jealousy, due to obsession, due to anger. When somebody misbehaves due to a Kilkul Hamiddos, something which is causing him to misbehave due to Middos. So the Mincha is a Kappara specifically for misbehavior due to Kilkul Hamiddos. Where does he get this from? I will mention a few of the Pesukim. In Shmuel Aleph 26:19 when Shaul is pursuing Dovid and Dovid confronts him. Dovid says (אִם-יְהוָה הֱסִיתְךָ בִי, יָרַח מִנְחָה) for what you are doing to me the Kappara comes from smelling a Mincha. What in the world does a Mincha have to do more than any other Korban which is a Kappara? The Netziv explains, because we know that Shaul pursued Dovid because of a Ruach Hashem, a depression which came upon him so he said (אִם-יְהוָה הֱסִיתְךָ בִי) if Hashem led you to pursue me (יָרַח מִנְחָה), smell the Mincha and that will be the Kappara for you.

Another example, in the Haftorah of Chazon Yoshiyahu which is found in Yeshaya Perek Aleph. Yeshaya tells the people 1:13 (לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ, הָבִיא מִנְחַת-שָׁוְא) don't continue bringing worthless Menachos. Why Menachos? All Korbanos were brought, what is special about the Mincha? Again the Netziv explains, the Mincha is a Kappara for misbehavior which is due to a person who is depressed, is jealous, is angry, anyone of the different Kilkul Hamiddos. However, the generation of Yeshaya were making a deliberate effort, a Beshita effort to sin. Therefore, he tells them (לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ, הָבִיא מִנְחַת-שָׁוְא`) you bring a Kappara for the wrong thing, you are pretending that it is a Kilkul Hamiddos that leads you to this behavior. It is not.

In Chumash in Parshas Korach 16:15 Moshe Rabbeinu says to the Ribbono Shel Olam (אַל-תֵּפֶן אֶל-מִנְחָתָם) don't turn to their Mincha offering. What does a Mincha offering have anything to do with Korach? The same thing. The Netziv explains, because had the Aveira of Korach been because of Kilkul Hamiddos they would not deserve such a severe punishment, such a once in the history of the world punishment. However, it is not that way. Moshe Rabbeinu says to the Ribbono Shel Olam their Kilkul comes from a Shittas Hachaim, from an opinion that they have certain rights to go against what HKB"H decreed and for that reason (אַל-תֵּפֶן אֶל-מִנְחָתָם).

We find a similar use in the second Perek of Malachi 2:13 (מֵאֵין עוֹד, פְּנוֹת אֶל-הַמִּנְחָה). The same idea of not turning towards a Mincha where people sin deliberately. It is amazing the Gadlus of the Netziv from these Pesukim in various places in Tanach to come to a conclusion which fits beautifully in these places and in others regarding the uniqueness of a Mincha.

We find four types of Mincha. 1) is flour and water, 2) when it is baked, 3) when it is on a (Machavas) pan, and 4) which is cooked in a pot and it is a softer Mincha. Four types of Mincha. The Netziv explains that it comes for the four types of Kilkul Hamiddos. 1) depression, 2) when the person is too involved in levity and in Kalus, 3) anger, and 4) that which comes from Taiva or the pursuit of pleasure. Four types of Menachos against these four dangerous Kilkul Hamiddos.

Based on this Netziv we understand that we find by the Mincha a Lav in 2:11 (לֹא תֵעָשֶׂה, חָמֵץ) that it is not allowed to be Chometz. Why a Lav on it being Chometz, we all understand. Since Chometz is a symbol of Kilkul Hamiddos

it can hardly be a Michapeir on Kilkul Hamiddos and therefore, these Menachos were all Matzah Dafka. We find Chometz, we find a few Korbanos that could be Chometz but not a Minchas Nedava. Minchas Nedava is never Chometz unlike for example the Shtei Halechem that we bring on Shevuos which is allowed to be Chometz. This is a Vort regarding the Korban Mincha.

2. Let's move on to something regarding to Korbanos, the other half of Sefer Vayikra. As you all know we find the expression Raiach Nichoach by every Korban (Menachos too). They are Raiach Nichoach Ishei L'Hashem. There is one Korban where we don't find anywhere in the Torah the expression of Raiach Nichoach. As a matter of fact it is probably the Korban mentioned the most times in Chamishei Chumshai Torah and we don't find the expression of Raiach Nichoach once, and that is the Korban Pesach. It is a bit of a Pele. I would think that the Korban that has to do with Yetzias Mitzrayim should have the biggest Raiach Nichoach to the Ribono Shel Olam. It needs an explanation.

In the Sefer Tzitz Hasadeh on Chag Hapesach he has a beautiful explanation and if you remember you can save this as a Vort for the upcoming Chag HaPesach. The Ramban in the beginning of Vayikra 1:9 quotes the Rambam. The Rambam says that the reason for the Mitzvah of Korbanos was because the Goyim had Korbanos to their Avodah Zorah and to offset that HKB"H gave Klal Yisrael a Korban. We shouldn't have a Taiva to bring Korbanos to an Avodah Zorah so HKB"H said you can have Korbanos here. This is what the Rambam writes in Moreh Nivuchim. It is of course a Ketzas Pele. The whole purpose of a Korban is as a safeguard against Avodah Zorah? The Ramban along with virtually almost every Rishon that quotes the Rambam disagrees vehemently. The Ramban says what do you mean? A Korban is Raiach Nichoach Lashem. The Korban is brought as a Raiach Nichoach as something which is positive. He asks that Noach brought a Korban when he came out of the Taiva. Kayin and Hevel brought Korbanos, there was no Avodah Zorah in the world and therefore, the Rambam is seen as a Pliya Atzuma.

It could be says the Sefer Tzitz Hasadeh that Ain Hachi Nami, all Korbanos that are Raiach Nichoach come for positive reasons. Nevertheless, the Korban Pesach which is unique is not called a Raiach Nichoach Lashem, can be understood based on the Rambam that it is brought as a Geder against Avodah Zorah. So that all Korbanos come as a Siman of Ahavah and Hiskarvus to the Ribbono Shel Olam and the Korban Pesach which is different in so many ways, it is different not only on when it is brought and when it is eaten but also in the Halachos of the Korban. There is no part of the Korban which is offered onto the Mizbaiach, there is no Raiach Nichoach opportunity. It may be that the Korban Pesach remains as the Rambam says as a Geder to Avodah Zorah. Shemos 12:21 (מִשְׁכוּ, וּקְחוּ לָכֶם), when the Ribbono Shel Olam commanded Korban Pesach he said (מִשְׁכוּ, וּקְחוּ לָכֶם). Mishchu Yidaichem Mai'Avodah Zorah and go take a Korban Pesach. How beautiful. It fits absolutely into this Machshava that the Korban Pesach is not Raiach Nichoach. It is meant as a Hakdara a Sur Maira, a Mishchu Yidaichem Mai'Avodah Zorah. We find by the Korban Pesach that there was a certain amount of Mesiras Nefesh in bringing the Korban Pesach. That again fits well. It was again a Geder against Avodah Zorah.

What we gain with this is something incredible for those at least who are interested in learning Nach. We find in Nach when Malchei Yisrael started movements of Teshuvah that they had Klal Yisrael come together and bring a Korban Pesach. We find it at least twice. Yoshiyahu Hamelech in Melachim II 23:21 when he has Klal Yisrael doing Teshuva and Yoshiyahu was the last great Machzir B'teshuvah from all the Malchei Yisrael. He says (וַיְצַו הַמֶּלֶךְ, אֶת-כָּל-הָעָם לֵאמֹר, עֲשׂוּ פֶסַח, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם). We find the same thing regarding Chizkiyahu who of course the Posuk says was the greatest person that brought Klal Yisrael to Teshuva in Divrei Hayamim II at the beginning of Perek 30 it is brought that Chizkiyahu or as it is brought in Divrei Hayamim Yechizkiyahu had Klal Yisrael bring a Korban Pesach (וַיִּשְׁלַח יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ עַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וִיהוּדָה, וְגַם-אִגְּרוֹת כָּתַב עַל-אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה, לָבוֹא לְבֵית-יְהוָה, בִּירוּשָׁלַם--לַעֲשׂוֹת פֶּסַח, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). Again he asks them to bring a Korban and if you know anything about Nach it is an incredible thing that he said (וְגַם-אִגְּרוֹת כָּתַב עַל-אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה). Chizkiyahu was only the Melech on the two Shevatim as it was in his days that the 10 Shevatim went to Galus. As part of his Teshuva movement he brought a Korban Pesach. This fits well with this Yesod. The Korban Pesach is a Geder against Avodah Zorah. Of course this sheds new light on the Seder Shel Pesach. The Pesach Seder is supposed to have Matza, Maror, and the Korban Pesach. Pashtus they have no connection to each other, they are just the three Mitzvos Hayom. If the Korban Pesach is Raiach Nichoach then it doesn't fit into the idea of Chametz Umatza. However, given our understanding that the idea of having Matza and not Chametz is part of Biur Hara, Biur Chametz, getting rid of that which is bad, then the Korban Pesach fits absolutely beautifully. The Korban Pesach is the Hakdara against Avodah Zorah. And so, we have an insight into the Korban Pesach and I am sure as we study the Korban Pesach in preparation for Chag HaPesach we will find additional places where this Yesod fits. Any solid Yesod that a person comes up with if it is true fits in other places.

Rav Chaim Brisker used to say if you go on a good road you will meet people. In learning, if you go on a good road, if you have a Mehaleich, an approach, a Klaliyosdika approach and it is true then you see that it fits in numerous places. And so, in the 5 weeks or so until Pesach, in these weeks learn about the Korban Pesach. Looking forward to finding other places where this Yesod fits well.

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Vayikra

פרשת ויקרא תשפ"ג

אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לד'

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

The underlying concept of *korbanos*, ritual offerings, is shrouded in deep, esoteric wisdom. The early commentators – such as *Rambam, Ramban, Ibn Ezra* – each presents his individual approach and opinion concerning the efficacy and purpose of *korbanos*. For our purposes, I will cite from the *Ramban's* commentary to the beginning of the *parshah*: "Since the actions of humans are consummated through thought, speech and action, Hashem commanded that, when a person sins, he shall bring an offering. He shall place his hands on it, corresponding to the action component of his sin. Then he shall confess his sin, verbalizing it with his mouth, corresponding to the speech component of his sin. The innards and kidneys are burnt in the fire of the Altar. These are organs of thought and desire; thus, their offering corresponds to the thought aspect of his sin. The rest of the animal's organs and its hands and feet, coincide with its hands and feet. The blood spilled on the Altar corresponds to the blood of its soul… All this is intended, so that the person should contemplate while he is doing these rituals, that he sinned to Hashem with his body and soul, and it is only through the kindness of Hashem that He has exchanged the life of the animal for his (the sinner's) life."

We derive from the words of *Ramban* that the primary intention of the one who brings the *korban* should be his preparedness to sacrifice himself to Hashem in place of the *korban*. It is only by the grace of Hashem that the *korban* takes his place. The *Shlah HaKadosh* adds that one who brings a *korban* elevates himself to such a high spiritual level that the fact that he is willing to relinquish his life for Hashem is in and of itself a *kapparah*, atonement, for him.

We glean from this that the barometer of a man's spirituality and relationship to Hashem is his total abnegation, to the point of self-sacrifice for the Almighty. The *Baalei Mussar,* Ethicists, teach that this level of *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, may apply to – and is fulfilled, when one exerts himself in – the study of Torah. *Yegiah*, toil, to learn, to understand, to innovate, are all expressions of *mesiras nefesh* which demonstrate one's love for Hashem. Today, one does not have to battle enemies from without who prohibit Torah study. One primary contemporary deterrent is overcoming indolence and maintaining focus on learning and not on the world outside the *bais hamedrash*.

At the funeral of *Horav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Brisk* (eldest son of the *Brisker Rav, zl*), the deceased's son and successor, *Horav Avraham Yehoshua, Shlita*, said the following in his *hesped*, eulogy. "*Abba*, I heard from you numerous times that the greatest form of *mesiras nefesh* is one's sacrifice to understand with optimum clarity every passage in

the Torah. (This applies to both the Written and Oral law, as well as its commentators.) One should not forgo, give in and not press forward, clarifying every issue in *halachah* that is presented. This is the ultimate *mesiras nefesh*. The reason for this is that a spectator is unable to ascertain and determine the level of such *mesiras nefesh*, its veracity and sincerity, its love for Torah and Hashem. Only the Almighty knows. Only He who peers into the deepest recesses of one's heart knows the depths of one's true *mesiras nefesh*."

As an aside, I feel it prudent to address the difference between *mesiras nefesh* in Torah theology and that of varied cultures who, often to prove a point, will immolate themselves or blow themselves up with a bomb just to inflict injury and worse on their enemies. The basic difference is our outlook on life in contradistinction to theirs: We view life as the greatest and most important gift that Hashem has given us. Life is sacrosanct; thus, every moment must be cherished and used for a higher purpose in service to the Almighty. If a life is in danger, one may transgress just about any sin – regardless of its severity. (This excludes the three cardinal sins, for which, under specific circumstances, one is compelled to give up his life.) Having said this, we understand what is involved for a Jew to make the decision when he is in a position in which he must relinquish his life. This is the epitome of devotion to the Almighty. Those who freely sacrifice their life either have no clue concerning the value of life or they consider their lives of no substance or no value. In addition, when one sacrifices his life out of hatred for an enemy or acts on the brainwashing orders and encouragement of a despotic cleric bent on making a name for himself, he is truly a very sick, very foolish, person. In short, we value life. Thus, when we give it up, it is *mesiras nefesh* of the highest order. On the other hand, in their minds, their life has little value to them and therefore, giving it up has little meaning to them.

We take our Torah leaders for granted, assuming that their distinction in Torah is, for the most part, due to their brilliance. *Horav Yechezkel Levinstein, zl*, the venerable *Mashgiach* of Mir and Ponovezh, said otherwise, "If you notice an *adam gadol*, great man, who has merited to achieve a pivotal plateau in Torah erudition or in his *avodah*, service to Hashem, you have no cause to search for a reason for his ascension to eminence. You may be certain that he endured and passed numerous difficult challenges, trials and ups and downs, in order to reach this point. On the contrary, the greater the *gadol*, the greater the indication that he went through even greater vicissitudes to reach this point."

Exerting oneself to study Torah is clearly a prerequisite to achieving lofty goals. We are aware, however, of an added ingredient without which the toil expended will ultimately not achieve its desired goal: *simchah*, joy, enthusiasm, excitement in being able to learn Hashem's Torah. At the funeral for *Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl, Rosh Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov, Horav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz, zl,* was among the *maspidim* who eulogized him. *Rav* Moshe Shmuel achieved the distinction that his *sefarim, Kuntros HaBiurim*, became a staple in the *yeshivah* world. *Rav* Michel Yehudah began by underscoring the deceased's *ameilus*, toil, in Torah. He then added that, under no circumstances, regardless of the challenges, travail and illness which he confronted, did he ever lose his *simchah* in learning. His success was a result of his joy. It gave life to his toil and allowed him to appreciate and value every moment of his exertion.

Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, zl, related to one of his sons that, when he was a youth, the Yerushalayim community was suffering through a debilitating famine. There was no food, even for those who could afford to pay for it – let alone for those, like the Auerbach family, who lived in abject poverty. He remarked that, when he returned home from the *yeshivah* and noticed that all there was to eat was some stale bread, he decided to return to the *yeshivah* to continue learning. He ruminated, "My sisters have nothing else to eat and no other means for soothing their hunger pangs. I can return to the *yeshivah* and, in a short while, be so engrossed in learning that the joy I will experience will help me to mitigate my starvation. My sisters do not have that option. He returned to the *yeshivah* and left his portion for his sisters.

אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לד'

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

Korbanos are a medium for bringing one closer to Hashem. Hence, (we use) the term *korban*, which is connected to *karov*, near. The various *korbanos* comprised one aspect of the person's atonement process. Once he recognizes and acknowledges his sin, states it and acts remorseful, he is now able to commence the journey toward penance and forgiveness. As part of the *teshuvah* process, he offers a *korban* which is sacrificed on the *Mizbayach*, Altar, with the understanding that, what takes place concerning the animal, really should have happened to him. The realization of the chasm created by his lapse in behavior will catalyze a sense of regret and acceptance for the future that such behavior will no longer be a part of his life. Today *korbanos* are no longer extant. As a result, *tefillah*, prayer, is our service to Hashem. Everything else, acknowledgement and remorse, followed by acceptance for the future, however, remain the same. These are part and parcel of the *teshuvah* process.

The following story, which I wrote a few years ago, is worth repeating. It is about a girl who, when up against the wall, decided to bring her own innovative *korban*.

A few years ago, a terrorist packed his car with 100 kilos of explosives and parked it near a supporting pillar at the Cinemall in Haifa. It did not explode. Had his intentions achieved fruition, the tragedy would have been cataclysmic. Not only would it have destroyed the pillar, but it would have also caused a conflagration when the other cars in the lot would have ignited. This is one of the most popular malls in the area, and it was full at the time. We cannot even begin to contemplate the extent of the tragedy had that bomb gone off. An alert passerby noticed smoke coming from the car and summoned the police, who brought in the bomb squad and diffused the bomb. Everyone – even Ehud Olmert, then Prime Minister – recognized that they were spared by Hashem. This was clearly a miracle.

Now, for the rest of the story. Several weeks prior to this occurrence, a teenage girl in Haifa who had been complaining of stomach pains went to the doctor, and, after a battery of tests, was diagnosed with a malignant tumor that had metastasized. The doctors gave the grim verdict: They could do nothing other than give her pain meds to make her comfortable. She had mere weeks to live.

The girl did not give up; her parents did not give up. They might not have been observant Jews, but hope is a value that is inherently Jewish. They pleaded with the doctors to try something – anything – at least to make an effort to save their daughter's life. The doctors finally agreed and scheduled surgery for the next day. Feeling that their chances for success were very low, they assigned a young, inexperienced surgeon, with the feeling that it would be good practice for him. Since he had nothing to lose, the surgeon really could not go wrong.

They say that there are no atheists in a foxhole. The night before the surgery, the non-observant girl began to plead with Hashem. She said, "*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, I am not perfect, and I probably do not deserve any favors from You. In ancient times, when we had a *Bais Hamikdash*, a sinner would confess and offer a *korban* and achieve penance. Today, we have no *Bais Hamikdash*, no *korbanos*, no *Kohanim*, but I still want to bring a *korban*."

At that moment, she walked into her closet, removed all of her immodest clothing and carried it out to her yard. She made a pile and struck a match, creating a large pyre of burning clothing. She cried out, "Hashem, this is my *korban*!"

The next day, the girl went to the hospital in her nightgown and robe. She had no other clothing. Her entire wardrobe had been elevated to *korban* status. She had the surgery, and, lo and behold, the tumor had not metastasized. It was totally contained – and benign. She had just been the fortunate recipient of a miracle. When she shared the story behind the miracle with her friends, they, too, wanted to reap the benefits of dressing modestly. The next day, they all came together, brought out their immodest attire and made a bonfire!

The girls were now left with nothing presentable to wear. No problem – that is what malls are for. They all went together to celebrate their newly-accepted modesty – by shopping for new clothes. When that terrorist bomb

was set to go off, those girls were at the mall, shopping for new, modest clothing!

אשר נשיא יחטא ועשה אחת מכל מצות ד' אלקיו אשר לא תעשנה בשגגה
When a ruler sins and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem that may not be done – unintentionally. (4:22)

The other *pesukim* (addressing private and communal sin) begin with the logical *v'im*, if (someone sins). Concerning the *Nasi*, the Torah begins with the word *asher*, which means when (a *Nasi* sins). Why, concerning everyone else, it is "if" and regarding the *Nasi*, it is "when"? It is almost as if the Torah is implying that, for the *Nasi*, sin is inevitable. It is only a question of when it will occur. *Rashi* quotes the *Sifra* that teaches that the word *asher* alludes to *ashrei*, fortunate, implying that a generation whose leader sins and seeks atonement for his error is truly fortunate. A leader who does not hide behind his cloak of power, who is prepared to come clean and seek atonement for his unintentional indiscretions, will surely repent his intentional sins. We wonder whether having a leader who concedes his unintentional sins is better than a leader who does not sin at all. One would think that a leader who is free and clear of all transgressions – both unintentional and intentional – would be the kind of leader a generation would be fortunate to have. Why settle for second choice?

Horav Sholom Shachne Zohn, zl (quoted by *Horav* Eliezer *HaLevi* Turk) related an exposition he heard from ***Horav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, zl***. When a generation has a leader who never errs, never sins, this can be attributed to either of two reasons: 1) The leader is that good, that circumspect, that careful that he does not commit an unintentional sin. 2) The leader does very little. He rubber stamps what his congregation wants. He never takes a stand, never takes the initiative, never goes on the offense for fear that he might lose support. A leader who does nothing cannot really err. (The second reason sadly occurs more often than we care to admit.)

One of the *gedolei ha'mussar*, Ethicists, analogized this in the following manner. A person attending a wedding was asked to pour wine for the participants sitting at his table. He replied, "I refuse to pour wine for the guests." When he was queried for a reason, he responded, "I am afraid of spilling wine on the tablecloth." Those who heard his reply looked at him incredulously, "What is so bad if you spill a little wine? That is what tablecloths are for."

This man was overly careful, and perhaps he should be commended for his caution. Not pouring the wine, however, is taking caution too far. His non-action borders on absurdity. A well-known quote (secular), "Your job is to achieve greatness, not to avoid mistakes." Errors are normal; people are often stressed, especially if they are under pressure. If they do nothing, however, they might not make mistakes, but they will have made the mistake of not doing anything.

This, explains *Rav* Chaim Ozer, is why a generation whose leader offers a *korban* for his unintentional sin is fortunate. The sin came as a result of his seeking to do, to achieve, to create for his community. He does not sit back ensconced in his ivory tower fearing what could result from his error. He acts, and, come what may, he knows that he had made every attempt to help those who rely on him.

Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl (*Ayeles HaShachar*) notes the language of *Rashi's* commentary, "The word *asher* here is related to *ashrei*, fortunate. Fortunate is the generation whose ruler sets his heart (*nosein lev*) to bring an atonement for his unintentional sins." *Rashi* lauds neither the *Nasi's* bringing the *korban*, nor his courage in not concealing his error. Rather, *Rashi* underscores the fact that he set his heart to introspect and examine himself, to correct his ways and repair his error.

Rav Turk explains this meaningfully. By his very nature, man refuses to accept responsibility. It is always someone else who is responsible for his oversight. Thus, whenever an error occurs, he will convince himself that it is not his fault. He will find every reason to justify his actions. *Teshuvah* is comprised of introspection, such that it does not allow for ambiguity and cover up. The *Nasi* has every excuse to project his unintentional guilt onto others. He carries enormous responsibility on his shoulders. Thus, he has numerous venues on which to lay blame. The leader who is man enough to accept responsibility and not seek a way to expunge his guilt by blaming it on someone or something else is truly a great ruler – one that the generation is fortunate to have.

A great leader whom the generation is privileged to have at its helm is one who, not only does not conceal his errors, but one who actually searches for any perceived failing in his behavior. He will not leave any stone unturned in his self-examination. *Rav* Turk relates an incredible incident which occurred with *Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl, Mashgiach* of Ponovezh, Mir and Kletsk. The *Mashgiach* was a *Levi*, and, as such, is enjoined to wash the hands of the *Kohanim* prior to *duchaning*, blessing of the congregation. Despite the fact that *duchaning* occurs at the end of *Mussaf*, the *Mashgiach* was unable to participate in this noble endeavor because he was reciting *Shemoneh Esrai*. On *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, however, due to the lengthy *piyutim*, liturgy, he was able to complete his recital of *Shemoneh Esrai* in time. He had one stipulation. He would only wash the hands of the *Rosh Yeshivah, Horav Yosef Kahaneman, zl, Ponovezher Rav*.

Rosh Hashanah Mussaf everyone, *Kohanim* and *Leviim*, lined up to participate in this pre-*duchaning* ritual. *Rav* Turk, who was a young boy at the time (he had accompanied his father), noticed that, while there were many *Leviim* assembled by the water faucets, in a corner he saw a solitary *Kohen* and a solitary *Levi*. This piqued his curiosity. After all, what made them different? He moved closer to see. When he saw who it was, he also wanted to wash the *Rav's* hands. (*Rav* Turk is a *Levi*.) He went over and was about to pick up a cup when the *Mashgiach* said, "*Nu, nu*!" and shooed him away.

The *Mashgiach* was distraught that perhaps he had hurt the young boy's feelings. He went over to *Rav* Turk's father and begged his forgiveness. He asked him to apologize to his son – which, of course, he did. Nonetheless, the *Mashgiach* could not rest. He worried lest he had hurt a young boy's feelings. On *Yom Kippur*, as the *Mashgiach* walked over to the faucet, he stopped at (young) *Rav* Turk's seat and motioned to him to come along. The *Mashgiach* filled the cup with water and signaled to *Rav* Turk to hold the cup with him, and together they washed the *Rosh Yeshivah's* hands. This was all because he might have slighted a young boy and hurt his feelings. Concerning such a leader, the Torah asserts, *Ashrei hador*; "Fortunate is the generation."

In memory of our beloved parents Rabbi Dr. Avrohom Yitzchok Wolf & Rebbetzin Anna Moses Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family, Ari and Rivky Wolf and Family, Abba and Sarah Spero and Family, Pesach and Esther Ostroy and Family, Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©*All rights reserved prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum*

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Laws of the Blessing of Bread and Mezonot
Revivim
By Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

Bread is a general term for satisfying food, therefore its blessing exempts the rest of the food in a meal * Foods that a person is used to eating because of their good taste and not for the purpose of satiety, blesses before eating them, even during a meal * Someone who wants to eat cakes at a meal, should decide in his mind from the beginning whether they are part of the meal and exempted with the blessing HaMotzi, or they are separate, and require the blessing Mezonot * One who eats an amount of Mezonot that usually satisfies him, should recite HaMotzi over them

Q: Why does the blessing over bread exempt the other foods in a meal?

A: There are two reasons for this: 1) Bead is the main part of a meal, and all the other foods are secondary to it. 2) 'Bread' is a general term for satisfying food, as written: "Jacob then made a vow, saying, "If God remains with me, protecting me on this journey that I am making, and giving me bread to eat and clothing to wear" (Genesis 28:20). Hence, bread is a general term for food. Also, we find during the famine in Egypt, when the Egyptians turned to Joseph and asked: "Give us bread, lest we die before your very eyes" (Genesis 47:15), and likewise, when Joseph provided for his father's household, everything he gave them was called bread, as written: " Joseph sustained his father, and his brothers, and all his father's household with

bread, down to the little ones" (ibid., 12). Thus we see that the blessing 'HaMotzi' is not directed only towards bread and what is eaten with it, rather, at all the foods that are meant to satisfy.

Therefore, the blessing 'HaMotzi' exempts all the foods that are eaten at a meal, such as meat, fish, potatoes, rice, lentils, cheeses, raw and cooked salads, etc. And even if they are eaten separately, while not eating the bread, the blessing of 'HaMotzi' exempts them.

Dessert Foods are not Exempted by the 'HaMotzi' Blessing Q: Which foods eaten at a meal are not exempted by the blessing 'HaMotzi'?

A: Foods that a person is accustomed to eating because of their good taste and not for satiety, such as dates, grapes, watermelon, and the like. This is because the blessing 'HaMotzi' applies only to foods intended for satiation, which are the main part of the meal, but desserts that are eaten to add a good taste, which are usually eaten at the end of the meal or in between, are an addition to the meal, and should be blessed separately.

Therefore, one who eats fruits of the tree during his meal, blesses 'Ha'Etz', and one who eats watermelon blesses 'HaAdamah'.

Similarly, many people eat ice cream or pudding at the end of a meal, and since they are eaten for dessert and not included in foods intended for satiation, one recites the blessing 'Shehakol' over them.

All of this applies to the first blessing, but the Bracha Achrona (after-blessing) does not need to be recited over them, because Birkat Hamazon exempts all the foods eaten at the meal, whether foods eaten for satiety, or as a dessert (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 3:6).

Carrot or Waldorf Salads No blessing is recited on carrot or Waldorf salad served with dishes intended for satiation, because since they are served with the main dishes, they are generally considered to be included in dishes intended for satiation. However, if a sweet carrot salad or Waldorf salad are served after the meal for dessert, a 'Bracha Rishona' should be recited. And also on compote, i.e., fruits cooked in sugar served at the end of the meal, a 'Bracha Rishona' is recited.

Which Drinks are Not Exempted by the 'HaMotzi' Blessing? Drinks that a person is accustomed to drinking during his meal, such as water, juice, and spirits, are exempted with the blessing of 'HaMotzi'. But wine, because of its importance, is not exempted by the 'HaMotzi' blessing.

Coffee and tea that people usually drink after the meal are considered as part of the meal, and are exempted by the 'HaMotzi' blessing.

On the other hand, spirits drunk after the meal are not considered part of the meal, and require a blessing.

Do Cakes Eaten at a Meal Require a Blessing? Q: Rabbi, do cakes served at a meal require a blessing?

A: This is one of the most difficult questions in the laws of blessings, because in this halakha there are two polar opinions. Some poskim say that the 'Mezonot' blessing should not be recited because cakes are similar to bread and they are also satisfying, and therefore, they are part of the meal and are exempted with the blessing of 'HaMotzi' (Rashba). In addition, this question is related to the safek (doubt) regarding the pastry called in our Sages' parlance 'Pat ha'ba b'kisnin' (see, Peninei Halakha: Brachot 6:2). Therefore, some poskim say that since there is a safek about the matter, and since the general rule is safek brachot le'ha'kel (if one is in doubt whether one can make a Bracha, the general rule is that one shouldn't make the Bracha), one who eats them during a meal should not recite a blessing over them. And those who wish to glorify the mitzvah and avoid the safek, it is preferable they refrain from eating mezonot at a meal (Chida).

In practice, those who wish to eat mezonot at a meal, have to decide how they relate to eating them. If they decide that it is part of the meal, they should determine in their minds that the 'HaMotzi' blessing will always exempt all the mezonot they will eat at the meal, and consequently, they will not bless 'Mezonot' over them, as suggested by the author of the 'Chayei Adam' (43: 9). And if they decide that eating the mezonot is intended for dessert, they should determine in their minds that the blessing 'HaMotzi' will never exempt the mezonot, and recite over them the blessing 'Mezonot', as Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul suggested (Ohr Le'Tzion Vol.2, 12:10, in the footnote). And as long as they have not decided, because of the safek, they should not bless beforehand 'Mezonot', and those who wish to glorify the mitzvah – should refrain from eating them at a meal (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 3:8, 9).

One Who Sets his Meal on Baked Goods are Considered Bread A person who wants to eat bread, even in a very small amount, has to recite the blessing 'HaMotzi', because bread is intended for the setting of a meal, and even if one eats a 'ke'zayit' (the size of an average olive), one recites the important blessing over it, and thus exempts all the foods in the meal.

But for the rest of baked goods from the five types of grain, such as cakes, biscuits and crackers, since it is not customary to set a meal over them, the blessing 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' are said. However, when a person decides to set a meal over them, they are 'up-graded' to the level of bread, and then, in order to eat them, one must wash his hands with a blessing, and recite the blessing 'HaMotzi' over them, and with this blessing, exempts all other foods he will eat with them at the meal. And when finished eating, 'Birkat Hamazon' is recited over everything one ate.

This is because all grain pastries that are not bread have an intermediate status: on the one hand, since they are pastries, they are similar to bread, but on the other hand, since it is not customary to set a meal on them, they are not considered bread. Therefore, the usual bracha is 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya', however, when a meal is set over them, their bracha is 'HaMotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon' (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 6, 2).

What is the Amount of 'Setting a Meal'? In the opinion of the majority of poskim, the amount for keviyat seudah (setting of a meal) is the amount acceptable to eat at a regular meal, in such a way that the diner leaves it satiated, and does not need to eat again until the next meal. It is impossible to determine a measure according to volume, because there are airy pastries that satisfy only when one eats a large amount of them, and then there are compressed pastries that satiate by eating a relatively small amount. Rather, everything follows what is customary – if one usually is full from what he intends to eat, their bracha is 'HaMotzi'and 'Birkat Hamazon'.

And one should not feel he does not know how much food he needs to eat in order to be full, because with any amount that satiates, just like after eating a regular meal, one has basically set his meal on such an eating, and recites 'HaMotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon'.

Some poskim say that the amount for keviyat seudah is the volume of four eggs from the mezonot pastry (about the amount of a medium cup), and even though this amount does not usually satiate, people are customary to set a meal on such an amount of mezonot. In practice, we do not rule according to this method, and one who eats the volume of four eggs of a mezonot pastry, as long as he has not eaten as much as is usual to satiate from a regular meal, he recites the 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamechiya' blessings. However, le'chatchila (ideally), it is preferable not to eat a volume of four eggs, so as not to enter into a safek, rather, one should either eat less than the volume of four eggs, and thus say the 'Mezonot' blessing, or eat an amount that usually satiates, and say 'HaMotzi' and 'Birkat Ha-mazon' according to all opinions.

In summary: A person who eats an amount of mezonot that satiates as if he had eaten a regular meal, or even if he only eats an amount of mezonot the volume of four eggs, but together with the other foods he eats, will be as full as if he had eaten a regular meal, blesses before eating the mezonot 'HaMotzi', and after eating, 'Birkat Ha-mazon'.

On Cooked Grain Dishes, the Blessings 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' are Always Recited If one cooked the grains, such as semolina, bulgur and oats (Quaker), or made their flour into a kind of cooked dish, like noodles, tiny pasta, or quiche – since they 'up-graded' to the level of a tavshil (cooked dish) that 'fills man's heart', the blessing 'Mezonot' is said. And after one has eaten from them a ke'zayit (about half an egg), he blesses 'Al hamichiya', which is the blessing 'Me'ein Shalosh' (Shulchan Aruch 208: 2).

However, if one sets his meal on noodles or tiny pasta, since they are cooked dishes and not baked goods, one must always recite the blessing 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' over them.

The Term 'Mezonot Rolls' is Misleading, because their Blessing is 'Hamotzi' As we have learned, a baked food that is not bread (pat ha'ba b'kisnin) has an intermediate status: if it is eaten between meals, the blessings of 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' are said, and if a meal is set over it, the blessing 'Hamotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon' are said. On the other hand,

on bread, even when eating a little, ‘Hamotzi‘ and ‘Birkat Hamazon’ are said. The question is, where is the line between bread and baked goods?

The general rule is that anything that one regularly sets a meal over, is judged as bread, and on the other hand, anything that is regularly eaten between meals, for sweetness, or to alleviate hunger to a certain extent, is judged as a mezonot pastry. According to this, sweet challah and sweet rolls are considered bread, since they are normally eaten at meals, and they are not usually served for a taste between meals. They are also eaten them with different types of salads, or used as a sandwich with cheese or tuna, and thus, are used as bread. Therefore, even when one eats just a little bit of them, one must say the blessing ‘Hamotzi‘ and ‘Birkat Hamazon’. In our language, anything that is called bread, or challah, or a bun – we regularly set a meal over them. On the other hand, if a pastry is called a ‘cake’ – it is not customary to set a meal over it.

Indeed, many Sephardic Jews are accustomed to bless ‘Mezonot’ on sweet challah, because in the past, they were not used to serving it at a meal, but were used to serving slices of sweet challah as a snack between meals. But today, since they are intended for satiety and a meal, and not as a dessert between meals, their bracha is ‘Hamotzi’. Similarly, ‘mezonot rolls’ are usually sold with tuna and egg and the like, very similar to rolls without sweetness.

In addition to this, there is usually a volume ratio of four eggs in the ‘mezonot buns’, and consequently, even if it were a cake, some poskim say that one should say the bracha ‘Hamotzi’ and ‘Birkat Hamazon’ over them (Rama Me’Pano, Maharam Ben Habib, Beit David, Peninei Halacha: Brachot 6, 2), all the more so when they are usually eaten with additional foods that come to a cumulative amount that can substitute for a regular meal (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 6: 6, 5).

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

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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SEFER VAYIKRA - INTRODUCTION

Most of us find Sefer Vayikra rather boring - at least until we reach Parshat Kedoshim.

In our series on Sefer Vayikra we attempt to make the study of this book a bit more exciting, not only by analyzing its specific laws, but also by paying careful attention to its structure and theme.

WHAT MAKES SEFER VAYIKRA UNIQUE

Before we begin our study, we must first clarify how (and why) Sefer Vayikra is 'structurally' different from the other books of Chumash.

In general, when we study Chumash, we encounter two basic types of passages. They can either be:

1) **narrative** - i.e. the ongoing 'story' of Chumash; or
2) **commandments** - 'laws' that God commands Bnei Yisrael

Up until Sefer Vayikra, Chumash has essentially been narrative, i.e. the story of how God chose the Jewish nation, took them out of Egypt and gave them the Torah. For example, Sefer Breishit begins with the story of Creation and continues with the story of God's 'bechira' (choice) of Avraham Avinu and his offspring to become His nation. The few mitzvot that we do find in Sefer Breishit (e.g. 9:1-7, 32:32) are presented as part of that ongoing narrative.

Similarly, Sefer Shmot begins with the story of the Exodus and Bnei Yisrael's subsequent journey to Har Sinai. Surely, we find numerous mitzvot in Sefer Shmot; however, each set of laws is imbedded within the ongoing story. For example, the laws of Pesach (12:14-20) are presented as part of the story of Yetziat Mitzrayim, and the Ten Commandments (& the laws of Parshat Mishpatim / see 20:1-23:19) constitute an integral part of the story of the covenant between God and His nation at Ma'amad Har Sinai. [Note from 24:3-7 how those laws become the Sefer Ha-brit.]

Sefer Vayikra is radically different, as it not only begins with a set of commandments [mitzvot], the entire book (with the exception of two short narratives) is a collection of various mitzvot! In other words, the ongoing narrative of Chumash that began in Sefer Breishit and continued with Sefer Shmot **does not** continue in Sefer Vayikra. Instead, that narrative resumes in Sefer Bamidbar - with the story of how Bnei Yisrael prepare to leave Har Sinai (after the Mishkan has been built). Sefer Vayikra appears to stand alone, as it constitutes a book of laws, spanning a wide range of laws (mostly relating to the Mishkan and "kedusha" [holiness]).

As Sefer Vayikra is a book of laws (and not a story), our shiurim will focus on which specific types of laws are found in this book, as well as the significance of their order and progression.

THE LONE NARRATIVES

Before we discuss the mitzvot, we should mention the two narratives that we do find in Sefer Vayikra:

The first is that of the mishkan's dedication ceremony - chapters 8 thru 10, including the story of the seven day "milu'im" ceremony and the special korbanot that were offered on the 'eighth day' ["yom ha'shmini"], followed by the story of the tragic death of Nadav and Avihu. In our study of that narrative, we will show how that story actually 'belongs' at the end of Sefer Shmot, while suggesting a reason why it was recorded in Sefer Vayikra instead.

The second is the brief story of the "mekallel", who was executed for blaspheming God (see 24:10-23). We will show how that story actually forms an introduction to a certain set of mitzvot. In other words, when we do find a narrative in Sefer Vayikra, we will explain how and why it was included to provide us with a better understanding of the commandments that follow that story.

TORAT KOHANIM

If our above assumption (that Vayikra is essentially a book of laws) is correct, then it is very understandable why Chazal refer to Sefer Vayikra as "Torat Kohanim" [the law guide for the priests]. At first glance, it certainly appears that most of its laws are targeted for those who officiate in the Bet ha-Mikdash. [See first Ramban on Vayikra.]

Likewise, this also explains why the laws in Vayikra should progress in thematic order, and not necessarily in the chronological order of when they were first given.

[Note how the laws (given earlier to Moshe) in Parshat Behar (see 25:1) are recorded much later than the laws given to Moshe from the ohel mo'ed in Parshat Vayikra (see 1:1).]

Even though the name 'Torat Kohanim' implies that the mitzvot of Sefer Vayikra will relate primarily to mishkan related laws, nonetheless we do find numerous laws that discuss other topics (e.g. Parshat Kedoshim). Furthermore, we will also find many other laws regarding the mishkan in other books of Chumash, especially in Sefer Bamidbar. Therefore, it would be difficult to conclude that Sefer Vayikra deals exclusively with mishkan related laws.

So what makes Sefer Vayikra unique?

To answer that question, we will search for a central theme that will thematically connect all of the mitzvot in Sefer Vayikra and explain their progression.

THE THEME OF SEFER VAYIKRA

To accomplish this task, we will follow a methodology that begins by first identifying 'units'. Usually, each set of mitzvot can be categorized as belonging to a single topic - thus forming a 'unit'. After identifying these units, we will discuss the logic of the progression from one unit to the next. By doing so, we hope to be able to answer such questions as:

- Why does the sefer begin with the laws of korbanot?
- Why are the korbanot outlined twice (in Vayikra **and** Tzav)?
- Why does the book abruptly switch topics in the middle of Acharei Mot, from the mishkan to 'arayot' [in chapter 18]?
- Why does the sefer include Parshat Kedoshim, which has little - if anything - to do with korbanot, but a lot to do with the laws that were already discussed in Parshat Mishpatim?
- Why does Vayikra conclude with the laws of 'shmitta' and 'yovel', that discuss how we are not permitted to work the land once every seven years?

In the shiurim to follow, we will attempt to answer these questions (and more).

A SPECIAL BOOK

In closing, one general remark concerning the relationship between Sefer Vayikra and our study of Chumash thus far, and hence the importance as the 'central' book of the 'Five Books.

In Sefer Breishit we saw how God entered into a covenant with Avraham Avinu in order that his offspring ['zera'] would become a nation dedicated to the representation of His Name. To facilitate that goal, God entered into a covenant with the Avot, promising both a special Land ['aretz'], and a long historical process to become that nation (i.e. 'brit bein ha-btarim' / see Br. 15:6-18).

Sefer Shmot began as God began His fulfillment of that covenant by redeeming Bnei Yisrael from Egypt, and giving them the Torah at Sinai - i.e. the laws that would help establish this special nation. The unfortunate events at chet ha-egel constituted a 'breach', raising the question if this special relationship could continue.

Fortunately, God declared His attributes of mercy, thus enabling Bnei Yisrael an avenue for repentance, as reflected in their collective effort to construct of the mishkan. The return of God's Shechina to the mishkan at the conclusion of Sefer Shmot served as a climax, for it showed that this covenantal relationship had returned to its original level.

It is precisely at this point - when God's Shechina returns - where Sefer Vayikra begins. Before Bnei Yisrael continue their

journey towards Eretz Canaan (as will be discussed in Sefer Bamidbar), God commands them with an additional set of mitzvot that will not only provide a guide for how they can use the mishkan, but will also facilitate their becoming God's special nation - a "mamlechet kohanim ve-goy kadosh" (see Shmot 19:5-6).

In this sense, Sefer Vayikra constitutes more than simply a technical list of the various rituals performed in the mishkan. As we will show, the laws of Sefer Vayikra will focus on the very nature of Am Yisrael's relationship with God, at both the individual and national level.

In our shiur this week on Parshat Vayikra, we will focus on the first unit of laws in Sefer Vayikra, that deals primarily with 'korbanot' [sacrifices], to show how those laws relate to this general theme.

Till then, shabbat shalom,
menachem

FOR FURTHER IYUN - A FEW IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS

A. RAMBAN'S SHITTA

Despite our observation that Sefer Vayikra is basically a book of **mitzvot**, it is important to note that a brief narrative introduces each set of mitzvot.

For example, most mitzvot begin with the classic header:

"And God spoke to Moshe saying..."
["va-'yedaber Hashem el Moshe leimor.."]
[see 4:1; 5:14,20; 6:12 etc.]

Sometimes, God directs His dibbur to Aharon, as well: "And God spoke to Moshe **and** Aharon saying" (see 11:1, 13:1).

In some occasions, the opening phrase may even tell us **where** these mitzvot were given to Moshe. Two classic examples:

1) In the ohel mo'ed -
"And God called to Moshe and spoke to him from the **ohel mo'ed** saying: speak to Bnei Yisrael..." Vayikra (1:1);

2) At Har Sinai -
"And God spoke to Moshe at **Har Sinai** saying..." (25:1).
[the first pasuk of Parshat Behar/ see also 7:37-38, 16:1, 26:46, and 27:34.]

Therefore, 'technically speaking,' one could still consider Sefer Vayikra 'narrative-based,' and perhaps even a continuation of Sefer Shmot. In other words, Parshat Vayikra opens with the **first** dibbur that Moshe received from the ohel mo'ed, once the mishkan was completed (see shiur on Parshat Pekudei); and then records the mitzvot Hashem issues from that point onward.

[This is more or less Ramban's shitta, who maintains 'yesh mukdam u-me'uchar ba-Torah'. See the lengthy Ramban on Vayikra 25:1 (till the end)!]

In truth, however, the two examples mentioned above could demonstrate quite the opposite, i.e. that the mitzvot in Sefer Vayikra are not presented in chronological order. According to 1:1, the first set of mitzvot is transmitted from the **ohel mo'ed**, and thus this dibbur must have occurred only **after** the mishkan was built. However, the mitzvot in chapter 25 were given on **Har Sinai** (see 25:1), and therefore must have been given **before** the **ohel mo'ed** (1:1) was built! [See also 26:46 & 27:34.]

Further proof may be drawn from Parshat Tzav. Although, as mentioned, the first set of mitzvot in Sefer Vayikra was given from the **ohel mo'ed** (chapters 1->5, see 1:1), the Torah tells us that God taught Moshe the next set of mitzvot (chapter 6->7 / Parshat Tzav) on **Har Sinai** (see 7:37-38) - **before** the mishkan was built! Nevertheless, Sefer Vayikra juxtaposes them, evidently because of their **thematic** connection (i.e. they both discuss the laws of korbanot).

[Note that Ramban on 7:38 seems to disagree. Iy"h, his shitta will be discussed in greater detail in our shiur on Parshat Tzav.]

B. SIGNIFICANT HEADERS

As noted above, a brief header introduces each set of mitzvot. In most cases, these introductions make no mention of **where** these mitzvot were given to Moshe, only that "God spoke to Moshe saying..."

When the Torah does offer this information, the commentators will always find significance latent within the Torah's specification in this regard. (For example, see 25:1 - Rashi, Ramban, & Chizkuni.)

Similarly, certain parshiot in the middle of the sefer, such as the laws of Yom Kippur (16:1/ "acharei mot..."), were given in the wake of a certain event. These laws must have been given to Moshe only **after** the mishkan was constructed, while other laws may have actually been given earlier, on Har Sinai, but recorded only later on in Sefer Vayikra.

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!]

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

Our Journey in the Haggadah

Byline:
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OUR JOURNEY IN THE HAGGADAH:
HOW ITS NARRATIVES AND OBSERVANCES ENABLE US TO EXPERIENCE THE EXODUS[1]

By Rabbi Hayyim Angel

INTRODUCTION

The Haggadah is a compilation of biblical, talmudic and midrashic texts, with several other passages that were added over the centuries.[1] Despite its composite nature, the Haggadah in its current form may be understood as containing a fairly coherent structure. It creates a collective effect that enables us to experience the journey of our ancestors. As the Haggadah exhorts us, we must consider ourselves as though we left Egypt, actively identifying with our forebears rather than merely recounting ancient history. The exodus lies at the root of our eternal covenantal relationship with God.

The Haggadah merges laws with narrative. Its text and symbols take us on a journey that begins with freedom, then a descent into slavery, to the exodus, and on into the messianic era. Although we may feel free today, we are in exile as long as the Temple is not rebuilt. Many of our Seder observances remind us of the Temple and we pray for its rebuilding.

The Haggadah also presents an educational agenda. Although most traditions are passed from the older generation to the younger, the older generation must be open to learning from the younger. Often it is their questions that remind us of how much we still must learn and explore.

This essay will use these axioms to outline the journey of the Haggadah, using the text and translation of Rabbi Marc D. Angel's *A Sephardic Passover Haggadah* (Ktav, 1988). This study is not an attempt to uncover the original historical meaning of the Passover symbols or to explain why certain passages were incorporated into the Haggadah. However, perhaps we will approach the inner logic of our current version of the Haggadah and its symbols as they came to be traditionally understood.

THE FIRST FOUR STAGES: FROM FREEDOM INTO SLAVERY

Kaddesh: Wine symbolizes festivity and happiness. Kiddush represents our sanctification of time, another sign of freedom. We recline as we drink the wine, a sign of freedom dating back to Greco-Roman times, when the core observances of the Seder were codified by the rabbis of the Mishnah. Some also have the custom of having others pour the wine for them, which serves as another symbol of luxury and freedom. The Haggadah begins by making us feel free and noble.

Rehatz (or Urhatz): We ritually wash our hands before dipping the *karpas* vegetable into salt water or vinegar. As with the pouring of the wine, some have the custom for others to wash their hands, symbolizing luxury and freedom. Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (Netziv, 1817–1893, Lithuania) observes that many Jews no longer follow this talmudic practice of washing hands before dipping any food into a liquid. Doing so at the Seder serves as a reminder of the practice in Temple times. We remain in freedom mode for *rehatz*, but we begin to think about the absence of the Temple.

Karpas: Dipping an appetizer is another sign of freedom and nobility that dates back to Greco-Roman times. However, we dip the vegetable into either salt water or vinegar, which came to be interpreted as symbolic of the tears of slavery. In addition, the technical ritual reason behind eating *karpas* resolves a halakhic debate over whether we are required to make a blessing of *Borei peri ha-adamah* over the maror later. On the one hand, we eat maror after matzah and therefore have already washed and

recited the blessing of *ha-motzi*. On the other hand, it is unclear whether the maror should be subsumed under the meal covered by the matzah, since it is its own independent mitzvah. Consequently, the *ha-adamah* we recite over the *karpas* absolves us of this doubt, and we are required to keep the maror in mind for this blessing.[2] Interpreting this halakhic discussion into symbolic terms: while we are dipping an appetizer as a sign of freedom and luxury, we experience the tears of slavery, and we think about the maror, which the Haggadah explains as a symbol of the bitterness of slavery.[3] We are beginning our descent into slavery.

Yahatz: The Haggadah identifies two reasons for eating matzah. One is explicit in the Torah, that our ancestors had to rush out of Egypt during the exodus (Exodus 12:39). However, the Haggadah introduces another element: The Israelites ate matzah while they were yet slaves in Egypt. The Torah's expression *lehem oni*, bread of affliction (Deuteronomy 16:3) lends itself to this midrashic interpretation.

Yahatz focuses exclusively on this slavery aspect of matzah—poor people break their bread and save some for later, not knowing when they will next receive more food (*Berakhot* 39b). By this point, then, we have descended into slavery. At the same time, the other half of this matzah is saved for the *tzafun-afikoman*, which represents the Passover offering and is part of the freedom section of the Seder. Even as we descend into slavery with our ancestors, then. the Haggadah provides a glimpse of the redemption.

To summarize, *kaddesh* begins with our experiencing freedom and luxury. *Rehatz* also is a sign of freedom but raises the specter of there no longer being a Temple. *Karpas* continues the trend of freedom but more overtly gives us a taste of slavery by reminding us of tears and bitterness. *Yahatz* completes the descent into slavery. Even before we begin the *maggid*, then, the Haggadah has enabled us to experience the freedom and nobility of the Patriarchs, the descent to Egypt with Joseph and his

brothers, and the enslavement of their descendants.

MAGGID: FROM SLAVERY TO FREEDOM

A. EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK

At this point in our journey, we are slaves. We begin the primary component of the Haggadah—*maggid*—from this state of slavery.

Ha Lahma Anya: We employ the "bread of affliction" imagery of the matzah, since we are slaves now. This opening passage of *maggid* also connects us to our ancestors: "This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt….Now we are here enslaved." The passage begins our experience by identifying with the slavery of our ancestors, then moves into our own exile and desire for redemption.

Mah Nishtanah–The Four Children: Before continuing our journey, we shift our focus to education. The Haggadah prizes the spirit of questioning. The wisdom of the wise child is found in questioning, not in knowledge: "What are the testimonies, statutes, and laws which the Lord our God has commanded you?" To create a society of wise children, the Haggadah challenges us to explore and live our traditions.

Avadim Hayinu: We are not simply recounting ancient history. We are a living part of that memory and connect to our ancestors through an acknowledgement that all later generations are indebted to God for the original exodus: "If the Holy One blessed be He had not brought out our ancestors from Egypt, we and our children and grandchildren would yet be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt."

Ma'aseh Be-Ribbi Eliezer: The five rabbis who stayed up all night in B'nei B'rak teach that the more knowledgeable one is, the more exciting this learning becomes. These rabbis allowed their conversation to take flight, losing track of time as they experienced the exodus and actively connected to our texts and traditions.[4] This passage venerates our

teachers.

Amar Ribbi Elazar: As a complement to the previous paragraph, the lesser scholar Ben Zoma had something valuable to teach the greatest Sages of his generation. Learning moves in both directions, and everyone has something important to contribute to the conversation.

Yakhol Me-Rosh Hodesh: The Haggadah stresses the value of combining education and experience. "The commandment [to discuss the exodus from Egypt] applies specifically to the time when matzah and maror are set before you."

B. THE JOURNEY RESUMES

Now that we have established a proper educational framework, we return to our journey. At the last checkpoint, we were slaves pointing to our bread of affliction, longing for redemption. Each passage in the next section of the Haggadah moves us further ahead in the journey.

Mi-Tehillah Ovedei Avodah Zarah: We quote from the Book of Joshua:

In olden times, your forefathers—Terah, father of Abraham and father of Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and worshiped other gods. But I took your father Abraham from beyond the Euphrates and led him through the whole land of Canaan and multiplied his offspring. I gave him Isaac, and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I gave Esau the hill country of Seir as his possession, while Jacob and his children went down to Egypt. (Joshua 24:2–4)

To experience the full redemption, halakhah requires us to begin the narrative with negative elements and then move to the redemption (see *Pesahim* 116a). However, the Haggadah surprisingly cuts the story line of this narrative in the middle of the Passover story. The very next verses read:

Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I plagued Egypt with [the wonders] that I wrought in their midst, after which I freed you—I freed your fathers—from Egypt, and you came to the Sea. But the Egyptians pursued your fathers to the Sea of Reeds with chariots and horsemen. They cried

out to the Lord, and He put darkness between you and the Egyptians; then He brought the Sea upon them, and it covered them. Your own eyes saw what I did to the Egyptians. (Joshua 24:5–7)

Given the direct relevance of these verses to the Passover story, why are they not included in the Haggadah? It appears that the Haggadah does not cite these verses because we are not yet up to that stage in our journey. The Haggadah thus far has brought us only to Egypt.

Hi She-Amedah: The Haggadah again affirms the connection between our ancestors and our contemporary lives. "This promise has held true for our ancestors and for us. Not only one enemy has risen against us; but in every generation enemies rise against us to destroy us. And the Holy One, blessed be He, saves us from their hand." The slavery and exodus are a paradigm for all later history.

Tzei Ve-Lammed: The midrashic expansion is based on Deuteronomy 26, the confession that a farmer would make upon bringing his first fruits:
My father was a fugitive Aramean. He went down to Egypt with meager numbers and sojourned there; but there he became a great and very populous nation. The Egyptians dealt harshly with us and oppressed us; they imposed heavy labor upon us. We cried to the Lord, the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our plea and saw our plight, our misery, and our oppression. The Lord freed us from Egypt by a mighty hand, by an outstretched arm and awesome power, and by signs and portents. (Deuteronomy 26:5–8)
We continue our journey from our arrival in Egypt, where the passage in Joshua had left off. Through a midrashic discussion of the biblical verses, we move from Jacob's descent into Egypt, to the growth of the family into a nation, to the slavery, and then on through the plagues and exodus. By the end of this passage we have been redeemed from Egypt.
Like the passage from Joshua 24, the Haggadah once again cuts off this biblical passage before the end of its story. The next verse reads:
He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. (Deuteronomy 26:9)

In Temple times, Jews evidently did read that next verse (see Mishnah *Pesahim* 10:4).[5] However, the conceptual value of stopping the story is consistent with our experience in the Haggadah. This biblical passage as employed by the Haggadah takes us through our ancestors' exodus from Egypt, so we have not yet arrived in the land of Israel.

Ribbi Yosei Ha-Gelili Omer—Dayyenu: After enumerating the plagues, the Haggadah quotes from *Midrash Psalms* 78, where Sages successively suggest that there were 50, 200, or even 250 plagues at the Red Sea. Psalm 78 is concerned primarily with God's benevolent acts toward Israel, coupled with Israel's ingratitude. Psalm 78 attempts to inspire later generations not to emulate their ancestors with this ingratitude:

He established a decree in Jacob, ordained a teaching in Israel, charging our fathers to make them known to their children, that a future generation might know—children yet to be born—and in turn tell their children that they might put their confidence in God, and not forget God's great deeds, but observe His commandments, and not be like their fathers, a wayward and defiant generation, a generation whose heart was inconstant, whose spirit was not true to God. (Psalm 78:5–8)

Several midrashim on this Psalm magnify God's miracles even more than in the accounts in Tanakh, including the passage incorporated in the Haggadah that multiplies the plagues at the Red Sea. From this vantage point, our ancestors were even more ungrateful to God. The Haggadah then follows this excerpt with *Dayyenu* to express gratitude over every step of the exodus process. The juxtaposition of these passages conveys the lesson that the psalmist and the midrashic expansions wanted us to learn.

In addition to expressing proper gratitude for God's goodness, *Dayyenu* carries our journey forward. It picks up with the plagues and exodus—precisely where the passage we read from Deuteronomy 26 had left off. It then takes us ahead to the reception of the Torah at Sinai, to

the land of Israel, and finally to the Temple: "He gave us the Torah, He led us into the land of Israel, and He built for us the chosen Temple to atone for our sins."

Rabban Gamliel Hayah Omer: Now that we are in the land of Israel and standing at the Temple, we can observe the laws of Passover! We describe the Passover offering during Temple times, matzah and maror, and their significance. It also is noteworthy that the reason given for eating matzah is freedom—unlike the slavery section earlier that focused on bread of affliction (*yahatz-ha lahma anya*). "This matzah which we eat is…because the dough of our ancestors did not have time to leaven before the Holy One blessed be He…redeemed them suddenly."

Be-Khol Dor Va-Dor—Hallel: The primary purpose of the Haggadah is completely spelled out by now. "In each generation a person is obligated to see himself as though he went out of Egypt.…For not only did the Holy One blessed be He redeem our ancestors, but He also redeemed us along with them.…" Since we have been redeemed along with our ancestors, we recite the first two chapters of the *Hallel* (Psalms 113–114). These Psalms likewise take us from the exodus to entry into Israel. R. Judah Loew of Prague (Maharal, c. 1520–1609) explains that we save the other half of *Hallel* (Psalms 115–118) for after the Grace after Meals, when we pray for our own redemption. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik adds that Psalms 113–114 consist of pure praise, befitting an account of the exodus from Egypt which already has occurred. Psalms 115–118 contain both praise and petition, relevant to our future redemption, for which we long.[6]

Asher Ge'alanu: Now that we have completed our journey and have chanted the *Hallel* thanking God for redeeming us, we conclude *maggid* with a blessing: "You are blessed, Lord our God…Who has redeemed us and redeemed our ancestors from Egypt and has brought us to this night to eat matzah and maror." For the first time in the Haggadah, we place ourselves before our ancestors, since our experience has become primary. As we express gratitude to God for bringing us to this point and

for giving us the commandments, we also petition for the rebuilding of the Temple and ultimate redemption.

THE REMAINDER OF THE SEDER: CELEBRATORY OBSERVANCE IN FREEDOM AND YEARNING FOR THE MESSIANIC REDEMPTION

At this point we observe the laws of Passover. Although there is no Passover offering, we eat the matzah and maror and then the festive meal (*shulhan orekh*). Our eating of the *korekh*, Hillel's wrap of matzah, maror, and haroset together, reenacts a Temple observance (*Pesahim* 115a). Similarly, we use the final piece of matzah (*tzafun*) to symbolize the Passover offering, the last taste we should have in our mouths (*Pesahim* 119b).[7] By consuming the second half of the matzah from *yahatz*, we take from the slavery matzah and transform its other half into a symbol of freedom.

After the Grace after Meals (*barekh*), we pray for salvation from our enemies and for the messianic era. By reading the verses "*shefokh hamatekha*, pour out Your wrath" (Psalm 79:6–7), we express the truism that we cannot fully praise God in Hallel until we sigh from enemy oppression and recognize contemporary suffering.[8] Many communities customarily open the door at this point for Elijah the Prophet, also expressing hope for redemption. We then recite the remainder of the Hallel which focuses on our redemption, as discussed above. Some of the later songs added to *nirtzah* likewise express these themes of festive singing and redemption.

CONCLUSION

The Haggadah is a composite text that expanded and evolved over the centuries. The symbols, along with traditional explanations for their meanings, similarly developed over time. Our Haggadah—with its core over 1,000 years old—takes us on a remarkable journey that combines narrative and observance into an intellectual and experiential event for

people of all ages and backgrounds. In this manner, we travel alongside our ancestors from freedom to slavery to redemption. We are left with a conscious recognition that although we are free and we bless God for that fact, we long for the Temple in Jerusalem. *La-shanah ha-ba'ah be-Yerushalayim*, *Amen*.

NOTES

[1] Shemuel and Ze'ev Safrai write that most of the core of our Haggadah, including the *Kiddush*, the Four Questions, the Four Children, the midrashic readings, Rabban Gamliel, and the blessing at the end of *maggid* originated in the time of the Mishnah and were set by the ninth century. "This is the bread of affliction" (*ha lahma anya*) and "In each generation" (*be-khol dor va-dor*) hail from the ninth to tenth centuries. Components such as the story of the five rabbis at B'nei B'rak and Rabbi Elazar; the Midrash about the number of plagues at the Red Sea; *Hallel HaGadol* and *Nishmat*; all existed as earlier texts before their incorporation into the Haggadah. "Pour out Your wrath" (*shefokh hamatekha*) and the custom of hiding the *afikoman* are later additions. All of the above was set by the eleventh century. The only significant additions after the eleventh century are the songs at the end (*Haggadat Hazal* [Jerusalem: Karta, 1998], pp. 70–71).

[2] See *Pesahim* 114b; *Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 473:6; 475:2.

[3] The symbol of the maror underwent an evolution. Joseph Tabory notes that during the Roman meal, the dipping of lettuce as a first course was the most common appetizer. By the fourth century, the Talmud ruled that the appetizer must be a different vegetable (*karpas*) so that the maror could be eaten for the first time as a mitzvah with a blessing (*The JPS Commentary on the Haggadah: Historical Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2008], pp. 23–24).
In *Pesahim* 39a, one Sage explains that we use *hasa* (romaine lettuce, the talmudically preferred maror, even though five different vegetables are suitable) since God pitied (*has*) our ancestors. Another Sage derives additional meaning from

the fact that romaine lettuce begins by tasting sweet but then leaves a bitter aftertaste. This sensory process parallels our ancestors' coming to Egypt as nobles and their subsequent enslavement.

[4] Unlike most other rabbinic passages in the Haggadah which are excerpted from the Talmud and midrashic collections, this paragraph is unattested in rabbinic literature outside the Haggadah. See Joseph Tabory, *JPS Commentary on the Haggadah*, p. 38, for discussion of a parallel in the Tosefta.

[5] Cf. Joseph Tabory, *JPS Commentary on the Haggadah*, p. 33.

[6] Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Festival of Freedom: Essays on Passover and the Haggadah*, ed. Joel B. Wolowelsky and Reuven Ziegler (New York: Toras HoRav Foundation, 2006), p. 105.

[7] The word *afikoman* derives from the Greek, referring to anything done at the end of a meal, such as eating dessert or playing music or revelry. This was a common after-dinner feature at Greco-Roman meals (cf. J. T. *Pesahim* 37d). The Sages of the Talmud understood that people needed to retain the taste of the Passover offering in their mouths. It was only in the thirteenth century that the matzah we eat at the end of the meal was called the *afikoman* (Joseph Tabory, *JPS Commentary on the Haggadah*, p. 15).

[8] Shemuel and Ze'ev Safrai enumerate longer lists of related verses that some medieval communities added (*Haggadat Hazal*, pp. 174–175).

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