

++++++

**The Lower East Side
Parshat Hashavua Sheet**

*A collection of Divrei Torah
from around the Internet*

++++++

=====

Parshat Shemini

Latest time for Kriyat Shma – 9:27

=====

CONSOLATION REPRISE

By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Tragedies happen. Unfortunately, we can't control them, and we have to learn to live with their consequences, as we try to continue our lives. Tragedy does not discriminate. It touches the lives of the wealthy and the poor, the wicked and the righteous. The Torah does not avoid telling us about the greatest of tragedies that happened to the most righteous of men. This week it describes the tragedy that occurred to one of our greatest leaders, Ahron the Kohen Gadol (High Priest). His two children, Nadav and Avihu, were tragically consumed by fire while bringing an undesignated offering to Hashem. Moshe is faced with the most difficult of challenges, consoling his bereaved brother who just lost two of his beloved children. The challenge is great and the words of consolation that Moshe used should serve as a precedent for all consolation for generations.

Moshe consoles Ahron by telling him, "This is what Hashem has previously said: By those who are close to me I shall be sanctified and thus I will be honored by the entire congregation" (Leviticus 10:3). Powerful words. Deep and mystical. We are in this world by G-d's command, and our mission is to maintain and promote His glory. Those are words that may not console simple folk, but they were enough for Ahron who after hearing the words went from weeping to silence. But Moshe did not just quote the Torah, he prefaced his remarks: "This is what Hashem has previously said." Only after that premise does he continue with the words of consolation. Why was it necessary to preface those powerful words by saying that they were once stated? After all, the entire Torah was once stated. Could Moshe not just as easily have stated, "My dear brother Ahron. Hashem is glorified by judgment of his dear ones." It seems that the familiarity of the statements was part and parcel of its consoling theme. Why?

The sudden death of Reb Yosef could not have come at a more untimely time – a few days before Passover. A Holocaust survivor, he had rebuilt his life in Canada and left this world a successful businessman, with a wonderful wife, children, and grandchildren. It was difficult, however, for them all to leave their families for the first days of Passover to accompany his body, and thus his widow traveled with her son to bury her husband in Israel. After the funeral the two mourners sat in their apartment in the Shaarei Chesed section of Jerusalem. Passover was fast approaching, and they were planning to spend the Seder at the home of relatives. As they were about to end the brief Shiva period and leave their apartment, a soft knock interrupted their thoughts. At the door to her apartment stood none other than one of Israel's most revered Torah sages, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach. "I live nearby," he said, "and I heard that there was a funeral today. I came to offer my condolences." The sage then heard a brief history of Reb Yosef's difficult, yet remarkably triumphant life. Then Rav Shlomo Zalman turned to the widow and asked a very strange question. "Did you say the blessing Boruch Dayan HaEmes? Blessed are You, Hashem, the true Judge." (This blessing acknowledges the acceptance of Hashem as the Master Planner of all events acknowledging that all that happens is for the best.) "Why? Yes," answered the elderly lady. "I said it right as the funeral ended. But it is very difficult to understand and accept." Rav Shlomo Zalman, a man who lived through dire poverty and illness, four wars, and the murder of a relative by Arab terrorists, nodded. "I understand your questions. That blessing is very difficult to understand and to accept. You must, however, say it again and again. As difficult as it may be, believe me, if you repeat it enough you will understand it."

Moshe understood that as difficult as it may be, the words he used to console Ahron were the precise ones that encompassed the essence of the meaning of life and death. They would be understood by Ahron. But he had to preface it by saying that this is not a new form of condolence. It has been said before. It was already taught. Now it must be repeated.

Difficult questions have no simple answers, but it is the faith of generations that must be constantly repeated and repeated. There are no new condolences; there are no fast answers. The only answers we can give are those that have been said for generations. Perhaps that is why we console our loved ones today with the same consolation that has been said for centuries. "May you be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem." And it shall be repeated – again and again – until there is no more mourning.

Eighth Day Jews

By Rabbi Berel Wein

The parsha deals with the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan. In general it can be stated that the eighth day after any event can be a time of challenge. The eighth day of life is the day of circumcision of male Jewish children. The eighth day – the day after the week of rejoicing of a young newly married couple – was and is the day when real married life with all of its joys and challenges begins.

The eighth day after the beginning of the holiday of Pesach in Israel is the day when we return to our ordinary lives and tasks and many times that is a moment of at least temporary depression. And here in the parsha the eighth day is transformed from the day of joy and supreme attainment to one of tragedy and silence.

The eighth day is a difficult day. But the main lesson here is that life is in reality a series of ‘eighth days.’ The eighth day is unpredictable, it can bring pain and sadness but it can also be inspiring and joyful, productive and worthy. So the eighth day syndrome has become a metaphor for life in general and certainly for Jewish life particularly.

Because of the potential problems and difficulties that the eighth day may bring, the Torah begins the parsha with the word “vayehi” which is not necessarily an expression of happiness. Here it will refer to the untimely deaths of the two sons of Aharon. But in general it serves as a warning to humans to view life cautiously and realistically. The Torah always teaches us to drive defensively in all areas of living.

Aharon’s reaction to the tragedy that has befallen him is noteworthy. The Torah emphasizes that he keep silent. Many times events occur in human lives that are so shocking, sudden and overwhelming that humans are left speechless. Silence then is really a reflex reaction. But here the Torah records Aharon’s silence as an act of bravery, restraint and holiness and not as a reflex reaction to the destruction of half of his family.

It indicates that Aharon had plenty he could have said and could have taken Heaven to task, so to speak, but instead he himself chose to remain silent. The Talmud in many instances advocates the supremacy of silence over complaint, in fact over unnecessary speech generally. There is much to complain about from our human viewpoint of life and its events. Heaven however states that the fact that we are alive and functioning should be sufficient to stifle any complaints.

This hard judgment is also one of the primary lessons of the eighth day. Aharon’s unspoken heartbroken complaint and his unanswered, in fact unasked, question hang in the air of Jewish history – mysterious and unfathomable. This also is true of all eighth day challenges that face us – the righteous and faithful shoulder on.

The great Rebbe of Kotzk said famously: “For the believer there are no questions; for the non-believer there are no answers.” We are all eighth day Jews. Let us also shoulder on to build the Jewish people in strength, compassion and belief.

A Tale of Two Brothers

By Sheldon Stern

The Gemara (Berachos 5b) relates that Rav Huna had 400 barrels of wine, which soured, causing him tremendous losses. When Rav Huna's colleagues questioned him, the legendary Amora took offense at their insinuation that he was somehow responsible for what transpired. They countered that it was untenable to say that G-d had erred and proceeded to inform him of his peccadillo. The story continues, but the point is that it presents one model for how Hashem conducts affairs in this world, to wit, people sin and they're punished. In our Parsha, perhaps we'll discover a different paradigm.

It was the best of times—it was the worst of times. It was the best of times. The entire nation had assembled for the inauguration of the Mishkan and Aaron's installation as Kohen Gadol. But it was the worst of times, amidst the celebration, Aaron's two oldest sons, Nadav and Avihu, perished by G-d's hand. In line with Rav Huna's denouement, several Tannaim posited as to which malfeasance(s) caused their untimely deaths. One said it's because they never got married, a second, that they performed the Avodah while intoxicated, and a third who suggested that they were taken for having rendered a Halachic decision before their master, Moshe Rabbeinu. The problem with this approach is that it doesn't jibe with the verses. In Leviticus 10:3 Moshe tells his brother that Hashem said He'll be sanctified through those He's closest to. Rashi explained that Moshe was implying that Nadav and Avihu were greater than he and Aaron. Moreover, verse 10:2 says that a fire came forth from Hashem and consumed them. The same expression is found in 9:24 regarding the Olah offering and it adds that the people

rejoiced. We, thus infer that just as Hashem accepted that Korbon, He also embraced Aaron's two sons. Finally, it was the year 2000. I was at the Torah Vodaath Bes Medrash on Shabbos Parshas Shemini. Rabb Yisroel Belsky ZTL delivered a Dvar Torah most befitting a Gadol B'Torah. He explained that Nadav and Avihu did "commit" all of the "crimes" listed by the Tannaim, however in each case their actions were entirely justifiable. I was unable to commit what he said to memory but that speech cemented, for me, Rabbi Belsky's hallowed place in the pantheon.

So we find ourselves in a quandary. Do we accept the Tannaim who suggest that Nadav and Avihu deserved their fate or do we follow the overwhelming evidence in their favor? In 1972, the Irish band Stealer's Wheel scored a "one-hit wonder" with "Stuck in the Middle with You." "Trying to make some sense of it all, but I can see that it makes no sense at all." In trying to fathom Hashem's ways it's de rigueur for some to shrug their shoulders and say that they're beyond our ken. While that's true it doesn't preclude us from wrapping our minds around them. Rabbi Miller offers a valuable first step. Interestingly, he argues that the "punishment" wasn't directed at Aaron's two sons, but at their mother Elisheva. The iconic Marbitz Torah then noted that she had done absolutely nothing wrong. Instead, Hashem was teaching her, and by extension, all of us, an eternal lesson, that true happiness is the province of Olam Habo. Let's explain this point. Elisheva had achieved nirvana in this world. Her husband, Aaron, was the Kohen Gadol, while Malchus would emerge through her brother, the inestimable Nachshon Ben Aminadav. Hashem decided that this Tzedeikes had to be reminded that while we're expected to enjoy Olam Hazeh, we must never lose sight that ultimate happiness can only be found in the world to come. So Rabbi Miller introduces us to another Mihaleich in understanding Hashem's modus operandi. It's not about punishments, rather He's sending messages through select individual(s.)

This said, we're still left with a difficulty, i.e. how do we process what the Tannaim said? So let's take a closer look at Verse 10:1 which said that Nadav and Avihu brought a strange(alien) fire that G-d hadn't commanded. Now, if this was an alien fire isn't it obvious that it wasn't ordered by Hashem? So we make an inference. "This" strange fire wasn't authorized by Hashem but there was another that did have His imprimatur. We speak, of course, of Eliyahu Hanovi challenging the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel. It's punishable, on pain of death, to bring an offering outside of the Temple but Eliyahu's act curried Hashem's favor. Was Eliyahu told to do this by Hashem? Yes and no. The entire corpus of Tanach was dictated by Hashem, either, through Nevuah or Ruach Hakodesh. Therefore when Dovid Hamelech said, (Tehilim 119:126) "It's a time to act for Hashem, we renounce Your Torah" it's considered a directive from Hashem to act when the situation arises. Eliyahu saw the pervasiveness of idolatry and recognized that "out-of-the-box" action was called for and Hashem heartily agreed as evidenced by the fact that He sent a fire to consume the Novi's offering.

On the other hand, Hashem wasn't amenable to what Nadav and Avihu did. But why not? They were trying to reach Deveikus with Hashem beyond what's possible through observing the Torah. This is a noble pursuit to be sure, which explains why Moshe praised them so effusively, but the bottom line is that it's not the way that people should behave. In 1995, MTJ commemorated the 100th anniversary of Rav Moshe's birth. His son-in-law Rabbi Moshe Tendler spoke about his Shver, "For all his greatness in Torah, his greatest Gadlus was being normal." He was, at all times, eminently approachable and his sons also exemplified this admirable trait. And the Gadol Hador learned this Middah from Yaakov Avinu. The Moshol of Yaakov's ladder teaches us that even though his visage reached the Kisei Hakovod, his feet were firmly on the ground. By taking these prodigies prematurely, Hashem was demonstrating that while they could rationalize what they did still it sent the wrong message. In Judaism our spiritual leaders aren't monks who divorce themselves from the world. Rather they get married, support themselves etc, in short they're expected to act no differently than their minions. And despite these distractions, or perhaps because of them they're able to reach the highest echelons. Therefore the Tannaim weren't saying that Hashem punished Nadav and Avihu for their innovations, rather they were simply enumerating them so that others won't be deluded into thinking that theirs was the correct approach.

And we can support this thesis. Chazal teach that Pinchas and Eliyahu are one and the same, because each of them stepped up to eradicate a Chillul Hashem. It would follow that analogues can be found for Nadav and Avihu. The Gemara in Chagigah 14a,b tells us that four Sages entered the Pardes. Among them were Ben Azzai who looked and died and Ben Zoma who looked and went mad. The Pardes alludes to the highest spheres of esoteric Torah. Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma were all in, but the experiences overwhelmed them. But it was left to Rabbi Akiva to weather this spiritual storm as he emerged not only intact, but elevated. Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma were on the same level, Torah wise, as Rabbi Akiva, but the latter exhibited that essential, additional factor, normalcy. To that point, he was married and raised a family. And it's his approach that we're expected to follow. But why? Shlomo Hamelech wrote, (Koholes 7:16) "Don't be overly righteous." And again we question this. There's a Yiddish expression, "Siz a Chisaron de Kallah's tze Shein?" Is it a problem that the bride is too pretty? Of course not. So why shouldn't a person try to scale the heights in Yiddishkeit? It's because of Eisav. According to Yitzchak's Havanah, Yaakov would've spent his entire life devoted to Torah study while Eisav would've conquered the material realm. But our nemesis was found wanting and so Yaakov had to also navigate the world of Gashmius. And so a healthy balance must be struck between the two. And this is also Rambam's intent in directing us, as Chrissie Hynde sang, 'To the middle of the road.'

I originally planned to end this piece here but I heard Rabbi Yehoshua Zelikowitz speak last Shabbos on the Haftorah of Shvii Shel Pesach. In II Shmuel 22:31 Dovid Hamelech said, "Hakel Tamim Poalo." (G-d's ways are perfect.) The Radak explained this to mean that G-d rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. This then leads us to conclude that Hashem must have found something offensive in what Nadav and Avihu did. Many years ago I heard a Rabbi analyze the debate between Bes Shamai and Bes Hillel as to whether it's better for a person to be born, or for his soul to remain on High. The two schools decided that the latter option is preferable because if a Neshomah descends and pairs with a Guf it's likely to sin. The Rabbi asked an incisive question, "Since it's axiomatic that everything G-d does is for the good, isn't this an exception?" His answer was even better, Yes, for Mr. A., advantageously, he shouldn't be born, but it's better, for Mr. B that Mr. A comes down to this world because there's something that he can do for Mr. B and vice versa. Let's explain this point. Hashem created a world in which no one can make it alone. We all need, doctors, lawyers, plumbers you name it.

Barbra Streisand expressed this beautifully in 1964, "People, people who need people are the luckiest people in the world." But what does that mean? Doesn't everyone need assistance? Babs didn't write the song, that was the late Bob Merrill and I think he was making the following point. Those people who recognize that they need others are fortunate, because they'll ultimately realize that they also need Hashem. But you'll ask, "Does anyone think they can make it on their own?" In 1965 John wrote, "When I was younger, so much younger than today, I never needed anybody's help in any way." And it's not just a throwaway line. Many people go through life convinced that they're masters of their fate. Don't believe it? Dev 8:17 cautions us, "Lest you say in you heart, "My power and the strength of my hand has produced this wealth for me." So yes, such grand delusion(Kefirah) is a very real possibility. And now we return to Nadav and Avihu. Their goal was spiritual perfection, and that's terrific. However their focus was on becoming the best possible Nadav and Avihu not on helping others reach their potential and this is, in essence, a negation of the purpose of Creation. The Potoker Rov learned day and night. In his words, "I learned until I felt my brain was about to explode." This said, when the Nazis eliminated Potok and several neighboring villages, this diminutive giant didn't hide in a cave. No he cared for the physical and emotional needs of 400 survivors during their two year sojourn in the Polish forests. And at the same time he learned 7 blatt Gemara a day. This is the approach that we must aspire to. As my father used to say, "Tze gott und tze leit."

Shemini: Judging One's Past, Present & Future

By Michael Winner

"The camel, for it brings up its cud, but does not have split hooves... the hyrax, for it brings up its cud, but it will not have split hooves, and the hare, for it brings up its cud and its hooves were never split" (11:4-6)

In this area of the parsha when dealing with unkosher animals, the Torah gives us three examples of animals which have one sign of kashrus, but don't have the other (i.e. split hooves, and chews its cud). The English chumashim translates the Hebrew to "does not have split hooves". Unfortunately, the translations a little off. The translation I provided above is a more realistic translation. You will notice when speaking of the hooves the Torah speaks in three different tenses: present, future, and past.

May'ayanah shel Torah believes this to point out to a very interesting lesson in life. When one is about to declare a person or an organization "treif" or "not kosher", it's important to look at every detail in that person/organizations life. Instead of quickly passing judgment, one should look at the persons past, present, and future, to see whether or not this person really is "treif".

How many of us would like to be judged solely on our past actions and thoughts, even though we have grown out of them since? Also, if we were being judged wouldn't we want the possible good that we might do in the future to be considered?

When we mentally judge a person, we should consider what type of past this person had. Maybe there was a situation when he/she was younger, which led to their current behavior. We can then take their current personality and see whether or not they are the type of person who will repent in the future. Hopefully they will.

Similarly, this can be used when judging ourselves. One of the Yetzer Horah's main weapons is depression. He uses it to blind us to the fact that we can still repent no matter what. We should use this lesson in the Torah to combat it! Many of us might not have the greatest pasts, but by using the present properly, we can change the future.

“Moshe said: This is the thing that Hashem has commanded you to do; then the glory of Hashem will appear to you” (9:6)

What is "this thing" that Moshe referred to? The Or HaChayim writes that this is tied to the previous posuk that speaks of Bnei Yisrael approaching "before Hashem" rather than "before the Mishkan." The fact that they came to the Mishkan is obvious. The posuk is telling us that they prepared themselves to come before Hashem on this special day. When Moshe saw this mental preparation and the awareness of Hashem that the people had, he told them that this was what Hashem wanted of them at all times in order to merit the Divine Presence among them. It is this principle of "I place Hashem before me constantly" that must form the foundation of every person's daily life. This is why the Rema begins his commentary on Shulchan Aruch with this idea. He writes that a person behaves differently in front of a king than he would at home. Therefore, one should remind himself constantly that he stands before Hashem, the King of Kings. In this way, he will always think of Hashem and dedicate his actions to His will, from the moment that he gets out of bed until he goes to sleep. It is said that while everyone believes that Hashem is with us wherever we go, some people think that Hashem is in the far corner of the room and facing the other way, while others feel that Hashem is right in front of them and staring at them. We should strive to bring ourselves closer to the latter feeling.

Aharon came near to the altar and slaughtered the sin-offering calf that was his” (9:8)

The Targum Yonasan ben Uziel translates this posuk: "Aharon approached the altar quickly." Even though Aharon was initially apprehensive because he believed himself unworthy, once Moshe reassured him and urged him to continue, he rushed to do his job. When a person is faced with a decision, he should carefully weigh his options and calculate which choice is the best one. However, once he has ascertained the correct path to follow, he should disregard his initial uncertainty and act upon his decision quickly. Doubting previous decisions can only harm a person and cannot help. One must have confidence that he is doing the right thing and not question his original decision. Once the right path becomes apparent, he should follow it without delay.

“Moshe spoke to Aharon and to Elazar and Isamar, his remaining sons: Take the meal-offering that is left from the fire-offerings of Hashem and eat it unleavened near the altar, for it is the most holy” (10:12)

Why does the Torah interrupt two commandments from Moshe to Aharon and sons with the commandment to drink wine instead of combining the two sets of commandments by Moshe and recording the prohibition against wine afterwards? Rabbeinu Bachya says that this teaches us the importance of the obligation to comfort mourners. Since Aharon was saddened by the death of his two sons, Hashem personally comforted him by speaking with him directly. The Torah emphasizes the importance of this obligation by recording it here in the middle of a statement and by breaking up the flow of the pesukim. This idea is underscored by a posuk and accompanying midrash in Koheles: "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of a wedding." The midrash says that it is better to do a mitzvah for the living and the dead, as one comforts the living and honors the dead simultaneously, than a mitzvah which only benefits the living. Hashem says: "Learn from me and how I put aside the rejoicing of My children in the Mishkan and revealed Myself [to Aharon] for the mourning of Nadav and Avihu. This posuk teaches us that comforting mourners is an obligation that goes beyond "a nice thing to do." "We should follow the example that Hashem has set for us and remember the importance of this obligation. [ed. note - when it is not possible to comfort mourners in person – one can and one should do so by other means, over the phone, email, Zoom, etc.]

“The anakah, the koach and the leta’ah; and the chomet and the tinschemes” (11:30)

The Torah lists eight sheratzim (creeping creatures) that transmit impurity. One creature is noticeably missing from this list – the snake. One would think that the snake should be an impure reptile because it was the root of the sin in Gan Eden and it brought impurity into the world in the first place. Not only is the snake left off the list, but it is specifically listed at the end of the parsha as forbidden for consumption but not transmitting impurity. Why is this so? R' Bachya says that the snake is not counted among the sheratzim even though it brought impurity to the world because the Torah is meant to be a path of peace. The Torah did not want to cause people to avoid killing snakes because of potential impurity because they would be endangered by their venom. In fact the other creatures mentioned along with the snake at the end of the parsha, the scorpion and the centipede, could also have qualified as sheratzim but are poisonous and thus were considered pure so that people could readily kill them in order to save themselves without pausing to take impurity into consideration. The Torah is meant to be good for us and not to cause us harm. This is more than just a theory - it is a halachic principle. Chazal knew that all halachos had to align with this idea before it could become law and there are instances in the Gemara where potential laws are rejected because they do not comply with the mandate that the Torah is a Torah of peace.

By Rabbi Mayer Friedman

Symbolism of the Kosher Signs

by Rabbi Yehonasan Gefen

In this week's Torah portion, the Torah details the signs of kosher animals: they must have split hooves and chew their cud. If an animal lacks one of these traits, it is forbidden even if it is the other. The Torah singles out four such animals: the camel, hare, and hyrax, which chew their cud but do not have split hooves, and the pig (chazir), which has split hooves but does not chew its cud.

Rabbi Shimshon Pinkus writes that the commentaries explain that these distinctions hint at deeper spiritual lessons about the relationship between external observance and inner belief. Chewing the cud symbolizes internal spirituality and connection to God and intention in Mitzvot —while split hooves represent external Mitzvah observance. The camel, for example, which chews the cud but lacks split hooves, represents a person with deep belief but no practical observance. Such a person may feel spiritual or connected to Judaism but does not translate those feelings into action. The pig, on the other hand, has split hooves but does not chew its cud, symbolizing someone who performs Mitzvot externally but lacks sincerity and inner conviction. Both forms of behaviour are considered 'non-kosher' because belief and action are both essential to serving God.

However, Rabbi Pinkus cites an astonishing Rabbinic source that stresses a key difference between the pig and the other non-kosher animal. The Hebrew name for pig is chazir coming from the root meaning 'return'. Chazal teach that this alludes to the fact in the future the pig will return to us and be permitted to eat. The Midrash emphasizes that only the pig will become kosher, implying that the other non-kosher animals will remain forbidden. What is the difference between the pig and the other nonkosher animals?

The answer lies in the transformative power of Mitzvah observance. The Sefer HaChinuch teaches that the heart follows the actions. A person who performs Mitzvot, even without deep intent, has the potential to develop true connection over time. By contrast, one who believes in God but does not act on that belief, has no foundation upon which to build. This is why the pig, which at least demonstrates external righteousness, has the capacity for eventual spiritual repair, whereas the camel's flaw—belief without practice—is much harder to correct.

This idea is fundamental to the Torah belief that that true spirituality requires action, not just belief. This is in stark contrast to some other religions that emphasize belief as the key to success, Judaism insists that faith alone is insufficient—one must act on it. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch emphasizes the problem of belief without action in his commentary on the Chumash.⁴ The Torah forbids setting up a pillar (*matseivah*) as a way to worship God. Instead, one should use an altar (*mizbayach*) for offerings. The problem arises that the Patriarchs themselves used to use pillars in their Divine service⁵, so why now does the Torah forbid it? Rashi explains that at the time the Torah was written, it was common for idol worshippers to use a pillar in their idol worship, whereas at the time of the Patriarchs, this was not a common practice.

Rabbi Hirsch offers a different explanation. He begins by elucidating the differences between a pillar and an altar. A pillar is one stone in its natural form which is a symbol of God's control over nature. In contrast, an altar comprises of a number of stones that a human assembles into an orderly structure. This symbolizes the idea that man's purpose is not just to see God in nature, but to subjugate man to God through man's actions. With this introduction, Rabbi Hirsch explains that in the time of the Patriarchs, before the Torah was given, the main purpose of man was to recognize God in the world through nature, but there was no requirement to direct one's actions to Mitzva observance because the Torah had not yet been given⁶. God loved these pillars because they achieved what was required at that time. However, after the Torah was given, it was insufficient to simply recognize God in nature without also living one's life in the way required by the Torah. Accordingly, the altar became the optimal means with which to serve God, because it symbolized man's active submission to God. Moreover, the pillar was now transformed from being beloved to God to being hated by Him, because only recognizing God in the world, without an accompanying commitment to live according to the Torah, is considered a sin in God's eyes.

A person who recognizes God in nature, and even believes in Divine Providence, fulfills two of the three foundations of belief that the Sefer HaKrim outlines, but the third is that God gave us the Torah to fulfill it. If he does not follow that third foundation, even if he believes in the other two, then he is fundamentally flawed, because man's purpose is to take his recognition of God and Divine Providence and live his life according to God's instructions, as outlined in the Torah.

We have seen how the lack of belief without action is even greater than action without inner conviction⁷, as one who keeps Mitzvot is more likely to come to fix his inner world, than vice versa. However, Rabbi Pinkus stresses that both modes of behavior are considered 'non-kosher' by the Torah. And for people who grow up doing Mitzvot, the flaw of the pig is more likely to be present than the flaw of the camel.⁸ Thus, it is essential for a person to work on his Emunah, and understanding of why he should learn Torah and observe Mitzvot, because without an active effort, it is very likely that his inner world will be inconsonant with his outer behavior.

May we all merit to have both signs of being 'kosher'.