

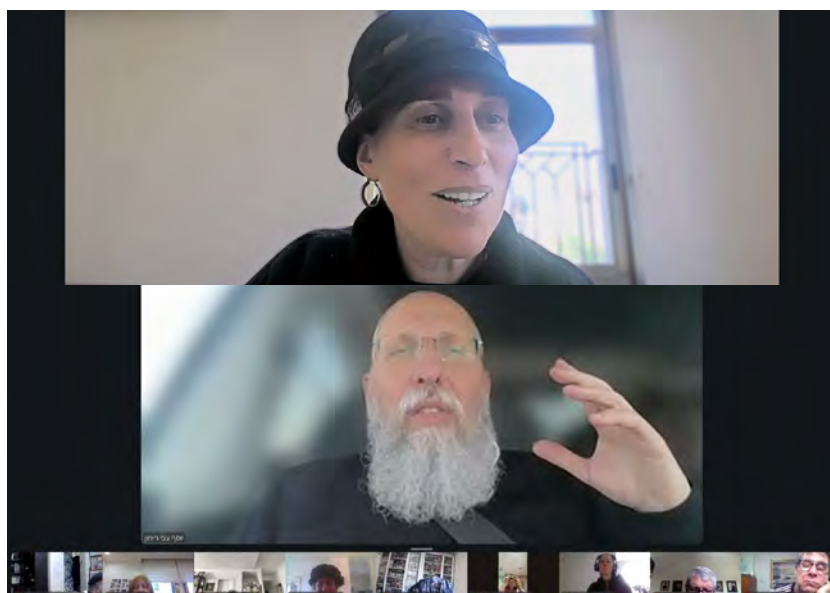


המזרחי HAMIZRACHI

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE WEEKLY:
MIZRACHI.ORG/HAMIZRACHIWEEKLY

PARSHA WEEKLY

PARSHAT VAYIKRA 5786 • 2026



WORLD MIZRACHI Picture of the Week

Over 100 participants joined a Virtual Beit Midrash program this week, organized by Young Israel in Israel in partnership with World Mizrachi. Participants heard inspiring shiurim from Rabbanit Shani Taragin, Educational Director of World Mizrachi who shared insights on preparing for the Seder this year, and from Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon, Nasi of World Mizrachi, who offered a broader perspective on current events. In a powerful reflection of these times, Rabbi Rimon delivered his shiur from the car as he made his way to visit IDF soldiers.

INSIDE

TORAT MIZRACHI

-  Rabbi Doron Perez 2
-  Rabbi Reuven Taragin 4
-  Rabbanit Shani Taragin 5
-  Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon 6
-  Rabbanit Sharon Rimon 7
-  Sivan Rahav Meir 8
-  Rabbi Danny Mirvis 9
-  Riddles: Reb Leor Broh 9

PARSHAT HASHAVUA

-  Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l 10
-  Rabbi Hershel Schachter shlit"a 12
-  Rabbi Yisroel Reisman shlit"a 13
-  Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein 14
-  Rabbi Shalom Rosner 15
-  Michal Horowitz 16
-  Rabbi Menachem Leibtag 17
-  Rabbi Eli Mansour 18

INSPIRATION

-  Rabbi Moshe Weinberger 19
-  Rabbi YY Jacobson 20
-  Rabbi Judah Mischel 21
-  Mrs. Shira Smiles 22
-  Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi 23

ISRAEL CONTENT

-  Hebrew Language: David Curwin 24





www.mizrachi.org
office@mizrachi.org
+972 (0)2 620 9000



NASI
Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon
CO-PRESIDENT
Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman
CHAIRMAN
Mr. Harvey Blitz
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN
Rabbi Doron Perez
CEO
Rabbi Danny Mirvis
EDUCATIONAL DIRECTORS
Rabbi Reuven Taragin
Rabbanit Shani Taragin

World Mizrachi is the global Religious Zionist movement, spreading *Torat Eretz Yisrael* across the world and strengthening the bond between the State of Israel and Jewish communities around the world.

Based in Jerusalem and with branches across the globe, Mizrachi – an acronym for *merkaz ruchani* (spiritual center) – was founded in 1902 by Rabbi Yitzchak Yaakov Reines, and is led today by Rabbi Doron Perez. Mizrachi's role was then and remains with vigor today, to be a proactive partner and to take personal responsibility in contributing to the collective destiny of *Klal Yisrael* through a commitment to Torah, the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.



EDITOR
Rabbi Reuven Taragin
ASSISTANT EDITOR
Esther Shafier
GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Leah Rubin
TYPESETTING
Yocheved Bernstein
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Yaakov Panitch
PROOFREADER
Renee Rosenberg

To dedicate an issue of HaMizrachi Parsha Weekly in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a simcha, or for other HaMizrachi enquiries, please email hamizrachiweekly@mizrachi.org

To sign up to receive HaMizrachi Parsha Weekly to your email or WhatsApp, visit mizrachi.org/hamizrachiweekly

Crucial Leadership Lessons

Five Sacrifices, Five Leadership Primers



Rabbi Doron Perez
Executive Chairman, World Mizrachi

The five types of *Korbanot* mentioned in detail, both in this week's *parasha* as well as next week's *Tzav*, reflect the essence of our relationship with Hashem – the key kernels to success in life and leadership.

As it is well known, the word describing offerings or sacrifices in Hebrew is קורבנות. Its root word קרב means “to come closer.” The essence of these offerings be they in the משכן, the temporary Tabernacle or the בית המקדש, the permanent Temple in Jerusalem is the same – an opportunity to build closeness to G-d. It is nigh impossible to create any genuine closeness and intimacy with any ‘other’ without giving of ourselves – offering something that is important to us and sacrificing for someone else. This is the basis of our relationship with Hashem, the ultimate ‘Other’ and of course in every other important human relationship.

I would like to touch on the core idea, as I see it, at the heart of each one of these sacrifices. To my mind they both define the essence of relationships and at the same time the contours of the qualities necessary to succeed in life and leadership. They represent five eternal lessons in spiritual success in all the important spheres of life.

#1 Olah: Total Commitment

No one has ever succeeded in any major endeavor in life without absolute commitment, passion, and determination. It is this quality at the core of the *Korban Olah* that I wrote about in detail in last week's *parsha*. Indeed the *Korban Olah* is the only sacrifice which has the unique distinction of being totally offered on the altar. It is known as either the burnt offering

or the elevation offering as every part of this animal without exception is burnt on the altar and entirely elevated to heaven. This sacrifice always appears first, both this week and last week, and must form the basis of any relationship.

It is impossible to succeed in any important endeavor where there isn't an absolute commitment. Not 50/50, not even giving 100% but even 110% – everything we have and then some. In Hebrew there is an apt expression to describe such commitment – it is termed “משוגע לדבר” a *meshugana* for a cause. Of course being fanatical about anything without being tempered by other qualities can make us become extreme and detached – a mad *mushegena*. Therefore this quality alone must be tempered with others. Having said that, no one can succeed at any endeavor without a burning desire and passion to succeed – absolute commitment to the task at hand. The desire to sacrifice anything and everything for that which is most important to us, is the nature of success in loving relationships, our life mission, and leadership role.

#2 Mincha: Treat Everyone Equally

The *Korban Mincha* – the Meal Offering – is always next in line and comes after the *Korban Olah*. What is unique about this sacrifice is that it is the cheapest offering – made from flour and oil and not from meat of any kind. All the other sacrifices are significantly more expensive – from cattle, lamb, or fowl. The *Mincha* is the poor person's sacrifice and affordable for the destitute.

The Sages teach an exceptional principle based on this: אחד המרבה ואחד הממעט – Whether one

brings an exceptionally expensive sacrifice or the most inexpensive kind – they are the same in the eyes of G-d as long as they are offered with pure intention (*Mishna Masechet Menachot* 13:11). It does not matter to G-d what our standing in society is or how wealthy we are and the quantum of our giving, but rather how much we give in relation to what we have. The poorest person who gives the smallest amount with a pure heart is no less worthy before G-d than the greatest donation of the wealthiest person. This in essence levels the spiritual playing fields. Judaism believes wholeheartedly that all have the same opportunity of spiritual closeness to G-d. There is a pivotal leadership lesson here – to give exactly the same respect to the wealthiest and the poorest person. Emulating G-d by treating all with the same dignity and respect.

This point is clearly articulated by the sage Ben Zoma when he says (*Pirkei Avot* 4:1) “Who is an honorable person? The one who honors others.”

Status and honor in Judaism are not primarily defined by our standing or status but rather by how we honor others. We ought to treat everyone with dignity and respect, whether it be the most dignified state leader or the garbage collector. All are created in the Image of G-d.

#3 Shlamim: Striving for Shalom

What is unique about this sacrifice is that it's the only one that everyone partakes in. The innards and blood are totally consumed on the altar, significant portions of the choicest meat are given to the *Kohen*, and other portions are given to the person who sacrifices it. In short, all participants in the sacrifice benefit from it. The altar, so to speak, is the offering to Heaven. The priests who serve in the Temple benefit and therefore are glad to be specifically involved in the sacrifice because it benefits them and their family, and of course the individual themselves also partakes. In short, everyone is happy. Our Sages say that it is called the sacrifice of peace and harmony because it causes שלום amongst all those who are involved in it and helps bring peace and harmony in the world (*Midrash Vayikra Nedava* 16). The essence of a Jewish life and leadership is striving for peace and harmony. Peace in marriages,

in families, in society, and in the world at large. The aim of Jewish leadership, says Rav Soloveitchik, is first and foremost about uniting the Jewish people and not about the maintenance of power (*Birkat Yitzchak Parashat Shoftim*).

The next two offerings are different from the above three in that they are a result of sin – the Sin Offering, קרבן חטאת, and the Guilt Offering, קרבן אשם. These offerings are very similar and it is not easy to find a clear categorical distinction between them.¹

#4 Chatat: Failing Forward and Forgiveness

The Sin Offering – there is no human being who does not fall and fail. The challenge of life is not whether or not we fall, but rather how we respond when we do. No human being is perfect and as such we are destined to sin (*Kohelet* 7:20). This sacrifice is offered when stringent prohibitions are transgressed inadvertently. This implies gross negligence and a shirking of responsibility (*Haamek Davar Vayikra* 4:8). The challenge of falling and failure is not to remain down but to pick ourselves up and keep going. As the great leadership thinker John C. Maxwell has said, we need to fail forward, not backwards. We use the momentum of failure to propel us forward. As the wisest of all men, King Solomon says in Proverbs, “Seven times a righteous person will fall and then gets up” (*Mishlei* 24:16). Even having sinned and distanced ourselves from G-d, we can repent, do teshuvah and come close once again. We should always aspire, just like Hashem does for us, to give those who have wronged us a second chance. To pardon misgivings and act with forgiveness and forbearance.

#5 Asham: Accountability and Responsibility

The Guilt offering – אשם – is as mentioned closely related to the sin offering as it's also offered as a result of six specific sins. Although difficult to find a common denominator amongst all the cases and the multiple interpretations, Rav Kook explains (*Olat HaRa'yah* pg. 173-175) that these sins harm the fabric and foundations of society. The very name of this category of sacrifices is אשם – guilt, implying

that the offender and offerer must assume responsibility for their actions. Indeed the very first of the alphabetical confessions over the Days of *Selichot* and Penitence begin with this admission of guile – אשמו – we are guilty. Without this *mea culpa* and taking personal responsibility, individuals and societies cannot be healed. So often in life and especially in leadership our impulse is to shirk responsibility as it is much easier to place the blame on others. Indeed, more often than not, others also bear partial blame for our mistakes – so we are tempted to place all the blame on them. It is so difficult to own up and take full responsibility, holding oneself accountable because invariably there are consequences to failure and sin – especially for a leader.

This was the greatness of King David as opposed to Saul, whose sins with Bathsheva and Uriah were arguably greater than Saul's sin with Amalek. Saul devolved responsibility to everyone other than himself, whereas David, when faced with his sins harshly presented by Nathan the prophet, took full and unconditional responsibility. For this reason he was saved, his kingship was not lost, while Saul's was (based on *Masechet Yoma* 22b). He was able to continue to lead despite his failure because of his salient and pivotal role in taking responsibility.

In Short

These five categories of sacrifices indeed offer crucial lessons for leading our own personal lives and certainly in aiming to lead others. Absolute commitment and passion for the task at hand; treating everyone we encounter equally – with kindness, respect, and dignity; striving always for win-win as a force of peace and harmony in the world wherever possible; failing forward and acting with forgiveness and forbearance to those who have wronged; always holding ourselves responsible and accountable.

May we all continue to deepen our relationship with Hashem and with all those who truly matter and aim to lead ourselves and others with the highest sense of sacrifice, service, and moral and spiritual greatness.

1. Ramban points out this difficulty in distinguishing between these two categories of sacrifices in his commentary on the Torah, *Vayikra* 5:15.

ESSENTIALS OF JUDAISM

All the World's People



Rabbi Reuven Taragin
Educational Director, World Mizrahi
Dean of Overseas Students, Yeshivat Hakotel

Scan here to join
Rabbi Taragin's
daily Divrei Torah
WhatsApp group



The First Jews

The Torah tells us that when the world's first Jews, Avraham Avinu and Sarah Imeinu, set off for *Eretz Yisrael*, they took the "souls they made" with them.¹ Chazal explain that this refers to the people they inspired to follow Hashem.² The Rambam adds that Avraham, Sarah, the subsequent Avot, and Moshe Rabbeinu were all missionaries – they aimed to not only raise their own family correctly, but also influence the nations of the world.³ During the ten generations between Noah and Avraham, the world had lost its way. People became idol worshippers. Avraham endeavored to get the world back on track.⁴

Hashem is concerned with the fate and direction of all people and wants us to offer them direction. As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes:

Judaism was never meant for Jews alone. In his first words to Abraham, G-d already said, "I will bless those who bless you, and those who curse you, I will curse; through you all the families of the earth will be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). Jews were to be a source of blessing to the world.

G-d is the G-d of all humanity. In Genesis, He spoke to Adam, Eve, Cain, Noah, and made a covenant with all humankind before He made one with Abraham. In Egypt, whether in Potiphar's house, prison, or Pharaoh's palace, Joseph continually talked about G-d. He wanted the Egyptians to know that nothing he did, he did himself. He was merely an agent of the G-d of Israel. There is nothing here to suggest that G-d is indifferent to the nations of the world.

Later in the days of Moses, G-d said that He would perform signs and wonders so that "The Egyptians will know that

I am the Lord" (Ex. 7:5). He called Jeremiah to be "a prophet to the nations." He sent Jonah to the Assyrians in Nineveh. He had Amos deliver oracles to the other nations before He sent him an oracle about Israel. In perhaps the most astonishing prophecy in Tanach, He sent Isaiah the message that a time will come when G-d will bless Israel's enemies:

"The Lord Almighty will bless them, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt My people, Assyria My handiwork, and Israel My inheritance'" (Is. 19:26).

G-d is concerned with all humanity.⁵

The First National Covenant – Sinai

We, too, are meant to emulate our ancestor Avraham. The *mitzvah* to love Hashem includes trying to bring others close to Him. A lover wants everyone to appreciate the one he loves.⁶

The Rambam also understood the mission of impacting others as part of Hashem's first covenantal words to the Jewish people at *Har Sinai*, where he destined the Jews to be a "*mamlechet kohanim* – a kingdom of priests (or ministers)," highlighting their role as leaders who influence the rest of the world.

The Rambam describes this impact as modeling: when we live our lives correctly, we inspire others to follow our lead.⁸ *Sefer Devarim* teaches us that other nations will see our way of life as wise and just.⁹ According to the Rambam, this is both intentional and important, as they are meant to be inspired to follow our lead.

Rabbi Sacks continues:

What we do as Jews makes a difference to humanity, not just in a mystical sense, but as exemplars of what it means to love and be loved by G-d. Other nations would look at Jews and sense that some larger power was at work in their history...

We were not called on to convert the world. We were called on to inspire the world. As the prophet Zechariah put it, a time will come when "Ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that G-d is with you'" (Zech. 8:23).

Our vocation is to be G-d's ambassadors to the world, giving testimony through the way we live that it is possible for a small people to survive and thrive under the most adverse conditions, to construct a society of law-governed liberty for which we all bear collective responsibility, and to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly" with our G-d.¹⁰

The Seforno understands us as responsible to take initiative as well: we should actively educate and seek to inspire others.¹¹ Though we do not seek to convert non-Jews to Judaism, we are responsible for inspiring them to live their lives as people who understand Hashem properly and observe the seven Noahide commandments.

Light to the Nations

Yeshayahu HaNavi had this in mind when he described the Jewish people eventually serving as a "light to the nations."¹² Chazal¹³ saw this role as the reason why *Shir HaShirim* compares the Jewish people to olive oil.¹⁴ The Jewish people, like olive oil, light up their surroundings.

Sadly, while living in exile, Jews were rarely given the opportunity to impact others. Our host nations and their cultures generally marginalized or even ostracized Jews. Naturally, Jews lived insular lives, struggling to survive physically, religiously, and culturally.

Lord Jacobovits lamented the impact of this reality: "We have become altogether

Continued on page 15

ALLUSIONS AND ILLUMINATION: INSIGHTS OF THE BA'AL HATURIM

Vayikra: Korbanot & The Cultivation of Humility



Rabbanit Shani Taragin

Educational Director, World Mizrahi

Educational Director, Mizrahi Lapidot and Matan Eshkolot Programs for Educators

Rosh Beit Midrash of Mizrahi-Tzemach David Women's Learning Hub, Mizrahi Lapidot, and Yeshiva University in Israel Women's Torah Studies Program

As we open *Sefer Vayikra*, we enter a world that can initially feel distant – one replete with meticulous procedures, precise offerings, and a highly structured sacrificial order. Yet beneath this technical surface lies a profound moral and spiritual vision. While the Ramban (*Vayikra* 1:9) understands *korbanot* primarily as a response to human failure – an external ritual meant to awaken internal repentance, the Ba'al HaTurim reveals a complementary dimension: the very details of these offerings are designed to refine not only our relationship with Hashem, but also our sensitivity toward one another.

Through his nuanced readings, the Ba'al HaTurim uncovers an ethic of humility and emotional awareness embedded within the *avodah* itself. The *korban* is not merely an act of atonement; it is a discipline in becoming more attuned, more dignified, and more compassionate.

The opening word of the *sefer* already sets the tone. On the *pasuk* “וַיִּקְרָא אֶל-מֹשֶׁה” the Ba'al HaTurim famously notes the small ‘א’ in “וַיִּקְרָא.” Moshe Rabbeinu, in his humility, wished to write “וַיִּקְרֵ” – a term used in connection with Bilam, connoting a chance or incidental encounter. Hashem, however, insisted on “וַיִּקְרָא,” an expression of affection and intentionality, yet allowed the ‘א’ to remain diminutive. This delicate compromise captures a remarkable dialectic: true greatness lies not in denying one's significance, but in holding it with modesty. Even as Hashem calls out with closeness and purpose, Moshe's instinct is to minimize himself.

This small letter becomes a large lesson. Spiritual stature must be accompanied by restraint. The closer one is to the Divine, the more one must guard against self-aggrandizement. Humility is not the absence

of worth, but the disciplined awareness that one's worth is not self-generated.

The Ba'al HaTurim then turns our attention to a seemingly technical distinction in the *korbanot*. Regarding the *mincha* offering, the Torah states, “וּנְפֶשׁ כִּי, תִקְרִיב קֶרֶבֶן מִנְחָה” – “when a soul offers a meal-offering.” Why “*nefesh*”? Because, he explains, the poor person invests his very soul in this offering of grain vs. animal. What for others is a modest gift is, for him, the product of profound exertion and sacrifice.

Here, the Torah shifts our perspective. Value is not measured by objective size, but by subjective investment. The modest *mincha* becomes, in Hashem's eyes, an offering of the soul.

Strikingly, the Ba'al HaTurim adds another layer: unlike the offerings of cattle, the Torah does not emphasize that these humble *korbanot* are brought “לפני ה'.” Why? So as not to embarrass those who bring them. The Torah subtly orchestrates the ritual space to preserve human dignity. Aharon and his sons are instructed to handle these offerings without public display, and Aharon himself is cautioned that even the *Kohen Gadol* must not belittle the offering of the poor.

What emerges is a deeply moving ethic: the *Mishkan* is not only a מקום שכינה, but a מקום רגישות – a sanctuary of emotional intelligence. Even in sacred service, or perhaps especially there, one must be exquisitely attentive to the dignity of others. Religious life that ignores human vulnerability is not merely incomplete; it is a distortion of *avodat Hashem*.

Finally, the Ba'al HaTurim points to an almost paradoxical *halacha* regarding the *korban chatat* of the *Kohen Gadol*. Unlike the discreet handling of the poor man's offering, the sin-offering of the High Priest

is burned publicly, “על שֹׁפַח הַדֹּשֵׁן.” Why this stark contrast? Precisely to teach that one should not be ashamed to confess wrongdoing. If the *Kohen Gadol* himself brings a *korban* and does so in full view, acknowledging his failure, then no individual need hide behind pride or denial.

Here again, the Torah calibrates human experience with remarkable precision. It conceals when exposure would humiliate; it reveals when visibility would inspire growth. The same system that protects the dignity of the vulnerable demands transparency from the powerful.

We find ourselves entering the month of Nissan – a time of redemption and renewal. This year, that transition unfolds against the backdrop of profound uncertainty and tension. In a time marked by conflict, fear, and resilience, public discourse naturally gravitates toward כוח: strength, strategy, and survival. And rightly so. Yet *Vayikra* quietly insists that even at the center of national and religious life, we must cultivate something more delicate and no less essential: an ethic of sensitivity.

Moshe's small ‘א’ reminds us that even in moments of historic magnitude -- moments that demand leadership and decisiveness – true greatness remains tempered by humility. Leadership, whether national or personal, must resist the instinct toward self-importance and instead remain anchored in quiet responsibility.

The Torah's concern for the dignity of the poor – structuring the *korbanot* so that one who brings less is not embarrassed – speaks powerfully in a time when many are carrying invisible burdens. Periods of crisis do not affect all equally. Some endure loss, displacement, anxiety, or financial strain more acutely than others.

Halachic Q&A



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

Nasi, World Mizrahi | Rabbi of the Gush Etzion Regional Council

Rosh Yeshivah, Jerusalem College of Technology | Founder and Chairman, Sulamot and La'Ofek

My son had a loose baby tooth on Friday night, and it was really hurting and bothering him. Is it permitted to pull out a baby tooth on Shabbat if he is in pain or if it is bothering him? In most halachic discussions I've seen, this is not so clear, and they usually talk about adult teeth rather than baby teeth. Is there a fundamental/halachic difference between adult teeth and baby teeth?

If it is a case of pain but not danger, the tooth may only be removed by a non-Jew, whether it is a regular tooth or a baby tooth. However, if the tooth is almost falling out and is hanging by a very thin connection (like a strand of hair), and there is no concern about bleeding, it may be removed even by a Jew.

Removing a tooth is considered an act of injury (*chavalah*), because something is uprooted from its place and a wound is created that causes bleeding. According to the *Mishnah Berurah* (316:30), any act of injury that involves bleeding and is done for a purpose (such as removing a painful and bothersome tooth) is biblically prohibited.

There is a well-known dispute among the early authorities (*Rishonim*) as to whether causing injury is considered a biblical prohibition only when one needs the blood itself (e.g., for dyeing or feeding dogs), or even when one merely wants the result of the injury (such as removing the tooth to relieve pain).

The *Mishnah Berurah* rules in accordance with the *Rambam* and the *Shulchan Aruch* that causing injury is a biblical prohibition even when one does not need the blood itself, but only the result of the injury (i.e., the removal of the tooth).

The *halachic* authorities explain that

pulling a tooth on Shabbat is permitted only under two conditions:

1. **It is done by a non-Jew, not a Jew** (Rema, Orach Chaim 328:3). Even though tooth pain might be considered an internal ailment ("*makkah shel chalah*"), for which Shabbat can be desecrated, here one should not do so via a Jew because "tooth extraction is not a recognized medical treatment" (*Eliyahu Rabbah*; *Mishnah Berurah*), and sometimes it may even involve danger.
2. **It is only in a case of significant suffering affecting the whole body** (*Magen Avraham*; *Mishnah Berurah*). However, the *Bi'ur Halacha* writes that through a non-Jew, it may be permissible even if the person is not considered ill in their entire body.

Additionally, some authorities explain that the Rema refers to a situation without danger, but if there is danger, it would be permitted even through a Jew. Nowadays, if a doctor says that extraction is necessary due to even a possible life-threatening concern (such as infection or dangerous inflammation), it is permitted to extract the tooth on Shabbat even by a Jew, since the procedure itself is not considered dangerous today.

In any case, in our scenario, it מדובר בצער ולא בסכנה (pain but not danger), and therefore the tooth could only be removed by a non-Jew. There is room to be lenient even when the suffering does not affect the entire body, especially since this involves a small child, who is generally considered like a "sick person without danger" (typically up to age 9–10, depending on development).

We do not find a distinction in halachic sources between a regular tooth and

a baby tooth, since the prohibitions involved in removing them on Shabbat are essentially the same—whether due to the prohibition of causing injury (biblical or rabbinic), or possibly due to uprooting something from its place of growth.

However, in the case of a baby tooth, since it is naturally meant to fall out, there could even be a greater concern related to the prohibition of "shearing" (*gozez*), based on certain halachic principles.

Nevertheless, if the tooth is almost completely detached and hanging by a thin thread, and there is no concern of bleeding, *Shevet HaLevi* rules that it may be removed by a Jew, similar to a fingernail that has mostly detached, which is permitted to remove by hand.

(There is also discussion whether even if bleeding is unlikely but slightly possible, it might still be permitted under certain conditions, such as an unintended act or a case of uncertain inevitable outcome – especially if the prohibition is only rabbinic.)

Practical ruling (halacha lema'aseh):

- If a doctor says the extraction is necessary due to possible danger (e.g., infection), it is permitted to extract the tooth on Shabbat even by a Jew.
- If it is a matter of pain but not danger, the tooth may only be removed by a non-Jew, whether it is a regular tooth or a baby tooth.
- If the tooth is almost falling out and hanging by a very thin connection, and there is no concern about bleeding, it may be removed even by a Jew.

הפטרת ויקרא

"עם זו יצרתי לי תהלתי יספרו"

הרבנית שרון רימון
Tanach teacher and author



כך הופכים ישראל לעדים לקיומו של ה': "וְאַתֶּם עֲדֵי הַיֵּשׁ אֱלֹהִים מִבְּלַעַדִּי וְאֵין צוּר בִּלְיָדְעָתִי" (ח).

המטרה של הגאולה היא להוות עדות למציאות ה' בעולם, ולהגדיל את שמו.

ההפטרה מסיימת בתזכורת חשובה:

"זָכֹר אֱלֹהִים יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי עֲבָדִי אֶתָּה יִצְרָתִי עֲבָד לִי אֶתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא תִשָּׁנִי: מַחֲיִיתִי כַעֲבַד פֶּשַׁעִיךָ וְקִנְיֹנִי חֲטָאוֹתֶיךָ שׁוֹבָה אֵלַי כִּי גָאֻלְתִּיךָ: רְנוּ שְׁמִים כִּי עָשָׂה ה' הֲרִיעוּ תַּחְתִּיּוֹת אֶרֶץ פִּצְחוּ הָרִים רָנָה יַעַר וְכָל עֵץ בּוֹ כִּי גָאֹל ה' יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל יִתְפָּאֵר" (מ"ד, כא-כג).

הנביא מנחה אותנו לזכור את העיקר:

עם ישראל הוא עבד ה';

ייעודו לפאר את שם ה';

ה' מוחל לעוונותיהם למען שמו;

גאולת ישראל תגיע, ומטרתה להעיד על גדולת ה'.

ההפטרה מסתיימת בקריאה קוסמית לשמחה: השמיים, הארץ, ההרים והיערות כולם נקראים לפצוח ברינה. כשישראל חוזרים למקומם ולייעודם, כל הבריאה כולה חוזרת להרמוניה.

בעולם המודרני, בו אדם יכול לברוא לעצמו זהויות וירטואליות ולסגוד ליציר כפיו, הנביא מזכיר לנו את הדברים החשובים באמת. הוא מעמיד מולנו מראה חד, המבחינה בין האליל שהאדם יוצר כדי לשרת את צרכיו, לבין הייעוד האמיתי של האדם ושל עם ישראל, שניתן להם מאת הבורא, ואשר לשמו הם נוצרו ובחברו.

אל מול העייפות שבמרדף אחרי הזמני והשקרי, או נקראים להתחבר אל הנצחי והאמיתי. הקריאה של הנביא היא לשוב אל עצמנו, אל השורש המקורי שבזכותו אנו קיימים: להיות העם שמספר את תהילת ה' בעולם צמא למשמעות.

האבסורד המוצג בדברי הנביא אמור להעביר מסר ברור: האליל הוא יציר כפיו של האדם, ואין לו כוחות רוחניים אמתיים, ובכל זאת העם מתלהב לעבדו. לעומת זאת, ה' (שהוא הא-ל האמיתי) יצר את עם ישראל, בחר בהם, ונתן להם ייעוד משמעותי - להיות עבדיו קוראי שמו. זהו המסר החוזר בדברי ההפטרה שוב ושוב: "וְעַתָּה שְׁמַע יַעֲקֹב עֲבָדִי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחַרְתִּי בּוֹ: כֹּה אָמַר יְקֹנֶק עֹשֶׂה וְיִצְרֵךְ מִבְטָן יַעֲזֹרֶךְ אֶל תִּירָא עֲבָדִי יַעֲקֹב וְיִשְׂרָאֵל בְּחַרְתִּי בּוֹ" (מ"ד, א-ב).

החידוש המפעים בדברי הנביא הוא, שלמרות העייפות והחטאים, ה' לא מוותר על עמו. אך המחילה אינה מגיעה בזכות מעשיהם של ישראל, אלא כחלק מהתכנית האלקית הגדולה:

"אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מִחָה פֶּשַׁעִיךָ לְמַעַנִי וְחֲטָאוֹתֶיךָ לֹא אֲזָכֹר: הַזְכִּירְנִי נִשְׁפָּטָה יָחִיד סֵפֶר אֶתָּה לְמַעַן תִּדְּצֶק" (מ"ג, כה-כו). ה' מוחל לעם ישראל למענו, למען שמו. הוא רוצה בצדקתם, מאחר וישראל הם הנציגים שלו בעולם. כשישראל מושפלים בגלות ומלוכלכים בחטא, נוצר חילול השם - הם אינם מעידים על קיום ה' ועל גדולתו אלא להפך, נדמה כאילו ה' (חלילה) אינו יכול להושיע את עמו.

המחילה והגאולה הבאה בעקבותיה הן הכרח כדי להחזיר את האור האלוהי לעולם. ה' מוחק את העבר כענן שמתפזר - "מַחֲיִיתִי כַעֲבַד פֶּשַׁעִיךָ", כדי לאפשר התחלה חדשה.

הגאולה מביאה איתה שפע רוחני וגשמי - "כִּי אֶצְקֶךָ מִים עַל צִמָּא וְנָזְלִים עַל בִּשְׁתָּה אֶצְקֶךָ רוּחִי עַל זֶרְעֶךָ וּבִרְכָתִי עַל צֹאצְאֶיךָ: וְצִמְחוּ בְּבִין חֲצִיר פְּעֻרִים עַל יְבֵלֵי מִים". רוח ה' שורה על עם ישראל, והוא מתברך בשפע ברכות ובצמיחה מחודשת.

הגויים מתפעמים מההתרחשות, רואים את מעלתם של ישראל ומתוכה לומדים להכיר בה': "זֶה יֵאמָר לְה' אֱנִי וְזֶה יִקְרָא בְּשֵׁם יַעֲקֹב וְזֶה יִכְתֹּב יְדוֹ לְה' וּבְשֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל יִכְנֶה" (מ"ד, ג-ו).

פרשת ויקרא פותחת בסדרת ציוויים מפורטת על עבודת הקרבנות. אך כאשר אנו עוברים להפטרה, נדמה שהנביא ישעיהו הופך את הקערה על פיה. הוא לא מדבר על אופן ההקרבה, אלא על הסיבה, ובעיקר על מה שקורה כשהלב חסר.

הנביא פותח בתיאור כואב של מערכת יחסים שחוקה. עם ישראל אמור להיות עבד ה' המספר תהלתו: "עם זו יצרתי לי תהלתי יספרו" (מ"ג כא). כל יצירת עם ישראל ובחירתו היתה למען שם ה'.

אך במקום זה, נראה שהם איבדו את הדרך. הטענה של ישעיהו אינה רק טכנית, שלא הביאו קרבנות, אלא הרהר יותר מהותית: "וְלֹא אֶתִּי קִרְאתָ יַעֲקֹב כִּי יִגְעַתְּ בִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל... אֲךָ הֶעֱבַדְתָּנִי בְּחֲטָאוֹתֶיךָ הוֹגְעַתָּנִי בְּעוֹנֹתֶיךָ" (מ"ג, כב-כד). התחושה היא של יגיעה הדדית, עייפות כרונית. עם ישראל מרגיש שעבודת ה' היא נטל כבד, בעוד שהנביא טוען שההפך הוא הנכון: חטאי העם הם אלו שמייגעים ומתישים כביכול את הקדוש ברוך הוא.

הכוונה המקורית של הקרבנות, עליהם אנו לומדים בפרשת ויקרא, היא לאפשר לאדם להתקרב לקב"ה, להביא לו משהו משלו כמתנת הודיה או לשם כפרה. אך בהפטרה מתוארת מציאות אחרת לגמרי: הקרבנות מבטאים תחושת ריחוק וניכור, מאחר והם נעשים ללא העומק והכוונה הראויה, בחוסר רצון ובחוסר חשק.

אל מול עבודת הקרבנות היגעה, מוצגת עבודת האלילים, שנראה שהעם משקיע בה במרץ ובשמחה. ישעיהו מקדיש פסוקים רבים ללעג על עבודת האלילים (מ"ד, ט-כ). הוא מתאר בפירוט קומי נגר שחוטב עץ, חציו הוא שורף בתנור כדי להתחמם ולאפות לחם, ומהחצי השני הוא מגלף לו פסל, הופך אותו לאליל ומשתחוה לו.

Continued from page 5

The Mishkan teaches us that a sacred society is measured not only by how it confronts its enemies, but by how gently it holds its most vulnerable.

And perhaps most strikingly, the public offering of the Kohen Gadol's sin-offering offers a countercultural message for moments of collective strain. There is a natural tendency, especially in times of crisis, to project certainty and suppress vulnerability. Yet the Torah models a different kind of strength: the courage to

acknowledge limitation, to admit error, and to remain morally self-aware even while confronting external threats.

Nissan calls upon us not only to anticipate redemption, but to prepare ourselves to be worthy of it. Parshat Vayikra teaches us that redemption is not built solely through acts of might, but through the quiet, disciplined cultivation of humility, dignity, and moral clarity. In a world filled with noise, popularity contests, and exposure, the Torah asks us to know when to

make ourselves small, when to protect another from shame, and when to stand openly accountable. These are not merely private virtues; they are the very foundations of a redeemed society.

In this way, the korbanot continue to speak not only from the mishkan, but into the very fabric of our interpersonal and national lives, guiding us toward a more humble, compassionate, and spiritually attuned existence.

Among the Ruins - Unity



Sivan Rahav Meir

World Mizrahi Scholar-in-Residence

Last week, in a single moment of terror, a missile fell near the home of the parents of the Peretz family in Beit Shemesh. The house that had been filled with memories and warmth was reduced to a pile of rubble.

Yet within the total destruction, a great miracle occurred: their beloved mother had been inside the house and survived. And it happened precisely on the *yahrzeit* of their father. In the midst of everything, the family felt they had received the greatest gift of all: life.

Here is an excerpt from a letter they sent me:

What happened afterward also felt like a kind of miracle.

The walls of our parents' house collapsed and the windows shattered. But through those broken openings, something else entered the house: the spirit of the Jewish people.

Countless volunteers – complete strangers! – offered to help. Moments of unimaginable pain, of clearing out belongings and dismantling an entire lifetime of memories, became moments of pure kindness, unity, and brotherhood.

Looking around, we saw an extraordinary scene: Uri the *kibbutznik* was standing next to a “hilltop youth”; beside them a *chareidi* volunteer, and nearby a group of teenagers from Beit Shemesh. So many good people who worked tirelessly lifting boxes, clearing broken glass, gathering debris. In such painful hours, their presence brought deep comfort.

We felt that we were witnessing what we read in the *parashah*, how all of *Am Yisrael* came together in remarkable harmony to build the *Mishkan*. When everyone accepts a sacred task and joins together to fulfill it, the *Shechinah* rests among them, and it can be felt!

Thank you to the Creator of the world for the privilege of being part of this extraordinary people.

—The Peretz Family, HaNasi Street, Beit Shemesh

■ ■ ■

I received a message from Ilana Steiner of Kfar HaRo'eh. Her daughter, Ora, was traveling south by train to her in-laws to mark her husband Amichai's release from reserve duty. During the trip, an alert sounded. The train stopped safely, and all the passengers got off and entered the station's protected area.

Ora told a woman standing beside her that she was worried the train would leave without her. In the rush to get off, she had taken only her baby in her arms, leaving her stroller and suitcase behind on the train.

At that moment, a man standing nearby joined the conversation and said, “Don't worry, the train won't leave. I'm the driver.”

Ilana wrote that this conversation made her realize: the Driver is always present, always close by. In the midst of all our rushing and worrying we do not always notice Him, but in truth we see so much *hashgachah pratit* these days. The journey is turbulent, but we can be calm in the knowledge that the Driver is always with us.

■ ■ ■

Every year, in the midst of Pesach cleaning, I'm asked to repeat the following idea (even this year, with all that is happening around us). Dr. Miri Kahane recommends adopting a different approach to Pesach cleaning:

“I would like to share a thought that I keep reminding myself as I prepare for Pesach. The reason that we need to do so much cleaning is because we've been blessed with an abundance of everything – I'm

not only speaking about me personally, but all of us. Most of us are living in our own home with a separate bedroom for parents, a shower, and a bathroom. Our homes are filled with furniture, clothes, dishes, and food. Our children are so well fed that they leave whole packages of snacks in their drawers and sandwiches in their school bags which they didn't feel like eating. Our current reality is so different than that of our ancestors who needed to ask halachic questions about the one communal oven shared by several families, or washing their one item of clothing for Shabbat.

Despite the difficulties and challenges we face today, I'm sure that each one of us has at least one great-grandparent who would be ecstatic to see the prosperity of their great grandchildren. So, every now and then, I stop myself from thinking about all the cleaning and cooking that still needs to get done in order to appreciate how much we have.”

You're welcome to share this idea with others as we prepare for Pesach.

■ ■ ■

These are challenging days. Pesach is steadily approaching, and this Shabbat we begin reading a new book of the Torah: *Vayikra*.

Most of *Sefer Vayikra* deals with the *korbanot*, the offerings brought in the *Mishkan*. It does not have the sweeping drama of *Bereishit* or *Shemot*. There is no gripping storyline here.

The Pulitzer Prize-winning American Jewish author Herman Wouk once wrote about this uniquely Jewish quality: our loyalty to every part of the Torah, and to every part of life, even when it is not easy, exciting, or immediately rewarding; even when it requires effort, patience, and commitment. This is what he wrote:

Continued on page 11

For the Shabbat Table



Rabbi Danny Mirvis

CEO, World Mizrachi

Rabbi of Ohel Moshe Synagogue, Herzliya Pituach

“Any Meal Offering that you offer to Hashem shall not be made leavened (*Chametz*), for you shall not offer a fire offering to Hashem from any leavening or honey” (Vayikra 2:11).

“You shall salt every Meal Offering with salt...” (Vayikra 2:13).

Within our *Parsha*’s theme of personal sacrifices, we come across the *Korban Mincha* (Meal Offering made with flour, oil, and frankincense), which was brought by those who could not afford to bring fowl or animals.

At first glance, there appears to be a discrepancy in the laws of the ingredients of the *Mincha*. On the one hand, there is a prohibition against sweetening and improving the taste of the *Mincha* using honey. This can be understood as a desire not to ruin the purity or integrity of the core recipe by inserting foreign flavours.

At the same time, there is a commandment to add salt to every offering. Salt improves the taste of the offering, so why is it allowed? What is the difference between honey and salt?

An answer lies in the different ways honey and salt enhance the taste of food. Honey improves food by contributing a new and different taste from outside. Salt, however, doesn’t add a different external taste but enhances the existing flavour of the food itself. Therefore, while it is forbidden to add external tastes to the Meal Offering, we are commanded to add salt, which enhances that which is already there.

Rav Mordechai Gifter, *zt”l*, used this concept to teach an important lesson about the search for spirituality. Sometimes, we might feel tempted to add “sweeteners” or foreign ingredients to our religious lives in order to enhance the flavour of our spirituality. The sense that elements of our religious framework or recipe lack

flavour can lead us on a well-meaning journey to improve the product, which could inadvertently corrupt its integrity and authenticity.

Rav Gifter explained that, in truth, there is no need to look elsewhere or add foreign agents. If we find our religious lives need enhancement, the correct solution is to enhance our understanding and belief in what we already have. Just as salt brings out the natural flavours of a recipe, so too we must discover the inner beauty and meaning and relevance of authentic religiosity, and find ways to appreciate its core value on a higher level.

Hashem has blessed our world with many spheres of knowledge and experience for us to gain from. Used in the right way and incorporated with the correct approach, they can enhance and elevate our religious identity and experience.

Shabbat Shalom!

Parsha Riddle



Reb Leor Broh

Mizrachi Melbourne

Find four words that appear in one verse, all having the same “shoresh” (root).

See page 24 for the answer to the Parsha Riddle

Between Destiny and Chance



Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l

The third book of the Torah is known in English as Leviticus, a word deriving from Greek and Latin, meaning, “pertaining to the Levites”. This reflects the fact that in Judaism the priests – all direct descendants of Aaron – were from the tribe of Levi, and that the ancient rabbinic name for the book was *Torat Kohanim*, “the law of the Priests.” It is an appropriate title. Whereas *Shemot* and *Bamidbar* are shot through with narrative, the book between them is largely about sacrifices and the rituals associated, first with the Tabernacle and later with the Temple in Jerusalem. It is, as the name *Torat Kohanim* implies, about the priests and their function as guardians of the sacred.

By contrast, the traditional name *Vayikra*, “And He called,” seems merely accidental. *Vayikra* just happens to be the first word of the book, and there is no connection between it and the subjects with which it deals. The truth, I will argue here, is otherwise. There is a deep connection between the word *Vayikra* and the underlying message of the book as a whole.

To understand this, we must note that there is something unusual about the way the word appears in a *Sefer Torah* in this particular instance. Its last letter, an *aleph*, is written small – almost as if it barely existed. The standard-size letters spell out the word *vayikar*, meaning, “he encountered” or “he chanced upon.” Unlike *Vayikra*, which refers to a call, a summons, a meeting by request, *vayikar* suggests an accidental meeting, a mere happening.

With their sensitivity to nuance, the Sages noted the difference between the call to Moses with which the book begins, and G-d’s appearance to the pagan prophet Bilaam, which does not use the same form of the word. This is how the *Midrash* puts it:

What is the difference between the prophets of Israel and the prophets of the pagan nations of the world?... R. Hama ben Hanina said: The Holy One blessed be He reveals Himself to the pagan nations by an incomplete form of address, as it is said, “And the Lord appeared to Bilaam”, whereas to the prophets of Israel He appears in a complete form of address, as it is said, “And He called to Moses.”

Rashi is more explicit:

All [G-d’s] communications [to Moses], whether they use the words “speak” or “say” or “command” were preceded by a call [*keri’ah*] which is a term of endearment, used by the angels when they address one another, as it is said, “And one called to the other” [*vekara zeh el zeh*, *Isaiah* 6:3]. However, to the prophets of the nations of the world, His appearance is described by an expression signifying a casual encounter and uncleanness, as it says, “And the Lord appeared to Bilaam.”

The Baal HaTurim goes one stage further, commenting on the small *aleph*:

Moses was both great and humble, and wanted only to write *Vayikar*, signifying “chance,” as if the Holy One blessed be He appeared to him only in a dream, as it says of Bilaam [*vayikar*, without an *aleph*] – suggesting that G-d appeared to him by mere chance. However, G-d told him to write the word with an *aleph*. Moses then said to Him, because of his extreme humility, that he would only write an *aleph* that was smaller than the other *alephs* in the Torah, and he did indeed write it small.

Something of great significance is being hinted at here, but before taking it further, let us turn to the end of the book. Just before the end, in the *sedra* of *Bechukotai*,

there occurs one of the two most terrifying passages in the Torah. It is known as the *tochachah* (the rebuke: the other appears in *Devarim* 28), and it details the terrible fate that will befall the Jewish people if it fails to keep its covenant with G-d:

As for the survivors, I will bring such insecurity into their hearts in their enemies’ lands that the sound of a windblown leaf will make them run as if they fled the sword; and they will fall, though no one is chasing them. They will stumble over one another as if fleeing the sword, when no one chases them. You will have no power to stand before your enemies. You will perish among the nations; your enemies’ lands will devour you.

Lev. 26:36-38

Yet despite the shocking nature of the forewarning, the passage ends with a note of consolation:

I will remember My covenant with Jacob; and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Avraham I will also remember, and I will remember the land . . . Yet even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them nor despise them and annihilate them, will not break My covenant with them, for I am the Lord their G-d.

Lev. 26:42-44

The keyword of the passage is the word *keri*. It appears exactly seven times in the *tochachah* – a sure sign of significance. Here are two of them by way of example:

If, despite all this, you still do not listen to Me – if still you walk contrary to Me – then I, in My fury, will walk contrary to you. I will punish you seven times more for your sins.

Lev. 26:27-28

What does the word *keri* mean? I have translated it here as “contrary.” There are other suggestions. The Targum reads it as “harden yourselves,” Rashbam as “refuse,” Ibn Ezra as “overconfident,” Saadia as “rebellious.”

However, Rambam gives it a completely different interpretation, and does so in a *halachic* context:

A positive scriptural command prescribes prayer and the sounding of the alarm with trumpets whenever trouble befalls the community. For when Scripture says, “Against the adversary that oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets” the meaning is: Cry out in prayer and sound an alarm . . . This is one of the paths to repentance, for when the community cries out in prayer and sounds an alarm when threatened by trouble, everyone realises that evil has come on them as a result of their own wrongdoing . . . and that repentance will cause the trouble to be removed.

If, however, the people do not cry out in prayer and do not sound an alarm but merely say that it is the way of the world for such a thing to happen to them, and that their trouble is a matter of pure chance, they have chosen a cruel path which will cause them to continue in their wrongdoing, and thus bring additional troubles on them. For when Scripture says, “If you continue to be *keri* towards Me, then in My anger I will be *keri* towards you,” it means, “If, when I bring trouble upon you in order to cause you to repent, you say that the trouble is purely accidental, then I will add to your trouble the anger of being-left-to-chance.” (*Mishneh Torah, Taaniyot, 1:1-3*)

Rambam understands *keri* to be related to the word *mikreh*, meaning “chance.” The curses, in his interpretation, are not Divine retribution as such. It will not be G-d who makes Israel suffer, rather it will be other human beings. What will happen is simply that G-d will withdraw His protection. Israel will have to face the world alone, without the sheltering presence of G-d. This, for Rambam, is simple, inescapable measure-for-measure (*middah kenegged middah*). If Israel believe in Divine Providence, they will be blessed by Divine Providence. If they see history as mere chance – what Joseph Heller, author of *Catch-22*, called “a trash bag of random coincidences blown open by the wind” – then indeed they will be left to chance. Being a small, vulnerable nation, chance will not be kind to them.

We are now in a position to understand the remarkable proposition linking the beginning of *Vayikra* to the end – and one of the most profound of all spiritual truths. The difference between *mikra* and *mikreh* – between history as G-d’s call and history as one event after another with no underlying purpose or meaning – is, in the Hebrew language, almost imperceptible. The words sound the same. The only difference is that the former has an aleph while the latter does not (the significance of the *aleph* is obvious: the first letter of the alphabet, the first letter of the Ten Commandments, the “I” of G-d).

The letter *aleph* is almost inaudible. Its appearance in a *Sefer Torah* at the beginning of *Vayikra* (the “small *aleph*”) is almost invisible. Do not expect – the Torah is intimating – that the presence of G-d in history will always be as clear and unambiguous as it was during the Exodus from Egypt and the division of the Red Sea. For much of the time it will

depend on your own sensitivity. For those who look, it will be visible. For those who listen, it can be heard. But first you have to look and listen. If you choose not to see or hear, then *Vayikra* will become *vayikar*. The call will be inaudible. History will seem mere chance.

There is nothing incoherent about such an idea. Those who believe it will have much to justify it. Indeed, says G-d in the *tochachah*: if you believe that history is chance, then it will become so. But in truth it is not so. The history of the Jewish people – as even non-Jews such as Pascal, Rousseau, and Tolstoy eloquently stated – testifies to the presence of G-d in their midst. Only thus could such a small, vulnerable, relatively powerless people survive, and still say today – after the Holocaust – *Am Yisrael Chai*, the Jewish people lives. And just as Jewish history is not mere chance, so it is no mere coincidence that the first word of the central book of the Torah is *Vayikra*, “And He called.”

To be a Jew is to believe that what happens to us as a people is G-d’s call to us – to become “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE:

- Why is humility essential for hearing G-d’s call?
- Think of an event in your own life. Can you see it as both a random chance event and as a Divine call? What changes when you look at it from each perspective?
- Rambam suggests that if we believe our lives are governed by chance, G-d will leave us to chance. Do you think our beliefs shape our reality in this way?

Continued from page 8

“One writer decided to publish an easy version of the Bible. He adapted the Five Books of Moses by simply keeping all the stories and omitting all the laws. As a result, the book of Leviticus was reduced to about half a page, and that was that. But the Jews never cut a single word from the Torah. The lengthy plan for building the Tabernacle and the dramatic story of the splitting of the Red Sea were of equal value in their eyes.”

What a powerful idea. It can change the way we live.

Commitment and loyalty are not meant only for the moments that feel inspiring or enjoyable. They are tested specifically in the daily routine, in the effort, in the parts that do not come with instant satisfaction.

And these, after all, are challenging days in Israel. There is so much that wears us

down: sirens, Zoom meetings, safe rooms, reserve duty, Pesach cleaning, and the strain on both body and soul.

And yet, year after year, we return with love to the preparations for Pesach. We return to *Sefer Vayikra*. We keep going.

Because this too deepens the bond. This too is part of the bigger story.

The Leader With the Small Aleph



Rabbi Hershel Schachter

Rosh Yeshivah, Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University

The Talmud (*Chagiga* 5b) tells us that G-d “sheds three tears” over the tragedies of the human situations that people bring upon themselves. One of those tears is over people appointed to positions of leadership who misuse their authority for the purpose of self-aggrandizement. It is a psychological principle that power corrupts. It is very unusual for one to wield a lot of power and to remain unaffected. The *parsha* speaks of the case of the Jewish king of Eretz Yisroel (the land of Israel) sinning and being able to offer a special kind of “*korban chatas*” (“sin offering”). The expression used is, “*asher nasi yecheta*” (“that a leader shall sin”), and the Rabbis pointed out that the connotation of the phrase is that “it is the good fortune and to the credit of that generation” that their chosen leader is able to admit his mistakes. “*Hakaras hachet*” (recognizing that one has sinned) is difficult for any intelligent person, and even more difficult for one in a position of leadership. If the chosen leader is able to admit his errors, this indicates that the people had chosen wisely.

When Rav Chaim Soloveitchik had to choose a *dayan* (rabbinical judge) for the city of Brisk to assist him in *paskening* the *shailos* (issuing Jewish legal rulings in response to questions), he preferred Rav Simcha Zelig Regeur over the other candidates because he alone was able to admit

that he did not know how to *pasken* on several of the issues that Rav Chaim had posed to him. The Talmud recommends that even laymen should all “train ourselves to say that we do not know.” This criterion is even more crucial for appointing one to a position of leadership.

The *Talmud* tells us that in the overwhelming majority of cases, the views of Beis Hillel have been accepted as opposed to those of Beis Shammai. One of the reasons given for this is that, generally speaking, the students of Beis Hillel were more humble than those of Beis Shammai. In general, the students of Beis Shammai were more brilliant than those of Beis Hillel, and often found it too difficult to humble themselves to the degree of their counterparts. The assumption is that the more humble the individual is, the better the chance he has to discover the deep truths of the Torah.

Moshe Rabbeinu was the greatest Torah scholar of all time, precisely because of his great humility. The opening mishna in Avos states that “*Moshe kibel Torah meSinai*.” The simple translation of the phrase means that he received the Torah at the location of Mt. Sinai. There is a famous interpretation offered by both Chassidic and Misnagdishe *rabbonim*, that Moshe was worthy of receiving the Torah because he was like Mt. Sinai, i.e., because of his humility. Just as Sinai was not so tall a mountain, and acted with humility in

context to the other mountains, and was therefore chosen by G-d for the purpose of *matan Torah* in lieu of other tall mountains, so too, Moshe Rabbeinu, Beis Hillel, and anyone else humble of spirit, stands a better chance of succeeding in clarifying the truth of the Torah.

When choosing a rabbi of whom we ask *sheilos*, or when selecting one for a position of leadership, the criterion of humility should be high on the list of qualities to look for. It is indeed the “good fortune of the generation” to be able to choose as their leader someone who is in the habit of saying “*eini yodeah*,” and humble enough to admit on occasion that he erred.

At the end of the first word in *Chumash Vayikra*, there is a small *aleph*, as opposed to the first letter of the word “Adam” at the beginning of *Sefer Divrei Hayamim*, where there is a large *aleph*. The small *aleph* is understood as representing the humility of Moshe Rabbeinu. The Baal HaTanya explained, along the same lines, that the extra-large *aleph* of “Adam” represents the arrogance of Adam Harishon. The *Chumash* tells us that the cause of the original sin was the arrogant attitude of Adam and Chava, who believed the words of the Snake, who said that if they ate from the *Etz Hadaas* they would become as great as G-d! Fortunate is the generation that understands enough to appoint as its leader the person with the small “*aleph*” like Moshe Rabbeinu.

A Good Story for Seder Night



Rabbi Yisroel Reisman

Rosh Yeshiva, Yeshiva Torah Vodaas

As we prepare for *Shabbos Parshas Vayikra* – not quite *Shabbos Hagadol* – but still a *Shabbos* that carries a sense of preparation and anticipation very similar to *Shabbos Hagadol*, let me start with a good story for the *Seder* night and then move on to a thought.

The story is about **Aliyah L'regel**.

At this time of year, if we would be in *Eretz Yisrael* in the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*, everyone would essentially be staying in a hotel for *Pesach*. When people tell you that Jews don't stay in hotels for *Pesach*, it's not quite true. In the time of the *Beis Hamikdash*, nobody stayed home unless they lived in *Yerushalayim*. Everyone traveled and stayed – maybe not in hotels – but in homes throughout the *Yerushalayim* area.

This is a story about a farmer who packed up his family and his wife and set out from their farm to go to *Yerushalayim* to be an **Oleh Regel**.

For a farmer, this was very challenging, because he would leave his entire farm totally unprotected. The whole family would go up to *Yerushalayim*.

So he is traveling in his horse and buggy toward *Yerushalayim*, and halfway there he says to his wife, "Did you remember to shut the window in the barn?"

She says, "I thought you shut the window."

He says, "Oh no! A thief could just climb right in and steal the chickens and the animals!"

Then he says to himself, "You know what? It says in the Torah that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* promises that if we go up for *Aliyah*

L'regel, nobody will take our things." And he continues traveling.

A little later, he says to his wife, "I don't know if we remembered to hide the silver. Did you hide the silver?"

She says, "I thought you hid the silver."

"The silver is just sitting there! *Oy vey!* A thief could come into our hut and steal everything. Maybe we should turn around and go back."

Then he says again, "You know what? The Torah gives us a **haftacha**, a promise, that we will be protected. Let's rely on that."

Still nervous about their home, they continue traveling toward *Yerushalayim*.

Eventually, they approach the city, and from a distance they see the *Beis Hamikdash*. Soon they come very close. They find a place to leave their wagon and head toward the *Beis Hamikdash*.

The farmer walks in, and he is swept away by the majesty and awe of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

When he reaches *Har Habayis*, he takes off his shoes and leaves them near the entrance – because it is *assur* to go onto *Har Habayis* wearing shoes.

He goes into the Azarah and feels the awesome *kedushah* of the *Beis Hamikdash*: the **Kohanim b'avodasam** and the **Leviim b'shram u'vizimram**. He feels like such a spiritual person.

Up in *Shamayim*, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* looks down and says, as the *pasuk* says in **Shir HaShirim**:

"Mah yapu pe'amayich ban'alim, bas nadviv." "How beautiful are your footsteps in your shoes, O daughter of nobility."

What does that mean?

HaKadosh Baruch Hu says: It is beautiful that you are in the *Beis Hamikdash*. It is beautiful that you are swept away by the *kedushah* of the *Beis Hamikdash*.

But what I hold especially dear is the **traveling**.

When you were traveling, you weren't inspired. It was an exhausting trip. You were worried about your *parnassah*. You were worried about your farm. You were nervous about what you left behind.

But you relied on Me.

"Mah yapu pe'amayich ban'alim." How beautiful were your steps when you were wearing your shoes – when you were traveling to the *Beis Hamikdash*.

That is **mesiras nefesh**.

And that is the message.

Ultimately, of course, the time of *kedushah* and inspiration is very important. The *Seder* should be a *Seder* in which we connect to Torah, to *mitzvos*, and to the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

But **"Mah yapu pe'amayich ban'alim."**

How beautiful are the **preparations**.

When you come and you don't feel inspired – when you feel tired, when you're exhausted, when you're busy preparing for *Yom Tov* and sacrificing for *Yom Tov* – those are the days before *Pesach*.

Those days are hard.

Those days are challenging.

And we push ourselves, and we do it, and we help.

That is the beauty.

The Best Way to Serve G-d



Chief Rabbi Warren Goldstein
Chief Rabbi of South Africa

Adam ki yakriv korban laHashem, “If a person comes to bring an offering to G-d.” The verse uses the word adam for “person” though normally the *Chumash* uses the word *ish*. The *Midrash* says that the word adam refers not just to any ordinary person but to Adam, *Adam HaRishon*, the very first human being who ever lived. The key to understanding what the service of G-d entails – in the offerings in the Temple and in general – is to first understand Adam and Eve.

Adam and Eve teach us several things about the service of G-d. Firstly, they teach us about the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of all human beings. The *Mishnah* asks why human beings all come from one father and one mother – Adam and Eve – unlike the animals and the species of the plant kingdom which were created en masse. One of the answers the *Talmud* gives is to eliminate racism; had there been numerous original ancestors, everyone would say his ancestor is greater than the others’. And so, G-d created us all from the same ancestors to teach us that human beings are all brothers and sisters. Despite this, people still sink to racism; just imagine how much worse it would be had we come from multiple ancestors. Adam, alluding to the first human being, is all about the universality of humans. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch links this with the fact that offerings in the Temple were brought not only by Jews, but by gentiles as well. Anyone who wanted to bring an offering in the Jews’ Temple in the Holy City of Jerusalem was welcome to do so. As the prophet Isaiah says, Hashem says, *Ki beiti beit tefilla yikareh lechol ha’amim* “My house will be a house of prayer for all the nations.” Thus, this word adam teaches us about the universality of every human being serving G-d.

The second thing we learn from Adam is how to serve G-d. The *Kli Yakar* discusses how Adam’s children – the most infamous siblings in history, Kayin and Hevel, Cain

and Abel – tried to serve G-d. They both brought offerings, but each had his own flaws. Kayin didn’t bring the best of his crops to Hashem. When we come to serve Hashem, we have to give Him our best. Hashem favoured Hevel’s offering and Kayin was jealous. Hevel’s flaw was that he brought an offering only after he saw his brother doing so; he wasn’t self-motivated. Often we keep up with others, not only in material things but in spiritual things as well; we do something solely because someone else is doing it and not because we are self-motivated. The *Kli Yakar* explains that we learn from the use of the word adam that just as Adam, the first human being in the world, had no one to be jealous of and no one with whom to compete, whose point of reference was only Hashem and himself and he didn’t worry about what anyone else was doing (because there was no one else), so too, when we come to serve G-d we must serve Him like Adam HaRishon, focusing only on G-d and not on what the rest of the world is doing.

The third thing we learn from Adam is that our service of G-d must be ethical. Rashi quotes the *Midrash* which says adam is referring to *Adam HaRishon*. When he brought his offerings to G-d there was no theft involved because he was the only person around, there was no one from whom to steal. So too, when one brought an offering to G-d in the Temple, it was not allowed to be from stolen property. But in truth, who would do such a thing? The *Kli Yakar* explains Rashi’s words and says that we are not talking about someone who brings stolen goods to the Temple. Rather, we are talking about a person who lives an unethical life, whose business practices are dishonest and result in a lot of ill-gotten gain. Some of their wealth may have been earned honestly, but there are lots of things that were earned unethically. When such a person brings an offering, it is an abomination to G-d. We certainly can’t serve G-d if our

behaviour toward others is unjust and unethical because we must keep the whole Torah – the *mitzvos bein adam laMakom*, between man and G-d, as well as the *mitzvos bein adam lachaveiro*, between man and his fellow man.

This brings us to the final point on Adam. The opening passage of the *parsha* deals with a free-will offering. As we know, some of the offerings in the Temple were obligatory but this passage is referring to a voluntary one, brought out of one’s own volition, with passion and fervour. When Adam came to serve G-d he had one major disadvantage: he didn’t have a Torah. He just came to serve G-d out of desire to be close to G-d, but he didn’t have a Torah to guide him. When we come to serve G-d, we have to come with the same fervour as Adam but we must also follow the Torah’s guidelines. The *parsha* is saying that when we approach the service of G-d, we must do so in the context of the Torah’s guidelines. We begin like Adam, but then there are volumes of Hashem’s wisdom written in the Torah for what we must do.

One of the most unique and important teachings of Judaism is that we can’t just intuit how to be a spiritual or a moral person. The Torah is a blueprint for life that guides us as to how to be spiritual and ethical. We can’t just work things out by ourselves; we must follow the guidelines of the Torah.

The book of *Vayikra*, which we are about to begin, is about service in the Temple, but more broadly, it is about the service of G-d in general. And so it begins with *Adam ki yakriv*; if a person comes to bring an offering to G-d, he or she should do so as though they are like Adam, the first Adam, in serving G-d: we must recognize the universal brotherhood and sisterhood of all human beings; we must be self-motivated; we must come completely clean from an ethical point of view; and we must be willing to be guided by the Torah as to how to serve G-d.

Give All That You Can Give



Rabbi Shalom Rosner

Rosh Beit Midrash, Machon Lev International program

וְנִפְּשׁ כִּי־תִקְרִיב קֶרֶבֶן מִנְחָה לַה' סֵלֶת יִהְיֶה קֶרֶבְנוֹ... (ויקרא ב:א)

If a soul (person) brings an unspecified grain-offering to G-d, his offering must be of fine flour. (Vayikra 2:1).

Rashi inquires as to why in connection with a *korban mincha* the term “*nefesh*” (soul) is used to identify the individual offering the sacrifice, whereas in connection with a *korban olah*, the term “Adam” is used.

Rashi explains that a *mincha* is brought by a poor individual who cannot afford to acquire a sheep, or even a dove. All he could muster was some flour for a *mincha* offering. By using the term “*nefesh*” Hashem is indicating that although the offering may seem miserly, it is in fact viewed by Hashem as if the poor individual has sacrificed his soul, because that is all he can afford.

Throughout Tanach, prophets condemn those that offer sacrifices to G-d while engaging in transgressions. The most illustrious sacrifices are worthless before G-d if they are not offered with sincerity. To sacrifice while committing transgressions is like dipping in a *mikvah*

while holding an impure animal. A sincere *korban* offered by a poor individual is valuable before G-d, irrespective of its intrinsic worth.

A story is told by Rabbi Frand in *The Power of a Vort* of a taxi driver who drove the Steipler one day. The Steipler inquired as to whether the taxi driver learned Torah. The taxi driver told the Steipler that in order to support his family he works a long shift from early in the morning until late at night. After his shift, he goes to *shul* and after *maariv*, participates in a nightly *shiur*. The problem is that due to exhaustion, the taxi driver falls asleep five minutes into the *shiur*. The taxi driver inquired whether he should continue to attend the *shiur*, or is it useless since he falls asleep and does not retain any of the Torah transmitted in the *shiur*.

The Steipler responded, that based on the *pasuk* cited above “*nefesh ki takriv*,” the taxi driver should continue to attend the

nightly *shiur*. Although many may view snoozing through a *shiur* night after night in a negative manner, the Steipler viewed it from a different perspective. This man's exhaustion was not by choice. To earn an honest living, he had to work long hours. Driving all day made him drowsy. The fact that he consistently showed up for a *shiur* portrayed his *mesirat nefesh*. He gave all he could, so that he could attend a Torah *shiur*. That is all that is expected of us!

Although we do not offer *korbanot* today, the lessons learned from *korbanot* are still very much applicable. As with the poor individual who offers what he can, we need to do our utmost with respect to our *Avodat Hashem*. After 120 years, we won't be compared to others. We will be asked whether we did the most we could to maximize our potential. May we be able to push ourselves so that we can give all we can give!

Continued from page 4

too inward-looking, with our horizons largely limited within the ghetto-walls we have erected to separate us from the rest of our people and from the human society beyond... Preoccupied with the burning problems of our own survival, we have lost sight of our assignment as a light unto the nations.”¹⁵

Baruch Hashem, Jews are now free to live openly and have the opportunity to impact the global village. We also have our own state that is meant to serve as a national role model. We should appreciate the opportunity and responsibility this affords us.

Rav Kook¹⁶ emphasized the importance of being a model nation. We need to show the world that a nation, not just individuals, can live by the principles of justice and righteousness and become holy. The State of Israel is meant to embody this vision. May the model of Avraham Avinu, our appreciation of the full breadth of the Sinaitic covenant, and the words of Rav Kook inspire us to work towards “*tikun olam b'Malchut Shakai*” – fixing the world by bringing people and nations closer to His service.

1. Bereishit 12:5.

2. Bereishit Rabbah 39:14 and 84:4. See also Rashi to Bereishit 21:33, Sotah 10a, and Bereishit Rabbah 43:7 and 54:6.
3. Moreh Nevuchim 3:51.
4. Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Avodat Kochavim 1:3.
5. “The Power of Why,” Hamizrachi Parsha Weekly, Va'etchanan 5783.
6. Sifri, Devarim 32, Yoma 86a, and Sefer Hamitzvot L'Rambam, Aseh 3.
7. Shemot 19:6. See Rashi ad loc.
8. See his opinion quoted by his son, Rav Avraham ben HaRambam, in his commentary to Shemot 19:6.
9. Devarim 4:6.
10. “The Power of Why,” Hamizrachi Parsha Weekly, Va'etchanan 5783.
11. Seforno, Shemot 19:6.
12. Yeshayahu 42:6,12 and 49:6.
13. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:21.
14. Shir HaShirim Rabbah 1:3.
15. The Timely and the Timeless, pg. 96-97.
16. Orot, pg. 104.

Vayikra & Korban Pesach: Closeness to Hashem



Michal Horowitz

Teacher, Lecturer & Author of "Able: Living With A Disability, A Torah View"

Parshas Vayikra focuses on *korbanos*, and the main *avodah* of *Mishkan* (and later in history, the *BHM"K*) was the *avodas korbanos* upon the *mizbachos*.

The *Mishkan* had two *mizbachos* (two altars). The *Mizbayach Ha'nechoshes*, the Copper Altar, which stood in the *chatzer* (courtyard) of the *Mishkan*, was used exclusively for animal offerings; hence, its appellation, *Mizbayach Ha'olah*. It was also known as the *Mizbayach Ha'chitzon* (Outer/Courtyard Altar), and *Mizbayach Ha'adamah* (the altar was filled with earth at the time of encampment). The *Mizbayach Ha'zahav*, the Golden Altar, stood within the space of the *Kodesh*, in the interior of the *Mishkan*. This was used exclusively for the daily *ketores* (incense) offerings, hence, its appellation, *Mizbayach Ha'ketores*. It was also known as the *Mizbayach Ha'penimi*, for it stood in the interior of the *Mishkan*.

As the *avodah* of *korbanos* has not been practiced for almost 2,000 years, since *Churban BHM"K*, it is challenging for us to relate to this *avodah*. And yet, if the Torah includes entire sections (such as *Parshas Vayikra*) delineating the different *korbanos*, it means that even in the absence of the *BHM"K*, this *avodah* contains relevant messages and lessons for us today.

It behooves us to study the root (*shoresh*), rationale and meaning of the word *קרבן*, *korban*, as well as the *avodah*, so that we may enhance our own personal *avodas Hashem*. The following piece by Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch is important, clarifying, illuminating and inspiring.

Rav Hirsch writes, "קרבן. We have no word in Western languages that adequately conveys the concept inherent in the Hebrew term *קרבן*. The common German translation *Opfer*, deriving from the Latin

offero, is related to "offering" in meaning; but unfortunately, in the sense of "sacrifice," it has taken on the connotation of destruction, annihilation, and loss – a connotation that is *foreign and antithetical* to the Hebrew concept of *קרבן*.

"Even the original meaning of the term *offero*, in the sense of 'offering,' does not correspond to *korban* in its full sense. For the idea of an offering implies a prior request or need on the part of the one to whom the object is offered; the purpose of the offering is to meet his request or to satisfy his needs. There is no distinction between an offering and a gift, a present. The concept of *קרבן*, however, is far removed from all of these; it is never to be understood as a gift or a present. It is found solely in the context of man's relationship to G-d, and can only be understood on the basis of the meaning of the root *קרב*.

"The meaning of *קרב* is in accord with its plain sense: to draw closer, to arrive at a close relationship with someone. It follows, then, that the purpose and the result of *הקרבנה* is a positive attainment, the realization of a more noble existence, and that the opposite – destruction, annihilation, and loss – should not be ascribed to it. It also follows that a *korban* serves to meet the needs of the *makriv* (the one bringing the *korban*), and not the needs of the One to Whom the *korban* is brought near. The will of the *makriv* is that something of his own should come into closer relationship with G-d. This is the very essence of a *korban*; and the act is designed to bring this about is called *hak'ravah* (coming close).

"The purpose of a *korban* is to seek G-d's nearness... טוב, קרבת אלקים לי-טוב, and for me, closeness to G-d is my good (*Tehilim* 73:28), which for a Jew is the sole good, without

which he feels beast-like, stripped of the true calling of a human being (*ibid.*73:22).

"In G-d's Sanctuary a man will understand that closeness to G-d is the sole criterion for shaping his outlook on life and for evaluating his true happiness. There... he will see clearly that his spiritual and material happiness will flourish only through closeness to G-d and the rule of His Law, and that this is his ultimate calling. There... he will learn that the only way to attain G-d's nearness is total dedication to the illuminating, purifying, life-giving fire of the Torah. There, life's riddles are solved. There, the measure of one's happiness is determined by the measure of one's closeness to G-d. There, body and spirit yearn for the living G-d and learn how to know Him... Hence, 'happiness' loses its appeal if found far from G-d, while in G-d's nearness suffering is sweetened and is even transformed into good. For in G-d's Sanctuary every spirit, every soul, is refined – to understand and feel what is truly good for man: אִךְ טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹקִים לִבְרִי לִךְ, Truly G-d is good to Israel, to the pure of heart (*ibid.*73:1)" (*The Hirsch Chumash, Sefer Vayikra*, p.5-6).

The goal of the *korbanos* was closeness to Hashem. They were a vehicle and mode of worship that transported the one who brought, the *makriv*, closer to the One to Whom it was brought. Though perhaps challenging for us to grasp and understand, the *emes* of the Torah remains unchanging *m'dor la'dor*, from generation to generation.

As we prepare for *Chag ha'Pesach*, let us remember that the essence of the commemoration of *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the Exodus, is missing from our national service and experience. In the days when the *BHM"K* stood, on the 14th of *Nissan*, in

Continued on page 22

What Makes Sefer Vayikra Unique



Rabbi Menachem Leibtag

Tanach Study Center | Yeshivat Har Etzion

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 G-d commands *Bnei Yisrael*

Up until *Sefer Vayikra*, *Chumash* has essentially been narrative, i.e., the story of how G-d 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 G-d’s “*bechira*” (choice) of Avraham Avinu and his offspring to become His nation. The few *mitzvot* that we do find in *Sefer Breishit* 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 embedded within the ongoing story. For example, the laws of Pesach are presented as part of the story of *Yetziat Mitzrayim*, and the Ten Commandments constitute an integral part of the story of the covenant between G-d and His nation at *Ma’amad Har Sinai*.

Sefer Vayikra is radically different, as it not only begins with a set of commandments, the entire book (except for 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]).

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, including the story of the seven-day “*milu’im*” ceremony and the special *korbanot* that were offered on the “eighth day,” followed by the story of the tragic death of Nadav and Avihu.

The second is the brief story of the “*mekallel*,” who was executed for blaspheming G-d.

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 at those who officiate in the *Beit ha-Mikdash*.

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.

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. 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?

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 G-d entered into a covenant with Avraham Avinu so that his offspring [“*zera*”] would become a nation dedicated to the representation of His Name. To facilitate that goal, G-d 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*”).

Sefer Shmot began as G-d 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, G-d declared His attributes of mercy, thus enabling *Bnei Yisrael* an avenue for repentance, as reflected in their collective effort to construct the *Mishkan*. The return of G-d’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 G-d’s *Shechina* returns – where *Sefer Vayikra* begins. Before *Bnei Yisrael* continue their journey towards *Eretz Canaan*, G-d 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 G-d’s special nation – a “*mamlechet kohanim ve-goy kadosh*.”

In this sense, *Sefer Vayikra* constitutes more than simply a technical list of the various rituals performed in the *Mishkan*. The laws of *Sefer Vayikra* will focus on the very nature of *Am Yisrael*’s relationship with G-d, at both the individual and national level.

The Danger of a Scholar Who Lacks Manners



Rabbi Eli Mansour

Edmond J. Safra Synagogue, Brooklyn

In the opening verse of *Parashat Vayikra*, G-d calls to Moshe and invites him into the newly-constructed *Mishkan* to hear His commands. The *Midrash* finds it very significant that Moshe waited to be called before entering the *Mishkan*. It was Moshe who heard the commands about the building of the *Mishkan*, and who then painstakingly relayed these instructions to the people and oversaw the entire project. And, of course, he was the nation's leader and prophet who regularly spoke with G-d. And yet, in his unparalleled humility, he did not allow himself the right to enter the *Mishkan* without being first summoned by G-d. We might draw a comparison to a Rabbi who knocks before entering the synagogue which he leads, out of courtesy and respect for the people inside.

Commenting on the respect and courtesy Moshe displayed by waiting to be invited into the *Mishkan*, the *Midrash* makes the following astonishing remark: "Any Torah

scholar who lacks wisdom – an animal carcass is better than him." If a Torah scholar does not have basic sensibility, and acts discourteously, then he is considered worse than an "animal carcass."

Why did our Sages choose such an unusual image – a carcass – to decry scholars who lack basic manners and decency?

One answer given is that whereas a carcass emits a foul odor, which keeps people away from it, a rude, discourteous Torah scholar attracts a following through his scholarship and piety. People are impressed by his knowledge and by his passionate commitment to learning and *misva* performance, and so they flock to him and respect him. And this is precisely what makes a Torah scholar so dangerous – that people see him as a role model for them to emulate. Rather than distance themselves from him as they would from an odorous animal carcass, people respect him and learn from his example of bad

manners, thinking that this is what the Torah wants, Heaven forbid.

Nowadays, all Halachically observant Jews are considered "Torah scholars" in this regard. When gentiles or non-observant Jews see an Orthodox Jewish man with a *kippa*, or an Orthodox Jewish woman with a hair-covering and modest attire, they view them as representatives of Orthodox Judaism no less than they would prominent Rabbis. If any Orthodox Jewish man or woman acts without "wisdom," without basic courtesy and good manners, then he or she unwittingly conveys the dangerous message that this is what Orthodox Judaism stands for. Our involvement in Torah learning and *Misva* observance does not ever excuse discourteous behavior. To the contrary, it requires us to aspire to especially high standards of manners and courtesy, as we are all ambassadors of Torah Judaism and represent to the world what the Torah teaches and the kind of behavior it demands.



SHAGRIRIM BALEV

Friends Setting Up Friends

THIS WEEK IN NUMBERS



46

New Ambassadors
(Shagririm)



70

New Singles
(Candidates)



143

Started Dating
This week



Want to join? Want to bring it to your community?

Message: +972 58-532-3242 Email: shagririmbalev@gmail.com Visit: en.shagririm.org.il

A Servant's Praise



Rabbi Moshe Weinberger

Congregation Aish Kodesh, Woodmere

Regarding the *mitzvos* the *Seder*, the Maharil explains (*Seder Hahagada* 4) as follows: “We see that the *mitzvos* of the *Seder* are so precious from the fact that the Torah is more scrupulous [regarding the involvement of] the children on this night [than with regard to any other type of *mitzvos*], as it says, ‘And you shall tell your son...’” We must understand why this is. Rav Elchonon Wasserman, זצ”ל, quoted in the name of the Vilna Gaon that, altogether, we fulfill sixty-four *mitzvos*, both rabbinic and Torah-based, on *Seder* night. In connection with the voluminous number of *mitzvos* on Pesach, one of the great Mussar masters admitted to wondering why, on the night we celebrate our freedom, we are weighed down with so many *mitzvos*. We feel like we have returned to slavery! What is the connection between our focus on the children and the tremendous number of *mitzvos* when we celebrate our liberation from slavery?

Rav Yerucham Levovitz, זצ”ל, teaches (*Bais Chochma U’mussar*, Vol. 1, *Maamarim* 38-43) that the main idea of Pesach is not the freedom to do whatever we want. Rather, the main idea of the exodus from Egypt is that it gave us the freedom to be servants of Hashem. We want to internalize this awareness even in our physical bodies. However, in order to bring our bodies into the service of Hashem, we must use language that our bodies understand. The physical body does not understand wisdom or philosophy. It does not comprehend intellectual experiences like reliving the exodus. Rather, the way to reach the body is through physical acts. As the *pasuk* (*Devarim* 29:8) says, “וַעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם,” “And you shall do them.” Because the Hebrew word for “them” is spelled without the letter *vav*, the *Gemara* (*Sanhedrin* 91b) explains that the *pasuk* could homiletically be translated as “And you shall make you,” so that when

one does the *mitzvos* with his physical body, “כאילו עשאו לעצמו,” “it is as if he creates himself.”

The only way we can fulfill the purpose of leaving Egypt is by physically doing all of the *mitzvos* of the *Pesach* and the *Seder*. When we cook and clean for Pesach, eat the *Matza* and the *Pesach* offering, and drink the four cups of wine, we enter Hashem’s servitude. That is why the *Hagada* says, “ואפילו כולנו חכמים, כולנו נבונים, כולנו יודעים את” “Even if we were all wise, all men of understanding, and we all knew the Torah, it would still be incumbent upon us to recount the exodus from Egypt.” We must use our physical mouths to retell the story. Our whole body gets involved in the *mitzvos* of *Pesach* and the *Seder*. While we must certainly also focus on the deeper things we can attain through the *Seder* like greater faith in the Hashem’s existence and continued providence, the main point is to physically do the *mitzvos* in order to bring ourselves into Hashem’s service. That is how we go from slaves of Pharaoh to being Hashem’s slaves.

There is a beautiful *Midrash* (*Yalkut Shimoni*, *Tehilim* 113, *Siman* 872) which makes this point clearly:

[At the time of the plague of the first-born, Moshe and Aharon said to Pharaoh,] “If you want this plague to end, say ‘Behold you are free people. Behold you are in your own domain. Behold you are slaves of the Holy One, blessed is He.’ Pharaoh then began to scream, ‘You used to be my slaves. Behold you are now free people. You are now only slaves of the Holy One, blessed is He. You must praise Hashem because you are his servants.’ As it says (*Tehilim* 113:1), ‘Praise G-d! Praise, oh servants of Hashem,’ and as it says (*Vayikra* 25:55), ‘Because the Jewish people are my servants.’”

Now we understand why on the *Seder* night we have more *mitzvos* than at any other time of the year. We can be like those who left Egypt by entering the service of Hashem and doing all of the sixty-four *mitzvos* of the *Seder*. Going from being slaves to Pharaoh to slaves of Hashem is like creating ourselves as exalted servants who faithfully carry out the will of the Creator (see also Maharal, *Gevuros Hashem* 52).

Now we can understand why the Maharil says that the Torah is particularly concerned that we involve children in the *Seder*. We must allow our children to observe how we define our essential nature as servants of Hashem by doing His will so that they will learn to define themselves that way as well. When people go to Pesach hotels for reasons other than going to *Eretz Yisroel* or because their family dynamics simply give them no choice, they do their children and themselves a profound disservice by running away from the *mitzvos* of preparing for Pesach. By fleeing to a hotel for the duration of the holiday, children see that their parents are servants of their own bodies’ desires, and not servants of Hashem, and they similarly learn to identify themselves in the same way.

The Sfas Emes (*Pesach* 5663) writes that the *pasuk* (*Tehilim* 113:1) says, “Praise G-d! Praise, oh servants of Hashem,” demonstrates that there is a connection between being a servant of Hashem and joyful praise. The connection exists because all types of servitude of this world result in sadness and depression except for the servitude of Hashem, which brings a person to happiness and joy. In the world at large, growing up means throwing off the shackles of one’s parents and teachers in order to do whatever he or she wants. That is why the celebrations they associate with coming of age like proms and graduation parties demonstrate that ethos of personal independence. In contrast, by connecting ourselves to the

Continued on page 22

Confronting Your Animal



Rabbi YY Jacobson
TheYeshiva.net

One of the enigmatic things about the Torah is, no doubt, its focus on animal sacrifices, which are described at length in this week's Torah portion *Vayikra*, and in many others to follow in the book of Leviticus.

While not getting into the widely debated issue of the morality behind animal slaughtering, the question remains: Why does the divine blueprint for living, find it necessary to devote hundreds of its verses to the laws of animal sacrifices?

In truth, every law and episode recorded in the Torah may be appreciated not only from a physical and concrete point of view but also from a metaphysical perspective. The detailed laws of animal sacrifices are no exception. Physically, they don't relate to us in our present age, but on a psychological and spiritual level, these laws relate to us a timeless message for human challenge and growth.

Every human being possesses an animal-consciousness within him or her. This dimension of our identity, constituting our regularly experienced sense of self, is self-oriented and self-absorbed. Its exclusive quest in life is self-preservation and gratification. It's one question, repeated before every encounter and before every endeavor, is "What is in this for me?"

In stark contrast to this conspicuous layer of self lays a deeper dimension of identity, a G-dly consciousness, a yearning to transcend the self and to connect with ultimate truth and reality. It is a layer of self that allows us to love altruistically and to seek higher, idealistic goals in life. This inherent dichotomy in the human structure gives rise to the perpetual struggle existing in the human psyche: the conflict between self-centeredness and self-transcendence, the tussle between frivolousness and immorality and genuine meaning and spirituality.

According to the Kabbalah, the G-dly consciousness was born into this world and

tucked into an animal consciousness and body with the sole purpose of refining this inner animal identity and elevating it to the plane of the spirit.

Each soul was given a "custom-made" animal consciousness as its special pupil for the years they will be spending together on earth. The Divine soul is charged with the mission of educating and sublimating the animal self, of actualizing its deepest, yet latent, potentials. It is called upon to take a rock and turn it into a diamond.

When the G-dly soul fails to perform its task of cultivating and educating its animal-student, the animal self can become a dangerous force. To be sure, the animal self is not inherently evil, merely selfish. Yet in its never-ending quest for self-preservation and self-enhancement, it can turn into a monster, demolishing itself and other people in its beastly urge for self-assertion and gratification. What was a little once-upon-a-time cute animal existing in our heart may turn into an undomesticated wild beast that is coarse, profane and destructive.

This is why the Bible is so obsessed with animal offerings. After all, our chief task in life is to challenge our own inner animal, every day anew, bringing it one step closer to our higher, deeper self, and to the G-dly space within us.

But how does one achieve this difficult goal?

That's the reason for the many nuanced laws concerning animal offerings throughout the Bible. It is no easy task to refine your animal, and different people struggle with different types of animals. Therefore, the Torah devotes hundreds of verses to the subject, guiding human beings on their path to confront and deal with the various forms of animals existing in their psyche.

Generally, the Torah states that all animal offerings required the following four

steps. First, you had to verbally declare that you are dedicating this animal to become an offering. Second, the animal was slaughtered by cutting both its esophagus and trachea (food pipe and windpipe). Third, its blood was sprinkled on the walls of the altar situated in the Holy Temple. Finally, parts of the animal fat were removed and burned in a flame on top of the altar.

What do these rituals represent in man's psychological work on his animal self?

The first step in dealing with the animal in you is the determination and commitment to change the status quo of your life and to challenge your animal identity. In the next stage, you must take the bull by its horns and exert full control over its very life and identity. To really refine your animal, you have to show it who's boss. No ifs, ands or buts. If you let your animal continue living its own life, there is no hope for genuine refinement and reorientation.

Particularly, you must challenge the way your animal eats and drinks, symbolized by the cutting of the food pipe, and the type of oxygen it inhales, symbolized by the windpipe; you have to change both the atmosphere which surrounds it and the type of information being fed to it.

In the third step, you take the blood of your animal and sprinkle it on an altar. This signifies the fact that you ought never to destroy the fervor and passion of your animal self. Rather, you must take it and sanctify it to G-d, reorienting it toward lofty and spiritual goals.

Finally, you take its fat and burn-in on top of the altar. Fat represents indulgence and pleasure-seeking. As you begin the process of animal sublimation, you will discover how the same "fatty" enjoyment you experienced previously in your animalistic patterns can now be experienced in living a life of meaning.

Continued on page 22

Vayikra: Before Hashem, With Hashem



Rabbi Judah Mischel

Executive Director, Camp HASC; Founder, Tzama Nafshi

Author of the Baderech series

In the *Beis Medrash* of Rebbe Yitzchak Meir Heshel of Zinkov (d. 1854), the oldest son and successor of the *Ohev Yisrael* of Apta zy'a, there was an emphasis on *avodas ha-midos*, refining character traits, and in particular attaining humility. When the Rebbe returned home to Zinkov from a lengthy road trip, he found that over the course of his protracted absence, his community had hired a *chazan* to lead prayer services. Unfortunately, this *chazan* seemed to be lacking in *yiras Shomayim*, and his *midos* did not live up to the standards the Rebbe was comfortable with. In defense of their hiring, the Gabbai pleaded: "The *chazan* was passing through town and had such a magnificent voice; everyone was so impressed! His voice fills the room, and he *davens* before the *amud* so beautifully that we didn't think we needed to know anything more about his personality, and we offered him the job on the spot."

Said the Rebbe, "Indeed, you found a *chazan* who *davens* for the congregation 'before the *amud*,' however I would have preferred that in Zinkov we have a *chazan* who *davens* before Hashem."

■ ■ ■

ויקרא אל משה... "Hashem called to Moshe," inviting him to enter the *Ohel Moed*, the Tent of Meeting, and stand before Him there for the first time. The last letter of the word *Vayikra* is written in our Torah scrolls as an *alef ze'ira*, a "small *alef*," graphically smaller than the other letters. The *Meforshim* comment that this points out Moshe Rabbeinu's humility; even as Hashem called to Moshe directly, Moshe

remained *anav mikol adam*, "more humble than any other person." (*Vayikra*, 12:3)

Rav Yisroel Belsky, *zt'l*, Rosh Yeshiva of Torah VaDaas points to Moshe Rabbeinu's *midah* of humility and noted how self-aware those in positions of Jewish leadership and influence must be within their roles of power and authority. Jewish law states that when a Jewish king *davens* the *amidah* he must remain in a bowed position throughout the entire prayer, instilling in himself self-negation and humility before the King of Kings. Rav Belsky would say that *malchus*, rulership, is the ultimate *avdus*, servitude. It is in this spirit that the great *tzadik*, Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zy'a, would sign his letters as "A Servant of the Holy Nation in the Holy Land."

Rambam writes of a Jewish king: "He must be exceedingly humble; (he must) not exercise pomp and dignity over his people more than necessary... (he must) be gracious and compassionate to young and old, and go and come for their sake and their good...and protect the honor of the smallest of the small...." (*Hilchos Melachim*, 2:6)

■ ■ ■

When the Tzemach Tzedek, Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneersohn (the 3rd Lubavitcher Rebbe) was brought to *cheder* to learn Torah, he asked his grandfather, the Alter Rebbe, why the letter '*alef*' of the word *Vayikra* is written smaller than the other letters. The Alter Rebbe explained to the young genius and future Rebbe that the *alef ze'ira* honors Moshe's humility, his 'smallness' in his own eyes. He shared an

insight as to how Moshe maintained that *midah*: "Moshe Rabbeinu was aware of the outstanding qualities he had been blessed with, yet did not become conceited. Instead, with great humility, he said to himself, 'Someone else in my position, given the opportunity to receive the Torah face-to-face from Hashem and granted all of this spiritual potential, would have accomplished so much more.'"

■ ■ ■

After experiencing the chaotic unraveling of Covid 19 – of our routine, expectations, sense of control and stability – what is clear is how so many of us have been '*davening for the amud*' – relying on external structures and framework, man made (holy!) institutions and constructs for our spiritual and personal connection with Hashem.

In the aftermath of this period, it is clear each of us are called upon to be a *shalich tzibur*: We are all *davening* for one another, leading a congregation of even one... in our own homes, for & with our families, our friends, online – it is so clear how much we are all standing before Hashem. Individually and collectively, we are experiencing the humility of the *alef ze'ira*.

This *Shabbos Vayikra*, may we embrace a humbled state, hear Hashem's calling, and respond directly to Him, with open, sincere conversation, real talk, real *kesher*.

No more *davening* for the *amud*, before a congregation.

Only before Hashem, with Hashem.

Distinctive Distinctions

Mrs. Shira Smiles

International lecturer and curriculum developer

Parashat Vayikra delineates numerous laws pertaining to *korbanot*, sacrificial offerings. Interestingly, there are various situations in which the Torah distinguishes between the obligations of the wealthy man versus the poor man. Although these differences may seem technical, they teach us fundamental truths about *avodat Hashem*.

Every animal sacrifice had its blood sprinkled on the altar. The blood of an animal sacrifice offered by a rich person is sprinkled on the upper part of the *mizbeach*, the altar. In contrast, the blood of a fowl, a poor man's offering, is sprinkled toward the lower part of the *mizbeach*. Rav Moshe Feinstein, *zt"l*, in *Darash Moshe* offers a beautiful interpretation to understand the discrepancy. What can cause a rich person to sin? If he fails to acknowledge that all he has is a result of Hashem's generosity and blessing, and instead defies Hashem's command. Such a person must "look up," remember that Hashem is the Source of everything, and repent.

A poor person, however, may come to sin out of resentful feelings toward Hashem,

that He has not been given enough of what he thought he deserved. Looking upwards would only exacerbate his negative feelings towards Hashem. Thus, to repent, he must look downwards and appreciate what he possesses, recognizing that everything he does have is a gift from Hashem. Then his contrition for not having expressed the proper appreciation can bring him to *teshuvah*.

If a poor person cannot afford an animal, he may bring turtle doves as a sacrifice. However, one who can afford an animal cannot fulfill his obligation by bringing these less expensive birds. The Chofetz Chayim, *zt"l*, sees this law as communicating an important principle. It is not uncommon for people to compare themselves to others, saying, "It's not so bad if I only do this, or if I don't keep that. So and so doesn't either." How foolish! says the Chafetz Chayim. Each person is held accountable for what he or she can accomplish, irrespective of others. Someone with limited understanding and narrow capabilities is not expected to reach the same levels as one who is blessed with

many talents and intellectual acuity. Hence, a rich man must bring a sacrifice that reflects his personal standards, not anyone else's.

"See the difference between one who is righteous and one who is wicked, between one who serves G-d and one who does not serve Him." (*Malachi* 3:18) Hillel expounds, "One who learns Torah and reviews it 100 times cannot be compared to one who reviews it 101 times." (*Chagigah* 9b) Although both learners are righteous, the one who reviews his studies an extra time is described as "a servant of G-d," whereas the person who studies one time less is termed as "not serving Him." One suggestion to explain this is that one who can push himself "one" step beyond and does not do so, is considered not to have served Hashem as he could have.

A rich and a poor person have different standards in offering a sacrifice; similarly, there are different expectations vis-à-vis *avodat Hashem* for one who is "rich" and one who is "poor."

Continued from page 16

the afternoon, the *Korban Pesach* would be brought. And that night, *leil 15 Nissan*, the Jews would sit around in their *chaburos*, with family and neighbors, celebrating together (cf. *Ex.12:3-4*) relating the story of the Exodus to their children, and their

children's children (cf. *Ex.10:2*), and giving thanks to Hashem for their miraculous salvation.

While today, the *zero'ah* (roasted bone) on the *ke'arah* reminds us of the *Korban Pesach*, we daven for the day when the *geula* will

be complete, the BHM"K will be rebuilt once again, and total and complete closeness between us and Hashem will finally be achieved.

Continued from page 19

infinite greatness of Hashem by submitting to His will, we demonstrate to our children that the greatest joy in life is not enslaving ourselves to our own desires. Such desires ultimately become merciless tyrants over

us. Rather, the key to happiness in life is taming our personal physical desires by submitting our own will to the will of the Master of the world.

May we merit to see the full revelation of Hashem's kingship and mastery over the world with the coming of *Moshiach* soon in our times.

Continued from page 20

So for those of us who struggle with such animal-like aspects as laziness, anger, self-centeredness, addiction, depression, apathy, and dishonesty, the laws of

animal offerings provide a written plan for corralling those impulses, breaking their wildness and converting them to a G-dly use. By doing so, we take our

animal personality and bring it closer to the higher truth.

A Salute to the Screen Children!



Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi
Popular Torah teacher and author

In this war, I've had the privilege of meeting, through screens, "screen children." They wake up every morning for Zoom, and every so often the school decides to bring Rebbetzin Yemima onto Zoom. They are religious and not, high schoolers and elementary students – and all of them deserve an endless salute. This week, on a Zoom call with grades 7–12, I told them that I have a son in 7th grade who seems to have gone through upheavals of historic proportions: in 1st and 2nd grade he was mostly at home because of COVID, after a short break came October 7th, then the war, then operation after operation – "*Chad Gadya, Chad Gadya*." And this little "kid," this small goat, proves himself to possess astonishing strength. He survives the cat, the dog, the stick, the fire, the water, and the ox – *Chad Gadya, Chad Gadya*.

"Where do you get your strength from?" I asked them. Their answers were the very definition of the beautiful concept: a **free person** (*ben chorin*).

"Ben" (son) is the place they come from – the immediate place of the close family, but also the history of fathers and mothers who were in Egypt, without freedom, enslaved – and דיוקא there discovered freedom. Just like the hostages in Gaza: Segev Kalfon recounted that they showed him, in a broadcast of Islamist educational programming, the series "*Sayyidna Yusuf*," where for the first time he encountered the story of Joseph the righteous, who went through this before him – something that infused him with endless strength.

"To humiliate requires two," writes Etty Hillesum in her diary before she was murdered in the Holocaust, "one who humiliates and one who is humiliated. The moment there is no one who is humiliated, only the humiliator remains – and the humiliation disappears." "There is

within you the DNA of children of those who know that evil is external to them," I told the young students. "Even if you have encountered evil, you have the power to remember that you are good!"

The goat of *Chad Gadya* survives because of the "*dezabin Abba*" – "that Father bought." Someone who loves him deeply and invested their best strengths in him flows in his blood and protects him.

The "*chorin*" (freedom) is the future – the small window through which we can hope toward what has not yet happened. It is the dream and the hope of the goat, who dreams of that great finale, when "the Holy One, blessed be He, will come and slaughter the Angel of Death..." "When you have something to live for, you can withstand any 'how,'" the captives in Gaza repeated to themselves again and again. "You must have a dream!" I told the screen children. "Don't let the networks drag you into dreams that aren't yours! G-d brought you into the world to fulfill the dream that is yours alone!"

So if the "*ben*" is the strength flowing into us from the past, and the "*chorin*" is the dream of the future – the window into that dream – what about the present?

Between what was and what will be stands this very day, which obligates us – amidst all the disorder – to create order. What is the order of this day?

A. This day must include giving.

In captivity, the hostages told how they shared their meager bread with those who had none – and that act gave them wondrous freedom. How much kindness can be done at home in these days! Get up from the screen and act!

B. This day must include seeing a good point within it.

Thus: "One who goes out during the days of Nisan and sees fruit trees in bloom recites the blessing: 'Who has left nothing lacking in His world and created in it good creatures and good trees for human enjoyment.'" This day is full of beauty – natural beauty and human beauty. Will you dedicate a moment to enjoy it? To merit this, one must "go out in the days of Nisan" – step away from the screen for a few moments. The released hostages told me that when they were moved from place to place, in those rare moments when they emerged from the tunnel, they would say to each other: "We're going now to gather as much sky as we can!"

C. And the most important order of the day: the prayer book.

Did you pray today? Only prayer reminds us that the "order" as the world speaks of it is not the divine order. So teaches Rabbi Yonatan Eybeschutz: in *Chad Gadya*, the goat is good and the cat is evil; therefore the dog that eats the cat is good, and the stick is evil; and the fire that burns the evil stick is good; and the water is bad; and the ox is good; and the slaughterer is bad; and the Angel of Death is good – and... what now? According to this "order," we might, G-d forbid, look at this entire chain and think that G-d... is not good! דיוקא here, prayer reminds us of the twist in the plot: when everything seems to be leading toward evil, the Holy One, blessed be He, will come and set the true order of the world.

So look at *this* screen – the one that shows history, the one that doesn't steal your dreams, the one that doesn't distract you from the beauty and goodness of the world. We need you, little goats – you are one of a kind! *Chad Gadya, Chad Gadya*.

Hebrew Language in the Parsha



David Curwin

balashon.com

Author of the book *Kohelet: A Map to Eden* (Maggid)

In *Parshat Vayikra*, the Torah describes the preparation of the burnt offering:

וְהִפְשִׁיט אֶת-הָעֹלָה וְנָתַח אֹתָהּ לַנְּחֹתָיָהּ

“Then he is to strip [the skin] of the burnt offering and cut it up into sections.” (*Vayikra* 1:6)

The word “strip” here is *הִפְשִׁיט*, and it derives from the root *פִּשַׁט*. The root has several meanings: to spread, to strip (off), to stretch out. Those are all in the physical sense. For example, *הִפְשִׁיט*, can either mean “to flay (a hide)” – as in our verse, or “to remove (garments)” – as the brothers did to Yosef in *Beresheet* 37:23. In the *hitpael* form, *הִתְפַּשֵּׁט*, the verb means to remove one’s own clothes, to undress.

The phrase for going bankrupt, *פָּשַׁט אֶת הָרֶגֶל*, literally “he extended his foot,” doesn’t seem to connect to financial ruin – until you examine where it comes from. In *Mishna Ketubot*, 13:5, the phrase appears as: *הַפּוֹסֵק מְעוֹת לַחֲתָנוֹ, וּפָשַׁט לוֹ אֶת הָרֶגֶל* – “If a person stipulated to give money to

his son-in-law, and he *הָרֶגֶל לוֹ אֶת הָרֶגֶל*...” meaning the father-in-law failed to pay the dowry. The concept extended naturally from there to anyone who doesn’t pay what they owe.

The strange imagery gets explained differently by various commentators. Rashi reads it as a derisive expression: either “take the mud from my foot” – because that’s all you’re going to get – or “hang me by my foot,” and you still won’t see any money. Rivan takes it more literally: “you can take my foot, but I have no money to give.” Rambam understands it as the father-in-law fleeing to another country – he picked up his legs and left. Meiri reads it as a way of saying the father-in-law died.

The adjective *פָּשׁוּט*, first appearing in Rabbinic Hebrew, originally meant “straight.” For example, in *Mishna Rosh Hashana* 3:3, a *shofar* is described as *פָּשׁוּט* – meaning from a straight horn. But in the middle ages, the word *פָּשׁוּט* gained the more common meaning used today – “simple.”

This is an example of the root *פִּשַׁט* taking on more abstract meanings. The noun *פִּשְׁטָן* means “the simple (meaning).” It’s often hard to define what the *פִּשְׁטָן* of a text is. The quip attributed to Nechama Leibowitz captures the subjective nature well: “If I say it, it’s *פִּשְׁטָן*. If you say it, it’s *דְּרָשָׁן*.”

The Arabic cognate to *פִּשַׁט* is *basat*, which gives us two common expressions in Hebrew slang. A *בַּאֲסָטָה* is a market stall, and the original sense was produce spread out on display for purchase. From there we get *אָת הַבַּאֲסָטָה סָגַר*, literally “to close the stall,” used to mean ending something that had been ongoing. The word *מְבֻסָּט*, “satisfied” or “pleased,” comes from the same root. Linguists explain it as the heart expanding when a person is happy, something English hints too in the connection between “relaxed” and happy.

Answer to the Parsha Riddle (from page 9)

There are several correct answers.

In 1:2, four words appear containing the root letters *קרב*.

In each of the verses at 4:3, 4:28, and 5:6, four words appear containing the root letters *חטא*.

In 2:13, four words appear containing the root letters *מלח*.

Let us have a look at this last verse, which deals with salting the meal offerings:

וְכָל-קֶרְבַּן מִנְחָתְךָ בַּמֶּלַח תִּמְלַח וְלֹא תִשְׁבֹּת מֶלַח בְּרִית אֶל-יְהוָה מֵעַל מִנְחָתְךָ עַל כָּל-קֶרְבָּנְךָ תִּקְרִיב מֶלַח

“You shall **salt** all your meal offerings with **salt**, and you shall not omit **salt**,

the covenant of your G-d from [being placed] upon your meal-offerings. You shall bring **salt** on every one of your offerings.” (2:13)

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin in Oznayim LaTorah asks why the verse needs to state “you shall not omit salt” after having already stated the obligation to salt all meal offerings in the beginning of the verse.

He answers this based on Rashi’s comment on the “covenant of your G-d” mentioned here in connection with salt. When the firmament was formed to separate the lower waters and the higher waters, the lower waters felt

rejected and complained. Hashem made a covenantal promise to them that they would be offered on the *Mizbeach* in the form of salt (which comes from the sea) and poured on the *Mizbeach* during Sukkot.

The requirement to place salt on animal sacrifices is therefore understood as fulfillment of this promise. But with regard to the meal offerings which already contain water, one might have thought the promise to the lower waters has already been fulfilled without having to add salt. Therefore, the verse needs to emphasize again that salt was still required.

OUR PARTNERS

Department of Education of the
World Zionist Organization

ARGENTINA
Comunidad La Casa

AUSTRALIA
Mizrachi Australia

MELBOURNE
Blake Street Hebrew Congregation
Elsternwick Jewish Community
Mizrachi Melbourne

SYDNEY
Mizrachi Bondi

PERTH
Dianella Shule – Mizrachi Perth

AUSTRIA
VIENNA
Misrachi Österreich

BELGIUM
ANTWERP
Mizrachi Antwerp

BRASIL
RIO DE JANEIRO
Mizrachi Rio de Janeiro

SAO PAULO
Mizrachi Sao Paulo

BULGARIA
SOFIA
Jewish Community

CANADA
MONTREAL
ADATH Congregation
Hebrew Academy

HAMPSTEAD
The ADATH

TORONTO
Beit Tzion Congregation
Bnei Akiva Schools of Toronto
Shaarei Tefillah Congregation

CHILE
Mizrachi Chile
Escuela Maimonides

COSTA RICA
SAN JOSE
Sharai Zion

CROATIA
ZAGREB
Bet Israel Jewish Community of Croatia

CZECHIA
PRAGUE
Jewish Community of Prague

ECUADOR
Equador Jewish Community

FINLAND
HELSINKI
Jewish Community of Helsinki

GERMANY
KOLN
Jewish Community

GUATEMALA
Guatemala City Jewish Community

HOLLAND
AMSTERDAM
AMOS Amsterdam Modern Orthodox Sjoel

HONG KONG
Chabad HK
Jewish Women's Association (JWA)
Kehilat Zion – Hechal Ezra
Ohel Leah Synagogue
The Jewish Community Centre

HUNGARY
BUDAPEST
Orach Chaim Kyiv

ISRAEL
JERUSALEM
Amudim Beit Midrash for Women
Baer Miriam
Hashiveinu
Jacques Sueke Foundation
Michlelet Mevasseret Yerushalayim (MMY)
Midreshet Emunah v'Omanut
Midreshet Eshel
Midreshet HaRova
Midreshet Rachel vChaya
Neve Hagiva'a
Shapell's/Darche Noam
Torat Reva Yerushalayim
Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi
Yeshivat Hakotel

Yeshivat Orayta
BEIT SHEMESH
Tiferet Midrasha
Kehillat Nofei Hashemesh
Yeshivat Ashreinu
Yeshivat Hesder Lev HaTorah

HERZLIYA
Mizrachi OU-JLIC Herzliya

MEVASERET ZION
Yeshivat Mevasseret
RAMAT GAN
Israel XP at Bar Ilan University

THE NEGEV
Mechinat Ruach HaNegev

LATVIA
JURMALA
Jewrmala - the Jurmala Jewish Community

MALTA
Jewish Community

MEXICO
Mizrachi México

NORTH MACEDONIA
SCOPIA
Jewish Community

PANAMA
Centro comunitario BETH EL

POLAND
Chief Rabbinate of Poland

PORTUGAL
PORTO
Rabbi Daniel Litvak

SCOTLAND
EDINBURGH
Edinburgh Hebrew Congregation

SERBIA
BELGRADE
Rav Isak Asiel

SOUTH AFRICA
JOHANNESBURG
Mizrachi Glenhazel Shul

SWEDEN

The Jewish Community of Stockholm
Kehilat Adat Yeshurun
Kehiliat Adat Yisrael

SWITZERLAND

BERN

Jüdische Gemeinde Bern

ZURICH

HaKehila HaYehudit Zurich
HaKehila HaYehudit Lausanne
Mizrachi
Wollishofen

TANZANIA

ARUSHA

Bayit Knesset Shalem Al Shabazi

UNITED KINGDOM

Mizrachi UK

UNITED STATES

NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Kol Hatorah Kulah
National Council of Young Israel
RZA-Mizrachi USA

CALIFORNIA

Beth Jacob Congregation
Harkham Hillel Hebrew Academy
West Coast Torah Center
Young Israel of North Beverly Hills
YULA High School
Young Israel of Century City

COLORADO

DAT Minyan
East Denver Orthodox Synagogue
The Denver Kehillah

CONNECTICUT

Beth David Synagogue
Congregation Agudath Sholom
Young Israel of West Hartford

FLORIDA

Beth Israel Congregation
Hebrew Academy RASG
PlayHard PrayHard
Congregation Torah Ohr
Sha'arei Bina Torah Academy for Girls
Young Israel of Hollywood-Ft. Lauderdale

GEORGIA

Congregation Beth Jacob
Congregation Ohr HaTorah

HAWAII

Kehilat Olam Ejad Ganim

ILLINOIS

Mizrachi-Religious Zionists of Chicago

MARYLAND

Kemp Mill Synagogue
Pikesville Jewish Congregation

Bnai Jacob Shaarei Zion Congregation

MASSACHUSETTS

Congregation Beth El Atereth Israel
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe
Congregation Shaarei Tefillah
Young Israel of Brookline

MICHIGAN

Young Israel of Oak Park
Young Israel of Southfield
Congregation Kadimah-Toras Moshe

MINNESOTA

Congregation Darchei Noam

MISSOURI

Yeshivat Kadimah High School Nusach
Hari B'nai Zion Congregation
Young Israel of St. Louis

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hillel at Dartmouth

NEW JERSEY

Ahavas Achim
Volunteer Chaplain Middlesex County
Congregation AABJ&D
Congregation Adath Israel of the JEC
National Council of Young Israel
Congregation Ahavat Achim
Congregation Ahavath Torah
Congregation Brothers of Israel
Congregation Darchei Noam of Fair Lawn
Congregation Etz Chaim of Livingston
Congregation Israel of Springfield
Congregation Ohr Torah
Congregation Sons of Israel of Cherry Hill
Kehilat Keshet
Ma Tov Day Camp
Ohav Emeth
Pal Foundation
Shomrei Torah of Fair Lawn
Synagogue of the Suburban Torah Center
Yavneh Academy
National Council of Young Israel
Young Israel of Teaneck

NEW YORK

Beis Community
Congregation Anshei Shalom
Congregation B'nai Tzedek
Congregation Bais Tefilah of Woodmere
Congregation Beth Sholom
Ramaz
Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls
MTA – Yeshiva University High School for Boys
Young Israel of Merrick
Congregation Beth Torah
Congregation Etz Chaim of Kew Gardens Hills
Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun
Congregation Ohav Zedek
Great Neck Synagogue
Iranian Jewish Center/Beth Hadassah Synagogue
Irving Place Minyan

Jewish Center of Atlantic Beach

Kehilath Jershurun
Kingsway Jewish Center
Lincoln Square Synagogue
Merkaz Yisrael of Marine Park
North Shore Hebrew Academy
Young Israel of Merrick
NYC Department of Correction
OU-JLIC at Binghamton University
OU-JLIC at Cornell University
Queens Jewish Center
Stars of Israel Academy
The Jewish Center
The Riverdale Minyan
Vaad of Chevra Kadisha
West Side Institutional Synagogue
Yeshiva University High School for Girls
Young Israel of Hillcrest
Young Israel of Jamaica Estates
Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst
Young Israel of Long Beach
Young Israel of New Rochelle
Young Israel of North Woodmere
Young Israel of Oceanside
Young Israel of Scarsdale
Young Israel of Woodmere

OHIO

Beachwood Kehilla
Congregation Sha'arei Torah
Congregation Torat Emet
Green Road Synagogue
Fuchs Mizrachi School
Heights Jewish Center

PENNSYLVANIA

Shaare Torah Congregation

SOUTH CAROLINA

Brith Sholom Beth Israel
Congregation Dor Tikvah

TENNESSEE

Baron Hirsch Congregation

TEXAS

Mayerland Minyan Synagogue
Robert M. Beren Academy
United Orthodox Synagogues of Houston

VIRGINIA

Keneseth Beth Israel

WASHINGTON

Bikur Cholim-Machzikay Hadath
Northwest Yeshiva High School
Sephardic Bikur Holim Congregation

URUGUAY

Comunidad Yavne Uruguay

VENEZUELA

CARACAS

Ashkenazi Kehilla
Mizrachi Venezuela



**To sign up to receive HaMizrachi
Parasha Weekly for free:**
mizrachi.org/hamizrachiweekly



**To sign up your organization
as a partner for free:**
mizrachi.org/hamizrachiweeklyorgs