

Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet

TZAV – Shabbos Hagadol - 5783

Drasha Parshas Tzav - Fitting Work

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

It is not a glamorous job, but somebody has to do it. And so the Torah begins this week's portion by telling us the mitzvah of terumas hadeshen, removing the ashes that accumulate from the burnt-offerings upon the altar. The Torah teaches us: "The Kohen shall don his fitted linen tunic, and he shall don linen breeches on his flesh; he shall separate the ash of what the fire consumed of the elevation-offering on the Altar, and place it next to the Altar" (Leviticus 7:3).

What is simply derived from the verse is that the service of ash-removal is done with the priestly tunic. What is noticeable to the Talmudic mind is the seemingly innocuous adjective "fitted." Rashi quotes the derivation that applies to all the priestly garments: they must be fitted. They can not be too long, nor can they be too short. They must be tailored to fit each individual Kohen according to his physical measurements.

The question is simple. The sartorial details of the bigdei kehuna (priestly vestments) were discussed way back in the portion of Tezaveh, which we read five weeks ago. Shouldn't the directive of precise-fitting garments have been mentioned in conjunction with the laws of tailoring? Further, if the Torah waits to teach us those requisites in conjunction with any service, why not choose a more distinguished act, such as an anointment or sacrifice? Why choose sweeping ashes?

My dear friend, and the editor of the Parsha Parables series, Dr. Abby Mendelson, was, in a former life, a beat writer for the Pittsburgh Pirates baseball club. In the years that we learned Torah together, he would recount amusing anecdotes and baseball minutia. Some of his stories have retained an impact on me years after I heard them. This is one of them.

Roberto Clemente was an amazing athlete who played the game of baseball with utmost dedication. One day, late in the 1968 season, he was playing outfield against the Houston team. The Pirates were no longer contenders, and the game had no statistical meaning.

A ball was hit deep toward the outfield wall. As Clemente raced back, it seemed that the ball was going to hit the wall way over his head. With superhuman strength he propelled himself like a projectile toward the wall. Speeding at a forty-five degree angle he collided with the wall at the same time that the ball hit it, two feet above his head.

Strictly adhering to the laws of nature, both Clemente and the baseball rebounded from the wall, the former's return to earth much less graceful than the latter's. While the white sphere gently bounced to the playing surface and rolled toward the infield, the much larger uniformed and spiked entity came crashing after it with a resounding thud.

Bruised and embarrassed, Clemente clamored after the elusive orb and finally threw it to a less traumatized member of his team who completed the hapless mission.

In the post-game interview an innocent reporter asked Clemente, "Roberto, your team is out of contention. There are three games left. Why in the world did you try so hard to make that play? Was it worth bruising yourself?"

Clemente was puzzled. In a few short sentences he explained his actions. "I am not paid to win pennants. My job is to catch the ball. I tried to catch the ball. I was trying to do my job."

When the Torah tells us that the clothes have to fit perfectly for a particular service it is telling us that the job is exactly right for the man who is doing it. The ash-cleaner is not doing another Kohen's job, wearing an ill-fitted garment as if it were thrown upon him as he entered for the early morning shift.

What seems to be the most trivial of jobs is the job that must be done! That is the job of the hour, and that is exactly what the Kohen is designated to do. And for the job or service that is tailor-made for the individual the clothes must also be tailor-made for the job as well!

I once asked a high-level administrator of a major institution what was his job. He answered in all seriousness, "I do what ever has to be done to get the job done and that becomes my job."

Whatever we do, and however we do it, we must realize that the end can only come through the menials. Whatever it takes to get to the goal is as integral as the goal itself. It requires devotion and commitment, and it requires self-sacrifice. If you dress with dignity to collect the ash, if you approach every task with both with sartorial and personal pride and grace, then you are certainly up to any task.

Good Shabbos!

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Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Tzav

Don't Let It Go to Your Head!

This week's parsha begins with the mitzvah of the Korban Olah. Aharon and his children are given the tremendous responsibility of the avodah in the Bais Hamikdash, but after the Torah introduces the Korban Olah, the first thing Aharon is instructed is, "And the kohen shall put on his linen garment and his linen pants shall he wear on his flesh, and take up the ashes, which the fire had consumed the elevating-offering on the altar, and lay them down at the side of the mizbayach" (Vayikra 6:3). This is the mitzvah d'Oraysa of "Terumas HaDeshen." Every morning, as part

of the avodah, the kohen removed the ashes of the wood and offerings that had burnt the previous night.

The Chovos HaLevovos, one of the classic works on ethics and Jewish philosophy, written by Rav Bachye ben Yosef Ibn Paqda, says that the rationale behind Terumas HaDeshen is that the Torah is particularly careful that people should not become ba'alei gayvah (haughty people). The kohen may think that he is something special—and in fact, he is something special. He is among the select few who were chosen to do the avodas hamikdash. Nevertheless, the Torah instructs him, “Take out the ashes!” The Torah is very sensitive to human emotions. Lest Aharon come to think too much of himself, the Torah tells him to begin his day with the lowly task of taking out the ashes.

A number of years ago, I realized that the last thing I do on Erev Yom Kippur is take out the garbage. Erev Yom Kippur is a very special day. We eat the Seuda Hamafsekes (last meal before the fast). We bless our children. But the last thing before going to shul on Erev Yom Kippur is taking out the garbage.

I was struck by two thoughts: First of all, this really represents what we all try to do on Erev Yom Kippur—take out the garbage in our lives. Secondly, when someone walks into Shul on Yom Kippur wearing his kittel, he may be tempted to think of the loftiness of his station, entering into Yom Kippur enveloped in kedusha. However, a person should always remember that he still needs to deal with such things as garbage bags. He remains a very human type of being. He should never forget that he needs to take out the garbage. He must eat, drink and sleep, and yes, he must still take out the garbage. If a person thinks in those terms, he will not let things go to his head and become a ba'al gayvah.

A Person's Honor Has Value

On one hand, as we explained, the Torah is concerned that the Kohen Gadol should not become a ba'al gayvah. On the other hand, the Torah is very particular about the honor of the less fortunate – that a poor person should not become depressed and broken.

There is an interesting gemara in Bava Kama (92a). The wealthy people brought their Bikurim (first fruit offerings) in gold and silver baskets. The poor people could not afford gold or silver baskets, so they carried their fruits to the kohen in baskets made out of reeds.

The Gemara says that the kohanim returned the gold and silver baskets to the wealthy people because they did not have the right to keep those precious utensils as a fringe benefit along with receiving the first fruits. However, the kohanim did keep the reed baskets that they received from the poor people. The poor person “lost” the basket in the deal as well. Rava applies to this the old rule “basar anyah azla aniyusa,” which means, loosely translated, “the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.”

It is ironic. The rich fellow gets his basket back, while the poor person, who can ill afford it, does not get his basket back. This always bothered me. Why does the kohen keep the poor fellow's basket?

I once read that the reason why the Torah takes the basket of the poor person is to bolster his ego. The fruit looks like a more substantial gift when it is in the basket. The Torah says to let the kohen keep the basket and let the poor person suffer the financial loss, but let him at least keep his pride intact. It is better for the poor person to lose the basket in order to give the Bikurim a plentiful appearance, rather than to return the basket and make the person swallow his pride. The Torah goes to great lengths to protect a person's honor.

I remember someone asking me about raising money for hachnosas kallah. A person was marrying off his daughter and he needed financial help. The fellow who approached me wanted to raise money on the other person's behalf, in order to pay for the wedding.

His question was as follows. If he told people for whom he was raising the money, there was no question that he could raise a lot of money. (The person was well-known and well-respected in the community.) On the other hand, if he kept it anonymous, he would not be able to raise as much, because these kinds of requests occur a half dozen times a week.

At that time, I asked this question to the Rosh Yeshiva (Rav Yaakov Ruderman zt"l): Should he mention the name and raise more money, or keep it anonymous and raise less money? Without batting an eyelash or the slightest hesitation, the Rosh Yeshiva said it should be anonymous — “A mensch's kavod is vert asach.” (A person's pride is worth a whole lot.)

That is what we learn from the baskets. A person's respect and honor are worth a lot. It is even worth losing money over them. Money can always be replaced, but kavod habriyos and pride are much harder to replace.

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Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz

Parashat Tzav – 5783 :: Peace with People and with G-d

Parashat Tzav, the second in the book of Leviticus, continues to detail the laws of the sacrifices they made in the Mishkan, the Tabernacle – the temporary temple that accompanied the Israelites in the desert, and then in the Temple in Jerusalem. Unlike the previous parasha, this one details the laws of eating the sacrifices, and relating to this, we find three types of sacrifices: the sacrifice of “olah” is not eaten at all by a man, but is entirely sacrificed on the altar; each of the sacrifices of “chatat”, “asham” and

“mincha” – part is sacrificed on the altar and part of it is eaten by the kohanim, the priests serving in the Temple; whereas the sacrifice of “shelamim” is unusual in that part of it is sacrificed on the altar, part of it is eaten by the priests, and part of it is eaten by the bringer of the sacrifice. What is the meaning of the name “shelamim”? Rashi, the great commentator of the Torah, offered two interpretations based on the words of the Midrash Tannaim for the book of Leviticus, known as Torat HaKohanim. According to the first interpretation, the “shelamim” sacrifice has a specific ability to bring peace to the world, and the sacrifice is called “shelamim” from the word for peace (shalom) – due to its result. The second interpretation also connects the name “shelamim” to the word “peace” and explains their relationship by the fact that this sacrifice is eaten by three: The altar that “eats” part of it, the kohanim, and the person who brought the sacrifice. These three make peace between them when they participate in the eating of the sacrifice.

We can understand the concept of “peace” when it comes to the relationship between two people, or two states. Peaceful relations mean that human beings behave with each other in friendship and solidarity. But what kind of “peace” is needed for the altar? If we look at the religious expression expressed by the sacrifice, we can understand the meaning of this “peace”.

The different sacrifices convey different aspects of religious expression. The sacrifice of the “olah” expresses one’s desire to give and devote oneself to holiness. Therefore, this sacrifice is not eaten at all by humans but is entirely sacrificed on the altar. This sacrifice is not limited to Jews alone. According to Halacha, even a person who is not Jewish can bring an “olah” sacrifice to the Temple since all people can and are invited to devote themselves to holiness. In contrast, the sacrifices of “chatat” and “asham” come to atone for sin. The person who feels guilty for his sin brings a sacrifice whose meaning is a kind of reconciliation offering that allows for turning a new page in one’s relationship with G-d. But the sacrifice of “shelamim” does not come to atone for sin. It is brought by a person who wants to express thanks and joy for his life.

The way to express the gratitude and joy between people is sometimes through a shared meal. Food—said the sages—brings hearts closer. This person, who strives to express gratitude and joy, expresses his feelings through a “joint meal” with G-d. Needless to say, G-d does not eat anything. This is a purely symbolic act, with the sacrifice on the altar seeming to man as G-d “eating” it, and in the language of the Torah: “pleasing fragrance to the Lord.”

But there is a third side to this “peace”: the kohanim. They, too, receive a part of the sacrifice and are also partners in this three-way “peace”. The kohanim are human beings, and the message in this is that there will be no peace between man and G-d without peace between people. Only when the bringer of the sacrifice shares with the kohanim,

which expresses the “peace” between them, can there be peace between man and G-d.

Religion brings people closer together, not just when they are members of one community. When a person internalizes the proper conception of Judaism, he learns that to properly worship G-d, what is required of him includes proper relations with others. Morality does not exist parallel with the religious world, and certainly does not contradict it. Judaism includes morality and calls on all of humanity: there is no true religiosity without unity and peace between us, human beings.

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Rav Kook Torah

Tzav: The Olah Offering and Prophecy

Rabbi Chanan Morrison

The ultimate objective of the Temple service is hashra’at Shechinah, bringing the Divine Presence into our physical world. This goal is clearly connected to the unique phenomena of divine inspiration and prophecy. God’s Presence in the Temple parallels on the national level the dwelling of prophecy in the mind of the prophet.

In particular, the Olah offering, completely burnt on the altar, corresponds to the highest level of communication between us and God, a sublime level in which the material world is of no consequence. Just as the altar fire utterly consumed the physical aspect of the offering, so too, this type of spiritual encounter completely transcends our physical existence. By examining the Olah service, we can gain insight into the prophetic experience.

Beyond the Physical Realm

The daily Tamid offering was completely consumed by fire on the altar during the night. What was done with the ashes? The following day, a kohen placed one shovelful of ashes next to the altar. To dispose of the rest, he changed into less important clothes and transported the ashes to a ritually clean spot outside the camp.

Thus, we see that the Olah service involved three different locations, with descending sanctity:

- The fire on top of the altar.
- Next to the altar, where a shovelful of ashes was placed.
- A ritually clean place outside the camp for the remaining ashes.

Three Stages

The prophetic experience is a blaze of sacred flames inside the human soul, a divine interaction that transcends ordinary life. This extraordinary event corresponds to the first stage, the nighttime burning of the offering in the fire of the holy altar.

However, the prophet wants to extend the impact of this lofty experience so that it can make its mark on his character traits and inner life. This effort corresponds to the placement of some of the ashes, transformed by the altar’s

flames, next to the altar. This is a secondary level of holiness, analogous to those aspects of life that are close to the holy itself, where impressions of the sacred vision may be stored in a pure state.

The lowest expression of the prophetic vision is in its public revelation. Informing the people of the content of God's message, and thereby infusing life and human morality with divine light — this takes place at a more peripheral level. Outside the inner camp, bordering on the domain of secular life, the kohen publicly brings out the remaining ashes. Even this area, however, must be ritually pure, so that the penetrating influence of the holy service can make its impact. For the sake of his public message, the kohen-prophet needs to descend somewhat from his former state of holiness, and change into lesser clothes. In the metaphoric language of the Sages, "The clothes worn by a servant while cooking for his master should not be used when serving his master wine" (Shabbat 114a).

The Constant Altar Fire

The Torah concludes its description of the Olah service by warning that the altar fire should be kept burning continuously: "The kohen will kindle wood on it each morning" (Lev. 6:5). Why mention this now?

Precisely at this juncture, after the kohen-prophet has left the inner nucleus of holiness in order to attend to life's temporal affairs, he must be aware of the constant fire on the altar. Despite his involvement with the practical and mundane aspects of life, the holy fire continues to burn inside the heart. This is the unique characteristic of the altar fire: from afar, it can warm and uplift every soul of the Jewish people. This sacred fire is a powerful, holy love that cannot be extinguished, as it says, "Mighty waters cannot extinguish the love; neither can rivers wash it away" (Song of Songs 8:7).

Yet, it is not enough for the holy fire to burn only in the inner depths of the heart. How can we ensure that its flames reach all aspects of life, and survive the "mighty waters" of mundane life?

The Torah's concluding instructions present the solution to this problem: "The kohen will kindle wood on it each morning." What is the purpose of this daily arrangement of kindling wood? New logs of wood nourish the altar's holy flames. We find a similar expression of daily spiritual replenishment in Isaiah 50:4: "Each morning He awakens my ear to hear according to the teachings" Just as renewal of the altar's hearth each day revives the holy fire, so too, daily contemplation of God's wonders and renewed study of His Torah rejuvenates the soul. This renewal energizes the soul, giving strength for new deeds and aspirations, and awakening a new spirit of life from the soul's inner fire.

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Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Tzav

פרשת צו תשפ"ג

וזאת תורת המנחה

This is the law of this meal-offering. (6:7)

In *Parashas Vayikra*, the Torah addresses the laws of the *Korban Minchah*. The Torah (2:1) begins the laws of *Korban Minchah* with a word not used regarding any of the other *korbanos nedavah*, voluntary offerings: *Nefesh*, soul (*v'nefesh ki sakriv*). *Rashi* explains that, concerning a *Korban Minchah*, the Torah makes an exception, since this inexpensive *korban* is usually the offering which a poor man brings. Hashem says, "I will regard it (the *korban* of an *ani*, poor man) as if he had offered his very soul. Concerning the *Korban Minchah*, *Chazal* (*Menachos* 110a) teach, *Echad ha'marbeh v'echad ha'mamit, ubilvad she'yichavein libo la'Shomayim*, "Whether one does a little (brings a *Minchah*) or one does a lot (brings an animal sacrifice) (what matters most) is that one's *kavanah*, intent, in bringing the *korban* is *l'shem Shomayim*, for Heaven's sake."

We no longer have *korbanos*; nonetheless, the imperative, "*Echad ha'marbeh v'echad ha'mamit u'bilvad she'yichavein libo la'Shomayim*," has not changed. Whether it is with regard to our *avodah she'b'elev*, service of the heart, prayer/supplication, or any spiritual activity for that matter, it is all about intent. One who acts for Heaven's sake fulfills the *mitzvah/tefillah* meaningfully. Otherwise, it is a *mitzvah* that lacks completeness and perfection.

A well-known story about the *Baal Shem Tov* gives us insight into how our *tefillos* will gain entrance to the Heavenly gate of prayer. It took place on *Yom Kippur*. The saintly *Baal Shem Tov* was leading the services, when he abruptly paused in middle of a chant. He appeared troubled, his countenance presented a strained, troubled image. When the *Baal Shem Tov* stopped, so did the rest of the congregation. The people knew something was out of sorts. Their revered *Rebbe* did not just stop in the middle of his service. During the wait, a young shepherd boy who was sitting in the back of the *shul* was troubled that he was unable to express his yearnings through prayer. He so wanted to *daven* like everyone else, to articulate his love for Hashem and supplication for the coming year. Alas, this boy had never been availed religious instruction. Sadly, he still could not read the Hebrew letters of the *siddur*. His lack of knowledge would not prevent him from expressing himself to his Heavenly father. He took his shepherd's whistle out of his pocket and decided to pray in the form of a tune. After all, Hashem "understands" the yearning and love behind the tune. Why should it be different than oral expression? As soon as the boy blew the first sound, the congregation turned around and silenced him. How could he make a farce out of the holiest day of the Jewish calendar year?

Suddenly, the *Baal Shem Tov's* visage changed, as a smile brightened his face. The holy *tzaddik* resumed the service and brought it to a joyful conclusion. His students asked him for an explanation. They were acutely aware that every action which the *Rebbe* performed was profound and well-thought out. He explained, "I sensed the Heavenly gates were sealed to our pleas. When Hashem heard the sincere prayer emitted by the shepherd boy via his whistle, the gates were opened in our favor."

The following story has three versions – that I am aware of. Indeed, it supposedly took place with three different rabbis. In any event, the message remains the same: *Davening*, *avodah she'b'lev*, is all about sincerity and intent. Some of us are more well-versed than others, and, as such, we have a deeper knowledge of *pirush ha'milos*, meaning of the words. Without sincerity and intent *l'shem Shomayim*, however, knowledge of the words alone comprises imperfect prayer. As we saw above, what we say is overshadowed by how we say it. Now for the story.

One of the students of the *Tzemach Tzedek*, himself a scholar of note, was sent by the *Rebbe* (*Horav Menachem Mendel Shneersohn*, *zl*, third *Lubavitcher Rebbe*) to travel throughout Russia, visiting the small far-off villages where the few Jews who made these places their home would be availed some spiritual inspiration and encouragement. It was *Erev Yom Kippur* when he arrived at a village far off the beaten path to discover that its Jews, about one hundred in all, had all gone to Vitebsk to join in the services at its large *shul*. While he did not blame them, he was still stuck in a village nowhere in the proximity to a *shul*. One of the villagers told him that two hours away there was a Cantonist village with a small *shul*. The Cantonists were a unique group of Jews whom we would refer to as bordering on the fringe. These men had been kidnapped as young children and forced to serve in the Czar's army for 25 years. The goal of this forced incarceration was to distance these children from Judaism. In most cases, the accursed Czar's diabolical plan succeeded. Those who withstood the emotional, physical and spiritual challenge emerged as changed men, hollow, broken shells of humanity. Having survived a quarter century of debasing, cruel treatment – with their commitment to Hashem still pulsating within them – these men kept to themselves and served Hashem in the manner that they could.

When the disciple heard that a Cantonist *shul* was within a two-hour walk, he practically ran all the way. He entered the "village" comprised of a few broken down wooden shacks. The first person to see the *Rav* immediately called the rest of their group. Within a few moments, a small, motley group assembled around their honored guest. They were beyond excited. To have such a distinguished scholar visit their outpost was an honor. They asked him if he could lead them in the *Yom Kippur* service. They looked at him in such a pleading manner that he saw

they really meant their request. How could he refuse? They made, however, one stipulation: one of them had to lead the *Neilah*, closing service. The *Rav* agreed, and they all went to the makeshift *shul* to usher in the Day of Atonement.

The *Rav* was amazed by the way these men *davened*. After suffering for 25 years, to be able to maintain their faith and *daven* the way they did required almost super human effort and a connection with, and love for, Hashem that only they could have. These simple men were giants of spirituality. The *Rav* felt honored to have the privilege of joining with them in prayer.

Finally, the closing moments of *Yom Kippur* was upon them. It was time to recite the hallowed *Neilah* service. Regardless of a person's affiliation, *Neilah* is the most compelling prayer of *Yom Kippur*. As they closed the service of the holiest day of the year, it was laden with emotion and trepidation. One was either successful, or he was not. No other avenues existed. As such, the individual who leads the service must be one who understands the enormity of the moment, such that he is able to inspire the congregation. These men had chosen one of their own. The *Rav* was in for a life-altering surprise. After this *Neilah*, he would no longer be the same person.

The *chazan*, leader of the service, ascended to the lectern and proceeded to unbutton and then remove his shirt. When the *Rav* saw this, he was about to yell "Stop!" One does not remove his shirt in a *shul*. When the shirt fell to the floor, however, he saw hundreds of scars and welts on the man's back and shoulders. These scars were the result of 25 years of refusing to give up his Jewish faith. These scars represented a badge of courage. When the *Rav* saw the *chazan's* scarred back, he broke down in tears. He knew that he was standing in the presence of greatness.

The Cantonist then raised his hands to Hashem and, with a loud voice, began his supplication, "Hashem! Please send *Moshiach*! I do not ask for the sake of our families, because we have no families. I do not ask for the sake of our futures, because we have no futures. I am not asking for the sake of our livelihoods, our comfort, our children, or our reputations, because we have none of those. We are asking *L'Maancha; Asei l'maan Shemecha*; Do it for Your sake; Do it for Your Name." He then put on his shirt and began *Tefillas Neilah*.

אם על תודה יקריבנו

If he shall offer it for a thanksgiving offering. (7:12)

One who has survived a life-threatening crisis brings a thanksgiving offering to Hashem as an expression of his gratitude. This gratitude goes far beyond the *korban*. On the contrary, it begins with the *korban* and should continue in every aspect of his life. He should never forget that he is alive by the grace of Hashem. Throughout *Sefer Tehillim*, David *Hamelech* reiterates his praises of Hashem in his gratitude to the Almighty for sustaining him throughout the difficult moments in his life. He went

further than just thanking Hashem for the good. He understood that, with regard to Hashem, there is no such thing as bad. What we perceive to be negative is due to our limited perception of events. David *Hamelech* declares *Odcha Hashem ki inisani va'tehi li l'yeshua*, "I thank You Hashem, for You have answered me, and You have been a help to me" (*Tehillim* 118:21). The *Bais HaLevi* observes that the word *inisani*, which is translated as "You answered me," has the same *shoresh*, root, as *inui*, suffering, affliction. This alludes that David was thanking Hashem both for the *inui*, suffering, and the salvation. He realized that the suffering was an integral part of the salvation. We do not know the reason for what we perceive as bad; thus, we are unable to see the necessity of the suffering in the scheme of Hashem's plan. We must keep in mind that there is a Divine plan, and this is part of it.

It is all about attitude. *Horav Yaakov Galinsky, zl*, relates that he was privy to a conversation that ensued between the *Steipler Gaon, zl*, and *Horav Avraham Yoffen, zl*. The conversation was difficult, due to the *Steipler's* failing hearing. He was hard of hearing, and, for some reason a hearing aid was not an option. *The Rosh Yeshivah* (Novardok) said to the *Steipler*, "You know there is no reason for you to suffer. Today, there are hearing-aids which are very effective."

The *Steipler* replied, "Truthfully, during *Krias HaTorah*, I strain my ears to hear every word. Other than that, what reason do I have to hear?"

When *Rav Yoffen* heard the response, he turned to *Rav Galinsky* and said, "What do I say to such a response?" The *Steipler* had not heard *Rav Yoffen's* remark. He, however, had read his lips and replied, "Do you think that the One who made me deaf owes me? Do you realize that hundreds of people come to see me? If I was not hard of hearing, I would have to devote all my time to them. When would I be able to learn?"

"Hashem helped me by making me hard of hearing. Visitors are now compelled to write their requests on a piece of paper. Since people are, for the most part lazy, the petitions that they write are short. Thus, *Baruch Hashem*, I have time to learn!"

It is all about attitude. Who would even think that being unable to hear well would be viewed as contributing positively to one's learning? The *Steipler* did. He thanked Hashem for his handicap, because he knew that it was all part of His plan.

ההנותר מבשר הזבח ביום השלישי באש ישרף

What is left over from the flesh of the feast-offering shall be burned in the fire on the third day. (7:17)

We are enjoined to burn the *nosar*, left-over meat of a *korban*, after the time limit for its consumption has passed. The simple reason for the burning of *nosar*, is that after a few days, the meat begins to spoil and emit a putrid odor. It is no longer edible and people will be disgusted by it. Hashem does not want *kodoshim*, consecrated meat of a

korban, to be a source of repulsion. Thus, He commands us to rid ourselves of this meat through the most effective means. (This is actually a rationale given by the *Sefer HaChinuch* for the purpose of human understanding. The actual reason for all *mitzvos* elude us. Hashem, the Divine Author of the Torah has His reasons for individual *mitzvos* – esoteric reasons which are beyond our grasp)

Second, the *mitzvah* alludes to the importance of *bitachon*, trust, in Hashem. The Almighty does not want a person to starve himself for fear that he might not have sufficient food for the next day. He, therefore, commanded that the meat should be destroyed when its time has passed. Neither human nor animal may partake of this meat. Hashem wants us to look up and rely on Him to provide us with our needs. Tomorrow? He will take care of us when the time comes. We must learn to place our trust in Him. We do not starve ourselves today out of worry for tomorrow. The One Who provided for us today can, and will, do so tomorrow.

This idea is the underlying concept, the anchor behind the *manna* that descended from Heaven. The people were enjoined to eat whatever they needed for one day. They received exactly as much as Heaven determined were their individual needs for one day – and no more. This routine continued every day (except for *Shabbos* for which they received a double-portion on Friday) for forty years. They were prohibited from saving *manna* for the next day, because such action would be indicative of a lack of faith in Hashem's ability to sustain them. As a distinguished *Rav* said, "He Who created the 'day' will also create the sustenance for it."

One who has *bitachon*, who lives his life with unreserved trust in Him, will safeguard his performance of *mitzvos* against violations which are engendered by anxiety concerning material hardship – real or imagined. *Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl*, contends that one who has not learned to trust Hashem for the next day will worry so much about the prospects of years to come that he will ultimately be led astray from Hashem and His Torah.

The *Gaon, zl, m'Vilna*, was asked what it means to trust in Hashem. He replied that David *Hamelech* answers this in *Tehillim* 131:2, *Shivisi v'domamti nafshi k'gamul alei imo*, "I have stilled and quieted myself like a suckling babe beside his mother." We should think of ourselves (says the *Gaon*) as a nursing infant. When he is full, he does not worry whether he will have more in a few hours when he will once again be hungry. He does not worry about what will be. Now, he is fine. His mother provided for him. So, too, we should not worry. Our Father in Heaven has provided and will continue to do so.

The *baal bitachon* who trusts in Hashem realizes that he has no other option than Hashem. Every other source is either a figment of our imagination or one of the many agencies which Hashem employs to deliver His beneficence. How often do we petition the assistance of

individuals who have *proteksia*, personal connections, as an “alternative” to relying on the only true Source of abetment? After wasting considerable time, effort and money, they come to the realization that human assistance is just that: human. Hashem pulls the strings. Sooner or later, we will have to turn to Him for an answer to our concerns. So, why not sooner?

Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita (Barchi Nafshi) offers an excellent analogy that should engender contemplation on our part, to the point that we realize that we are looking for aid in all the wrong places. A benevolent king, who loved his subjects and treated them royally, sought to avail them the opportunity to obtain great wealth. As he was not giving it away, he devised a test which put their cognitive skills to a test. He announced that, at the bottom of a pond located in the royal garden, was a treasure chest filled with diamonds and other precious stones. The pond was far from shallow, and the chest was far from light. It was up to the successful person to figure out a way to retrieve the chest and somehow haul it to dry land. Everyone lined up and took his turn in attempting to drag the chest up to the garden. Some used brute strength, others were more creative, devising intricate engineering plans to bring the chest up. All failed. The people felt that the kind king had used and made fools of them. There appeared to be no way to draw the chest to the surface. They all gave up.

There was one person, a wise man, who did not give up. He knew there was a catch to this. He walked all around the pond, studied the chest, and, after contemplation, asked the king, “Is it necessary that one’s clothing become soaked in his attempt to retrieve the chest?” In other words, was it necessary to dive down into the pond in order to get to the chest? The king replied, “No.” The king was no fool. He knew by listening to the question that the wise man had solved the conundrum. He had figured out how to bring the treasure chest to the king. The wise man took a ladder and proceeded to climb the tree whose branches overhung the pond. Lo and behold, situated in the tree, supported by branches, was the elusive treasure. It was never in the water. What they saw was a reflection. They had been looking in the wrong place this entire time.

The lesson is obvious. We look all around us for someone, something, any avenue or medium that can extricate us from our situation. We look everywhere but up to Heaven.

The following story gives us a window into the perspective of *bitachon* intimated by *gedolei Yisrael*. One of the most prolific heroes of the Holocaust was *Horav Michael Dov Weissmandel, zl*. Through his tireless efforts, he saved thousands of Jews from the Nazi murderers. He could have saved more; he could have done better. These feelings gnawed at him until his last mortal breath. He had an intense love for the Jewish people and was prepared to

do anything, to go anywhere, to spare their lives. As a result of his negotiations with the murderers, he was given the opportunity to save Slovakian Jewry (over 100,000 souls) for the sum of two million dollars. The ransom was indeed an exorbitant sum, but can one put a price on a Jewish soul?

Rav Weissmandel pleaded, begged and wept copious tears in his attempt to warm the hearts of the assimilated Jewish leadership both in America and in *Eretz Yisrael*. They were, however, committed to establishing a Jewish state – an ideal which, to them, took precedence over the plight of Slovakian Jewry. One cannot calmly relate one of the ugliest periods in our history, where brother could have saved brother – and chose not to. His priorities were Jewish land over Jewish life. *Rav Weissmandel* was relentless. He refused to give up. Telegram after telegram described the atrocities, the persecution, the wholesale murder. Yet, they were not moved. They had their own agenda, and it did not coincide with *Rav Weissmandel*’s. In the end, they relented and contributed some money – too little – too late. He was able to save some Jews. The majority, however, were relegated to become martyrs as they perished sanctifying Hashem’s Name.

It was after the war, and *Rav Weissmandel* came to America. He met with *Horav Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, zl*, the *Lubavitcher Rebbe*. *Rav Weissmandel* became very emotional when he met the *Rebbe*. The pain and anguish over his failure to save more Jews was overwhelming. He could not stop crying bitterly. The *Rebbe* said nothing, allowing him to vent his emotions.

Finally, when *Rav Weissmandel* calmed down, the *Rebbe* asked, *Uhn ver hot dos getohn*, “And who (do you think) did all of this?” *Der Bashefer*, “The Creator! You think that this was all the result of the failure of secular Jewry to assist in the plight of their brothers and sisters? Can they do anything? Are they able to achieve anything (on their own)? This was all the Hands of Hashem. Since He did all of this (and did not permit your efforts to succeed), then all this is His decree. It is all for the good – because this is what the Almighty wanted.”

Va’ani Tefillah

וְאַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ יוֹשֵׁב תְּהִלּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל – *V’Atah kadosh yosheiv tehillos Yisrael*. Yet, You are the Holy One, enthroned upon the praises of Yisrael.

Chazal (Bereishis Rabbah 48:7) teach, “Whenever *Klal Yisrael* praises Hashem, He rests His *Shechinah* upon them.” The source for this is the *pasuk* in *Sefer Tehillim* (22:4), “*V’Atah kadosh yosheiv tehillos Yisrael*.” The *Midrash* is teaching us that, whenever Hashem hears any expression of praise coming from the mouth of *Klal Yisrael*, He rests his Presence among them to hear the supplications and petitions that follow the words of praise. From *Chazal*’s words, we derive the overriding significance of *Kidusha d’Sidra*, which we often say “on

the run.” Whether it is an appointment, trip, business endeavor, or even to go to work, we should take heed and stop for a moment to recite this *tefillah* with proper *kavanah*, intention/devotion. It might make a world of difference in our “appointment.”

A similar idea applies to answering *Amen, Yehei Shmei Rabbah Mevarach...* (*Sotah* 49a). לעלוי נשמת ר' שרגא רצון בוראו תמיד פייבל בן יצחק אייזק הכהן ז"ל שם טוב רכש לו בחייו לפני עיניו גדולה היתה אהבתו לקיום המצוות אף הקטנות שמר בקנאות In loving memory of FRANK ALTMAN by his family Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

Ohr Somayach :: Talmud Tips :: Pesachim 2^a
For the week ending 1 April 2023 / 10 Nisan 5783
Rabbi Moshe Newman

Bye, Bye, Chametz

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav, “One who checks (for chametz), also needs to nullify (chametz).”

The “checking” that Rav Yehuda refers to in the gemara (on *daf vav*) is taught in connection with the first mishna of our new masechta, which teaches the mitzvah of bedikat chametz: “On the night of the 14th of Nissan, one checks for chametz by the light of a lamp.”

What is the reason for this mitzvah to check for chametz, also known as bedikat chametz? Let’s have a look at a few relevant laws of chametz and Pesach. First of all, there are prohibitions against eating or deriving benefit from chametz on Pesach. As the Rambam states, “On Pesach it is forbidden to have any benefit from chametz, as is stated in Shemot 13:3: ‘Do not eat chametz.’” (This verse not only prohibits eating chametz but also prohibits deriving benefit from it on Pesach.)

In addition, there are two prohibitions against the mere ownership of chametz on Pesach. “No chametz may be found in your homes” (Shemot 12:19). “No chametz may be seen in all your territory” (Shemot 13:7).

So, why does our mishna insist that bedikat chametz be done? Rashi explains that bedikat chametz is required in order to not transgress the Torah prohibitions against owning chametz on Pesach. By checking for chametz and destroying it before Pesach (or selling it to a non-Jew or giving it to a non-Jewish neighbor, as I recall doing as a youngster), a Jew will not possess chametz on Pesach. (Rashi)

Tosefot questions this reason based on the teaching of Rav Yehuda in the name of Rav, that even if one does bedikat chametz he must still mevateil and nullify it. If the purpose of the bedika is as Rashi claims — to not transgress the prohibitions against chametz ownership on Pesach — why is bedika also needed? Once a person does bitul, nullifying his chametz, he no longer owns chametz and therefore does not transgress. The gemara clearly states that according to the Torah, even bitul b’lev — “nullifying the chametz in

one’s heart” — suffices for avoiding the Torah prohibitions of not owning chametz on Pesach. Due to this question, Tosefot argues that although the required bitul is indeed enough to fulfill Torah law, the Rabbis enacted a stringency to also do bedika so that one will certainly be chametz-free and not mistakenly eat chametz on Pesach.

One defense offered for Rashi’s explanation is that he is explaining the reason for bedika at the time of the mishna and according to the basic Torah requirement. bedika would suffice. Only later was there an additional decree added, the reason for which is explained in the gemara on 6b and by Rashi there. (Rabbeinu Nissim)

There is much more discussion in the Rishonim and Achronim surrounding the mechanism of bitul chametz and the nature of the dispute between Rashi and Tosefot. Pursuit of further study of this subject makes for fascinating Torah study on a quite practical issue and is placed highly on this author’s “Recommended Reading List.”

And, in addition to the Torah’s prohibitions against owning, eating and benefiting from chametz on Pesach, there are numerous additional Torah mitzvahs related to Pesach, such as eating matzah, eating marror (bitter herbs), telling the story of the Exodus from Egypt (Hagaddah), bringing and eating a korban Pesach at the time of the Beit Hamikdash, and more. In fact, there is even a mitzvah to not break a bone of the korban Pesach while eating it. “And you will not break any of its (the korban Pesach’s) bones.” (Shemot 12:46)

This mitzvah has been explained in many rational ways, such as the notion that princes, unlike animals, eat with dignity, and that we should take special care to behave as royalty on the night of the Pesach Seder, not eating in an undignified manner and breaking bones of the food. (Sefer HaChinuch 16)

I would feel remiss in not citing an important life-lesson that the Sefer HaChinuch adds in noting the extraordinary abundance of “Pesach mitzvahs.” He explains that it is human nature that “a person is affected according to his actions.” Pesach is not just another holiday, but rather a time to reflect on our nation’s past, present and future eternal destiny. Pesach represents this all. The greater the number of mitzvahs that we do and the greater the number of prohibitions that we refrain from on Pesach serve to help shape us into the type of individuals and the nation that Hashem wants us to be.

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Weekly Parsha TZAV/SHABAT HAGADOL
Rabbi Wein’s Weekly Blog

The parsha of Tzav more often than not coincides with the Shabat preceding Pesach – Shabat Hagadol, the “great Shabat.” At first glance there does not seem to be any inherent connection between the parsha of Tzav and Shabat

Hagadol and Pesach. However, since Judaism little recognizes randomness or happenstance regarding Jewish life, and certainly regarding Torah itself, a further analysis of the parsha may reveal to us an underlying connection between Tzav and Pesach.

I feel that this underlying theme lies in the description that the parsha contains regarding the consecration of Aharon and his sons as the priests and servants of God and Israel. Judaism teaches us that freedom equals responsibility. Freedom without limits or purpose is destructive anarchy. The entire narrative of the Torah regarding the construction of the Mishkan and the institution of public worship/sacrifices come to emphasize to the freed slaves from Egypt their newfound responsibilities.

The rabbis cogently and correctly defined freedom in terms of obligations and study of Torah, as opposed to the alleged freedom of hedonism. The consecration of Aharon and his sons coinciding with the consecration and dedication of the Mishkan itself brought home to the Jewish people the requirement of community service and national unity.

Look at the freedom movements that have arisen in the Middle East over the past few years and the chaos and deaths of tens of thousands of people that followed in their wake. The inability to create unity, to develop a moral and tangible national goal mocks all pretenses of positive freedom. Without Aharon and the Mishkan the promise of the freedom of Pesach would have remained permanently unfulfilled.

Part of the lesson of the Great Shabat is that without Shabat, Jewish freedom is only an illusion. Shabat is truly the epitome of freedom. The absence of workday activities, the sense of family and friends, and of the contentment that Shabat engenders all combine to create a vision of true freedom that is attainable and real.

The Great Shabat that precedes Pesach gives it its true meaning and places the anniversary of our freedom from Egyptian bondage into holy perspective. Freedom to toil 24/7 is only a different form of slavery. When Saturday looks like Tuesday but only more so since school is out and the burdens of car pooling and “having a good time” are even greater, then that cannot even remotely be related to true freedom.

In reality every Shabat is the Great Shabat and the Shabat preceding Pesach is even more so. Shabat Hagadol represents the miracle that blessed our forefathers in Egypt when they took the Paschal lamb and the Egyptians did not object. But the true and ultimate miracle of Shabat Hagadol is Shabat itself. It has preserved the Jewish people throughout the ages in the face of opposing innumerable odds and challenges. It is in the realization of our freedom that we are able to properly appreciate and give tribute to Shabat - Shabat Hagadol, the Great Shabat that we now commemorate so joyfully and gratefully.

Shabat shalom

Pesach kasher v'sameach

Rabbi Berel Wein

TZAV - Understanding Sacrifice

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ZTL

Understanding Sacrifice

One of the most difficult elements of the Torah and the way of life it prescribes is the phenomenon of animal sacrifices – for obvious reasons. First, Jews and Judaism have survived without them for almost two thousand years. Second, virtually all the prophets were critical of them, not least Jeremiah in this week's haftarah.[1] None of the prophets sought to abolish sacrifices, but they were severely critical of those who offered them while at the same time oppressing or exploiting their fellow human beings. What disturbed them – what disturbed God in whose name they spoke – was that evidently some people thought of sacrifices as a kind of bribe: if we make a generous enough gift to God then He may overlook our crimes and misdemeanours. This is an idea radically incompatible with Judaism.

Then again, along with monarchy, sacrifices were among the least distinctive features of Judaism in ancient times. Every ancient religion in those days, every cult and sect, had its altars and sacrifices. Finally, it remains remarkable how simply and smoothly the Sages were able to construct substitutes for sacrifice, three in particular: prayer, study, and tzedakah. Prayer, particularly Shacharit, Minchah, and Musaf, took the place of the regular offerings. One who studies the laws of sacrifice is as if he had brought a sacrifice. And one who gives to charity brings, as it were, a financial sacrifice, acknowledging that all we have we owe to God.

So, though we pray daily for the rebuilding of the Temple and the restoration of sacrifices, the principle of sacrifice itself remains hard to understand. Many theories have been advanced by anthropologists, psychologists and Bible scholars as to what the sacrifices represented, but most are based on the questionable assumption that sacrifice is essentially the same act across cultures. This is poor scholarship. Always seek to understand a practice in terms of the distinctive beliefs of the culture in which it takes place. What could sacrifice possibly mean in a religion in which God is the creator and owner of all?

What, then, was sacrifice in Judaism and why does it remain important, at least as an idea, even today? The simplest answer – though it does not explain the details of the different kinds of offering – is this: We love what we are willing to make sacrifices for. That is why, when they were a nation of farmers and shepherds, the Israelites demonstrated their love of God by bringing Him a symbolic gift of their flocks and herds, their grain and fruit; that is, their livelihood. To love is to thank. To love is to want to bring an offering to the Beloved. To love is to give.[2] Sacrifice is the choreography of love.

This is true in many aspects of life. A happily married couple is constantly making sacrifices for one another. Parents make huge sacrifices for their children. People drawn to a calling – to heal the sick, or care for the poor, or fight for justice for the weak against the strong – often sacrifice remunerative careers for the sake of their ideals. In ages of patriotism, people make sacrifices for their country. In strong communities people make sacrifices for one another when someone is in distress or needs help. Sacrifice is the superglue of relationship. It bonds us to one another.

That is why, in the biblical age, sacrifices were so important – not as they were in other faiths but precisely because at the beating heart of Judaism is love: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” In other faiths the driving motive behind sacrifice was fear: fear of the anger and power of the gods. In Judaism it was love.

We see this in the Hebrew word for sacrifice itself: the noun *korban*, and the verb *lehakriv*, which mean, “to come, or bring close”. The name of God invariably used in connection with the sacrifices is *Hashem*, God in his aspect of love and compassion, never *Elokim*, God as justice and distance. The word *Elokim* occurs only five times in the whole of the book of *Vayikra*, and always in the context of other nations. The word *Hashem* appears 209 times. And as we saw last week, the very name of the book, *Vayikra*, means to summon in love. Where there is love, there is sacrifice.

Once we realise this we begin to understand how deeply relevant the concept of sacrifice is in the twenty-first century. The major institutions of the modern world – the liberal democratic state and the free-market economy – were predicated on the model of the rational actor, that is, one who acts to maximise the benefits to him- or herself.

Hobbes’ account of the social contract was that it is in the interests of each of us to hand over some of our rights to a central power charged with ensuring the rule of law and the defence of the realm. Adam Smith’s insight into the market economy was that if we each act to maximise our own advantage, the result is the growth of the common-wealth. Modern politics and economics were built on the foundation of the rational pursuit of self-interest.

There was nothing wrong with this. It was done for the highest of motives. It was an attempt to create peace in a Europe that had for centuries been ravaged by war. The democratic state and the market economy were serious attempts to harness the power of self-interest to combat the destructive passions that led to violence.[3] The fact that politics and economics were based on self-interest did not negate the possibility that families and communities were sustained by altruism. It was a good system, not a bad one. Now, however, after several centuries, the idea of love-as-sacrifice has grown thin in many areas of life. We see this specifically in relationships. Throughout the West, fewer

people are getting married, they are getting married later, and almost half of marriages end in divorce. Throughout Europe, indigenous populations are in decline. To have a stable population, a country must have an average birth rate of 2.1 children per female. In 2015 the average birth-rate throughout the European Union was 1.55. In Spain it was 1.27. Germany has the lowest birth-rate of any country in the world.[4] That is why the population of Europe is today rendered stable only on the basis of unprecedented rates of immigration.

Lose the concept of sacrifice within a society, and sooner or later marriage falters, parenthood declines, and the society slowly ages and dies. My late predecessor, Lord Jakobovits, had a lovely way of putting this. The Talmud says that when a man divorces his first wife, “the altar sheds tears” (Gittin 90b). What is the connection between the altar and a marriage? Both, he said, are about sacrifices. Marriages fail when the partners are unwilling to make sacrifices for one another.

Jews and Judaism survived despite the many sacrifices people had to make for it. In the eleventh century Judah Halevi expressed something closer to awe at the fact that Jews stayed Jewish despite the fact that “with a word lightly spoken” they could have converted to the majority faith and lived a life of relative ease (*Kuzari* 4:23) Equally possible though is that Judaism survived because of those sacrifices. Where people make sacrifices for their ideals, the ideals stay strong. Sacrifice is an expression of love.

Not all sacrifice is holy. Today’s suicide bombers sacrifice their lives and those of their victims in a way I have argued (in *Not In God’s Name*) is sacrilege. Indeed the very existence of animal sacrifice in the Torah may have been a way of preventing people from offering human sacrifice in the form of violence and war. But the principle of sacrifice remains. It is the gift we bring to what and whom we love.

[1] Jeremiah 7:22, “When I freed your fathers from the land of Egypt, I did not speak with them or command them concerning burnt offerings or sacrifice” – a remarkable statement. See Rashi and Radak ad loc., and especially Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed*, III: 32.

[2] The verb “to love” – *a-h-v* – is related to the verbs *h-v-h*, *h-v-v* and *y-h-v*, all of which have the sense of giving, bringing, or offering.

[3] The classic text is A. O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, Princeton University Press, 1977.

[4] The Observer, 23 August 2015.

Shabbat Shalom: Parshat Tzav (Leviticus 6:1-8:36)

Rabbi Shlomo Riskin

Efrat, Israel – The Sabbath before Pesach is called “The Great Sabbath” (*Shabbat Hagadol*) after the last verse of the reading from the prophets (*haftara*) for that day: “Behold I send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and awesome day of the Lord” – the day of

Redemption (Malachi 3:23). It is certainly logical that Elijah, the herald of the redemption, features before Pesach – the “time of our freedom” and redemption from Egyptian servitude.

But what kind of person is Elijah, who will be the “messenger of good news, salvation and comfort” (Grace after Meals)?

The biblical Elijah was a zealot who slaughtered 450 prophets of Baal after a contest at Mount Carmel, and challenged God to punish the Israelites for having rejected His covenant and allowed Jezebel to murder the Lord’s prophets (I Kings 19:10). But somehow in Talmudic and folk tradition, Elijah morphs into a benign, grandfatherly figure who drinks from a special goblet at everyone’s Seder table, graces every newborn male baby with his presence at their circumcision and frequently appears as a *deus ex machina* to teach important lessons and save people’s lives at critical moments.

Just when, why and how did this fiery fanatic become a venerable sage? Let us look again at the biblical text and I believe we’ll discover the dynamics of the process.

Elijah lives in Israel under the idolatrous monarchy of Ahab and Jezebel, Baal devotees who murdered the prophets of the Lord. The wrath of God is expressed in the form of a drought which wreaks havoc on the land. Elijah stages a Steven Spielberg-style extravaganza: He convinces King Ahab to invite all the Israelites to the foot of Mount Carmel, where he has the 450 prophets of Baal choose a bull. Elijah takes another bull, and each animal is cut in half and placed on an altar without a fire – one altar to God and one to Baal. The victor will be the person whose altar is graced by fire from on high.

After the better part of a day of fruitless prayers, incantations and orgiastic immolations by the prophets of Baal, Elijah drenches his offering in water and then calls out to God. A fire descends from heaven, consuming his offering together with the wood, the stones, the water and the earth. The Israelites cry out: “The Lord! He is God!”

Elijah then slaughters the 450 prophets of Baal, clouds gather and a great rain comes down. Elijah is exultant, until he receives a message from Queen Jezebel, who vows that “at this time tomorrow I shall make your soul like one of those [prophets of Baal].”

Elijah is shocked that she does not repent or seek forgiveness for her idolatrous ways. Yet he also understands the shrewdness in her words. After 24 hours, she shall have him killed! Why not immediately? Because it will take the Israelites only 24 hours to forget the immediacy of the miracle. After only one day, the Israelites will forget about God and allow the wicked queen to destroy His only remaining prophet.

Elijah escapes to Beersheba and asks God to take his soul. An angel provides him with food and sends him on a 40-day journey to Mount Sinai. When he arrives, God asks why he has come, and he responds: “I have been a zealot;

yes, a zealot for the Lord God of hosts, because the Israelites have forsaken Your covenant; they have destroyed Your altars, they have killed Your prophets and they now seek to take my life as well, I who am now left alone” (I Kings 19:10).

Elijah understands that despite the great miracle he wrought at Mount Carmel, no one has repented, nothing has changed, and his life is in danger.

God then sends Elijah a vision: a great, powerful wind, but the Lord is not in the wind; an earthquake, but the Lord is not in the earthquake; a fire, but the Lord is not in the fire. And after the fire comes a still, silent sound – the voice of the Lord.

God is telling His prophet that people aren’t moved in the long term by miracles on a mountain – whether Mount Sinai or Mount Carmel – and that the Israelites will not be forced into submission by dire punishments. After the first revelation at Sinai, they worshiped the Golden Calf, and after the revelation at Mount Carmel, they didn’t repent of their idolatry, despite their shouts of “The Lord! He is God!”

The Israelites will be moved only by learning of God’s second revelation at Sinai – the glimpse He shared with Moses into His divine essence by the still, small voice of kindness and understanding, by the God of love and forgiveness (Exodus 34:6-8).

And this is precisely what Malachi says at the conclusion of his prophecy. There is the possibility that “the end of days” will be awe-some and awe-ful, replete with war, destruction and the bare survival of the faithful remnant; but the preferred possibility is that the end of days come as a result of national repentance for ignoring the voice of God, and the return of Israel to our heavenly Father in love and gratitude rather than out of fear. Elijah must “turn back the hearts of the parents to their children and the hearts of the children to their parents” with the still, silent sound of unconditional love. God does not want to “strike the land with utter destruction” at the end of days (Malachi 3:24).

The rabbis of the Midrash go one step further. God is teaching Elijah that the prophet wanted to punish Israel only because he grossly misjudged them when he said, “They rejected Your covenant.” Elijah will be “taken to heaven” (II Kings 2: 11, 12), but he will have to shuttle between heaven and earth, he will attend every Pesach Seder where Jews celebrate God’s promise of redemption, and be present at every circumcision where Jews demonstrate their willingness to shed blood for the covenant. The prophet will transform his people not by judging (or misjudging) them, but only by loving them with the still, small sound of our Father’s unconditional love.

The opening words of this third book of the Bible, the Book of Vayikra, tells us that God first called to Moses and then communicated to him a specific message concerning the sacrificial offerings of the Sanctuary. Why this double

language of “calling” first and then “speaking” afterwards? Why not cut to the chase: “And the Lord spoke to Moses from the Tent of Meeting”?

The Talmudic sage Rabbi Musia Rabbah, in Tractate Yoma (4b), explains that the Bible is giving us a lesson in good manners: before someone commands another to do something, he must first ask permission to give the order. He even suggests that before someone begins speaking to another, one must ascertain that the person wishes to hear what he has to say. With great beauty, the rabbis suggest that even God Himself follows these laws of etiquette when addressing Moses; asking his permission before speaking to or commanding him.

The Ramban (Nahmanides) takes a completely opposite view, limiting this double language of addressing to the Sanctuary specifically: “this (seemingly superfluous language of first calling and then speaking) is not used elsewhere (where God is addressing Moses); it is only used here because Moses would not otherwise have been permitted to enter the Tent of Meeting, would not otherwise have been permitted to be in such close proximity to the place where the Almighty was to be found” (Ramban ad loc).

From this second perspective, it is Moses who must first be summoned by God and receive Divine permission before he dare enter the Sacred Tent of Meeting of the exalted Holy of Holies.

This latter interpretation seems closest to the Biblical text; since the very last verses in the Book of Exodus specifically tell us that whenever a cloud covered the Sanctuary, Moses was prevented from entering the Tent of Meeting and communicating with the Divine (Exodus 40:34, 35). Hence, the Book of Leviticus opens with God summoning Moses into the Tent of Meeting, apparently signaling the departure of the cloud and the Divine permission for Moses to hear God’s words.

This scenario helps us understand God’s relationship – and lack thereof – with the Israelites in general and with Moses in particular. You may recall that the initial commandment to erect a Sanctuary was in order for the Divine Presence to dwell in the midst of the Israelites (Ex. 25:8); such a close identity between the Divine and the Israelites on earth would signal the period of redemption. This would have been a fitting conclusion to the exodus from Egypt.

Tragically, Israel then sin with the Golden Calf and God immediately informs them that “I cannot go up in your midst because you are a stiff-necked nation, lest I destroy you on the way” (Exodus 33:3). Only if the Israelites are worthy can God dwell in their midst. If they forego their true vocation as a “sacred nation and a Kingdom of priest-teachers” while God is in such close proximity to them, then this God of truth will have to punish and even destroy them. He will therefore now keep His distance from them, retaining His “place”, as it were, in the supernal, transcendent realms, and sending His “angel-messenger” to

lead them in their battles to conquer the Promised Land (ibid 33:2,3).

As a physical symbol of the concealment – or partial absence – of the Divine (hester panim), Moses takes the Tent of Meeting and removes its central position in the Israelite encampment, to a distance of 2000 cubits away (33:7). He then remonstrates with God arguing that the Almighty had promised to show His love by means of His Divine Name, to reveal to him His Divine attributes; and to accept Israel as His special nation (33:11,12). In other words, Moses argues that that He, God – and not an angel-messenger – must reveal His Divine ways and lead Israel (Rashbam on 33:13).

God then responds that indeed “My face will lead” – I, Myself and not an angel-messenger – and “I shall bring you (you, Moses, but not the nation) to your ultimate resting place” (33:14). Moses is not satisfied, and argues that God Himself – His “face” and not His angel-messenger – must lead not only Moses but also the nation! Otherwise, he says, “do not take us (the entire nation) out of this desert”. And finally, God agrees that although He cannot be in the midst of the nation, He can and will lead them, stepping in whenever necessary to make certain that Israel will never disappear and will eventually return to their homeland.

God may not be completely manifest as the God of love in every historical experience of our people, and will not yet teach the world ethical monotheism. Israel remains a “work-in-progress” with God behind a cloud and “incommunicado”. Our nation, albeit imperfect, still serves as witnesses that the God of love and compassion exists, and orchestrates historical redemption through Israel. God is “incorporated,” incorporealized, in Israel, the people and the land. What God leaves behind even when He is in a cloud are the two newly chiseled tablets of stone – His Divine Torah with the human input of the Oral Law – as well as His thirteen “ways” or attributes: God’s spiritual and emotional characteristics of love, compassion, freely given grace, patience, kindness, etc. (Leviticus 34:1-7). And when individuals internalize these attributes – imbue their hearts, minds and souls with love, compassion, kindness, grace and peace – they cause God to become manifest, enabling them to communicate with God “face to face”, like Moses. Then the cloud between Moses’ Active Intellect and God’s Active Intellect disappears, and Moses is enabled to teach and understand God’s Torah.

And so, Vayikra opens when God perceives that Moses has reached the highest spiritual level achievable by mortals, the cloud is removed from the Tent of the Meeting and God invites Moses to enter it and receive more of those Divine Emanations which comprise our Bible.

Shabbat Shalom

The Blessing over Trees, And Kashering the Kitchen for Pesach

Revivim

Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

According to formal law, it would have been possible to recite the blessing over trees at the time of their blooming after winter, but the Kabbalists emphasized the importance of the blessing in the month of Nissan specifically * The kashering of a gas stove should be done by light libun of the stovetop grates, or wrapping them in foil; on an induction cooktop, it is sufficient to pour boiling water over them, and heat a pot on it * Kashering an oven: clean the leftover food, and heat it to the highest setting for half an hour

Our Sages said “One who goes out during the days of Nissan and sees trees in bloom says, ‘Blessed is He Who did not omit anything from His universe and created in it good creatures and good trees, to benefit mankind with them’” (Berachot 43b).

The purpose of the blessing is to thank Hashem for His kindness, for reviving and flowering the trees that stood dry in winter, and now, bloom and grow flowers that eventually will develop into good fruits that humans may enjoy (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 15:8).

Time of the Blessing

The time of blessing depends on the flowering of the trees after the winter, whether before or after the month of Nisan. Regarding our Sages statement that the time of reciting the blessing is during the days of Nisan, this is because in the Land of Israel, trees usually bloom in Nisan. In the northern countries, where flowering is delayed until the month of Iyar, the blessing is recited le-chatchila (ideally) in the month of Iyar. A person located in the southern hemisphere, where the flowering of the trees occurs in the month of Tishrei, should recite the blessing over trees in the month of Tishrei (Har Tzvi, O.C 1: 118). However, the Kabbalists emphasized the virtue of this blessing, through which great tikkunim (rectifications) are made to the neshamot (souls) who have been re-incarnated in trees, and these tikkunim are made precisely in the month of Nisan. Consequently, some Achronim wrote that one should be careful to say the blessing precisely in the month of Nisan. Those quick to fulfill mitzvot recite the blessing on Rosh Chodesh Nisan.

The Laws of Kashering Stoves – Types of Stoves

In order to explain the halachot of stoves, their use for meat and dairy, and koshering them for Pesach, we must first state that there are four types of stoves:

1) Gas stoves – they are the common stoves, in which the heat source is from a fire lit on gas, and the pots are placed on the bars above the heat source.

2) Electric ranges – where the source of heat comes from electric heating elements instead of a gas fire.

3) Ceramic burners – in which the source of heat is the flat surface on which the pots are placed. The surface is made of impervious glass, and is heated by electricity.

4) Induction cooktops – also in which there is a surface on which the pots are placed, which is impervious glass, but unlike ceramic burners, in which the heat source is within the ceramic surface, in induction cooktops the heat source is in the pot, which heats up by means of a magnetic field. From the pot, the heat spreads to the food cooking within it, and to the surface on which it is standing.

Use of Dairy and Meat Stoves

In gas stoves or electric stoves, it is permissible to use the same stovetop grates for meat and milk, because even if a little meat or dairy sauce spills on to them, the fire incinerates and befouls it.

The same is the case with ceramic burners, where it is permissible to place a meat pot, and other times a milk pot on the same surface, since the heat of the burners burns what occasionally spills from it.

However, one should be stringent not to eat foods that have fallen on the metal surface under the bars, because sometimes there are remnants of meat and dairy foods there. If a thick piece of food fell there, one may cut and throw away a thickness of about two centimeters from the side of the food that touched the surface, and eat the rest.

If one is sure that the surface has been cleaned well, and it is still clean, it is permissible to eat what has fallen on it, since all the concern is of actual residue or oiliness on it, but there is no need for concern that the surface has absorbed flavor that will later be released. Likewise, if dairy food has fallen there, and it is known that since the last cleaning no meat food has been cooked there, the dairy food that fell there is kosher (Peninei Halakha: Kashrut 25: 13).

Induction Cooktops

Since in induction cooktops the source of heat is not in the surface, but rather the heat spreads from the sides of the pot to the food and to the surface on which it stands, these cooktops do not have the full power to burn anything that spills from the pots. Therefore, those who are not careful to always clean what has spilled from the pots, should always make sure to heat the meat foods on one side, and the dairy foods on the other, so that it does not happen that a milk pot is placed on top of food that has overflowed from a meat pot, or vice versa.

However, those who make sure to clean every time a dairy or meat dish has overflowed, may use the entire surface for either a meat pot or a dairy pot. This is because the glass of these cooktops is non-absorbing, so as long as the overflowed food that got on them is cleaned, there is no concern. On top of that, even if the glass was absorbent, as long as the pot remains dry, there is no prohibition in the pot touching the surface (Peninei Halakha: Kashrut 25: 13).

Separation between Milk and Meat Pots

When cooking a pot of meat and a pot of milk on the stove at the same time, one should make sure that there is a space between them, so that one dish does not overflow on to the side of the other pot. And if the two pots touched each other during cooking, as long as there was no moisture that connected between them at the point of contact, the pots and the dishes are kosher, as the flavors do not pass through dry dishes (Rema YD 92: 8). But if there was moisture that connected them, such as one dish spilled over – the food in them are kosher, but the pots require hagala (Peninei Halakha: Kashrut 25: 11).

Kashering Stovetops that became Treif

Gas stove: Le'chatchila (ideally), one should clean the stove and do light libun on the grates. If it is difficult to do light libun on the grates, it is enough to clean the grates and do hagala in boiling water, and if the grate is longer than the depth of the pot, one side should be inserted first, and then the other side. For the areas of the grates that do not come into contact with the pots, the enamel cook top beneath the grates, and the burner caps it is sufficient to clean them well, and do not require libun of hagala. Le'chatchila, it is good to turn on all the flames and let them burn for about fifteen minutes.

Electric ranges and ceramic burners: Clean thoroughly and run on the highest setting for about 15 minutes, based on the principle of ke-bole'o kakh polto.

Induction cooktop: clean the surface and pour boiling water on it, and heat the pots on it for about fifteen minutes, so that they heat the surface under them according to the way they are used (Peninei Halakha: Kashrut 33: 9).

Kashering Stoves for Pesach

Gas stoves: the law of kashering them for Pesach is the same as the law of kashering them from treif. Admittedly, from ikar ha'din (letter of the law), their ruling is less stringent, since chametz is permitted all year round, and therefore some poskim are of the opinion that it is enough to clean the stove for Pesach without light libun or hagala. However, due to the severity of chametz, it is customary to kasher the grates for Pesach with light libun, as the law of kashering them from a treif (Rema 451: 4, MB as loc. 34).

Instead of this, one can cover the grates on which the pots stand with aluminum foil, in order to create a buffer between the grate on which the chametz foods are placed in Pesach pots. And it is also customary to let all the flames burn for about fifteen minutes.

For the areas of the grates that do not come into contact with the pots, the enamel cook top beneath the grates, and the burner caps it is sufficient to clean them well.

Electric and Ceramic Stovetops: clean thoroughly, and heat on the highest setting for about fifteen minutes.

Induction cooktops: they are kashered as one does for treif – clean the surface and pour boiling water over it, and in order to kasher them from the food that overflowed and got stuck to the bottom of the pot is based on the principle of ke-bole'o kakh polto: wet the bottom of the pot when they

are empty, and heat them up on the cooktop for about 15 minutes. from the residue that was stuck under the pots, the bottom of the pots should be moistened with water when they are empty, and heated on the surface for about fifteen minutes, and as such they were emitted (Peninei Halakha: Pesach 11:2) .

Microwave for Meat and Dairy

One is permitted to use the same microwave for dairy foods and meat foods while creating a separation between them. When separating, one should pay attention to two things: one, not to put dairy or meat foods directly on the same plate. Second, that a lot of vapor does not enter the microwave cavity into the food being heated.

Therefore, care must be taken not to place foods directly on the fixed plate of the microwave, rather, dairy foods on a dairy plate, and meat foods on a meat plate, and these plates should be placed on the microwave plate. Also, a special lid for dairy foods and a special lid for meat foods should be set aside. And even though steam comes out through the small holes in the lids designed for microwaves, the vapor coming out of them does not have the power to accumulate on the walls and ceiling of the microwave and to give them flavor, and even more so, they do not have the power to emit a flavor that may have been absorbed by the walls of the microwave, and put it into the food that is being heated.

It is also possible to determine that the regular state of the microwave is dairy, and if one wants to heat a meat dish in it, one should place another plate, or other surface, on the fixed plate of the microwave, and cover the meat foods with a lid or a box, or wrap them in a bag. This is also what one should do when he heats a parve food to eat it with meat foods.

Kashering a Microwave from Treif and for Pesach

There are three steps to kashering a microwave oven: 1) cleaning it thoroughly of any residual food resulting from spillage or steaming; 2) perform hagala with boiling water for the rotating plate; 3) heating a bowl of water for about ten minutes at the highest setting – thus, kashering it from chametz steam and vapor that stuck to, or got absorbed in it, when used with treif, or chametz.

Kashering a Baking Oven from Treif and for Pesach

The oven itself and the racks on which trays are placed are kashered by cleaning them and running the oven on its hottest setting for half an hour.

Baking trays are not kashered because they absorbed through fire, and kashering them requires libun at a temperature of 400oC, which will likely cause them serious damage. One should therefore buy special baking trays for Pesach, while the chametz trays should be cleaned and put away like all other hametz utensils. Instead of special Pesach trays, one may use disposable trays (Peninei Halakha: Pesach 11:3).

However, when one kashers an oven from treif, and there is no way to obtain new baking trays, or they cost a lot, they

can be kashered by thoroughly cleaning them, and then heating them in the oven on its highest temperature for about half an hour (Peninei Halakha: Kashrut 33:7, footnote 8).

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Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

Insights Parshas Tzav :: Nissan 5783

Yeshiva Beis Moshe Chaim / Talmudic University

Based on the Torah of our Rosh HaYeshiva

HaRav Yochanan Zweig

This week's Insights is dedicated in loving memory of Dr. Ernest Herman, Isser ben Feivush z"l. "May his Neshama have an Aliya!"

Your Wish is My Command?

Command Aharon and his sons, saying [...] (6:2).

Rashi (ad loc) comments that the word "tzav" (command) means enthusiastically encourage (the Kohanim) beginning now and for succeeding generations.

This would seem a little incongruous. After all, have you ever tried "commanding" someone and found that the person commanded feels "encouraged" or "enthusiastic"? Hardly. For a proper understanding of this concept try "commanding" your spouse to do the dishes and let us know how that works out for you.

In addition, how could Rashi say "to encourage the Kohanim for now and succeeding generations"? Commanding this generation of Kohanim to do their duty would seem difficult enough, how would this last for succeeding generations?

The word mitzvah also etymologically has the root "tzav," which is why mitzvos are generally translated as commandments. This is, at best, an incomplete translation. Both Targumim on this possuk translate "tzav" as "paked," which means to appoint. This is also the exact same word that Moshe uses when he asks Hashem to appoint a leader in his stead over the Jewish people: "Yifkod Hashem [...]" (Bamidbar 27:16). This is a very important concept to understand. When Hashem first chose Moshe to go lead the Jewish people out of Egypt, a week long conversation ensued. This consisted, primarily, of Moshe arguing with Hashem. This would seem very odd, after all Hashem is telling him to go, how can Moshe possibly argue?

The answer is that Hashem was asking Moshe to accept a position of responsibility, and responsibility has to be accepted willingly. This is why when Moshe finally accepts to go with Aharon the Torah uses the same exact language of "tzav" – "Vayetzavem al Bnei Yisroel" (Shemos 6:13). The same is true by the entire Torah and mitzvos, which is also a derivative of tzav. They are a responsibility. That is why Hashem had to ask us to accept the Torah, and every soul had to be present at Mount Sinai

and sign on for this obligation. The Torah and mitzvos aren't merely rules we must keep. They are a complete agenda for the perfection of the world and we signed on for the responsibility to see it fulfilled.

This is also the reason that the only people who are counted (root word pokad) are those who take responsibility for the continuity of the Jewish nation, those who go to war and are willing to die for their ideals.

So too in our parsha, Hashem is telling Moshe to appoint Aharon and his sons to the permanent role of Kohanim and to do it in an encouraging and enthusiastic manner in order that they should feel the same way. They aren't being commanded, they are being asked to accept a sacred responsibility. Once they accepted it, this responsibility became binding for all succeeding generations.

For a further discussion of how to get your spouse to do the dishes go to Rabbizweig.com/makethekidsdothem.

An Ongoing Relationship

If one offers (a peace offering) as a thanksgiving [...] (7:12).

Rashi (ad loc) explains that this korban, which is known as a toda, was brought when a person was delivered through miraculous means from a difficult situation. There is a fascinating Midrash related to the Korban Toda: In the future, (i.e. in the times of Moshiach and when the Beis Hamikdosh is rebuilt) all the sacrifices will become obsolete except for the Korban Toda (Vayikra Rabbah 9:7). What's unique about this korban that it endures to the times of the third Beis Hamikdosh?

Since Hashem created the world to give good to mankind, a basic tenet of our relationship with Him is hakoras hatov – recognizing the good he has done for us. The first individual to recognize this was Kayin, when he attempted to bring an offering of his own. Unfortunately, his motivation was to relieve himself of the obligation that he felt he owed Hashem. This caused him to bring his offering from an inferior product, which Hashem ignored. Why was it ignored?

The ultimate in good is a closeness to Hashem, so Hashem desires, for our own sake of course, that we have a relationship with Him. Kayin wanted to relieve himself of the obligation; he didn't desire a relationship, which is why he brought his offering from an inferior product. This is akin to an individual paying his taxes to the IRS in a small truck filled with pennies and nickels. In other words, he was making a statement that said, "I despise the fact that I owe this debt and I want to let you know how unhappy I am about it." Kayin missed the whole point of why Hashem created the world.

The Korban Toda is not one of obligation. It is in the family of korbonos known as shelamim – peace offerings. This sacrifice is not merely a recognition of the good Hashem has bestowed, it is a testimony to our ongoing relationship. The word shelamim comes from shalem – whole. This refers to the oneness that is created by this

relationship, which is also the reason for “peace.” When there is a unity there is no dissension. This is why this korbon will still be offered in the times of Moshiach; it is the very definition of what those times are all about.

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לע"נ

שרה משא בת ר' יעקב אליעזר ע"ה
ביילא בת (אריה) לייב ע"ה
אנא מלכה בת ישראל ע"ה