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From Darash Moshe A selection of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein's choice comments on the Torah.

**By Rabbi Moshe Feinstein**

**Parashas Vayikra**

He shall not place oil on it...for it is a sin-offering (5:11)

The Talmud (Shekalim 6:6) states that the remainder of monies earmarked for sin-offerings or for guilt-offerings shall be used to purchase burnt-offerings.

The reason for this is that a sacrifice is not a bribe meant to placate Hashem to forgive one's sins. One who thinks that way angers Hashem, whose response is "Why do you trample My courtyards?" Hashem has no need for sacrifices, and His conduct is diametrically opposite to that of mortal man. The latter is likely to forgive one who sins against him if he presents him with a beautiful gift adorned with many adornments. Hashem, in contrast, refuses to accept an offering adorned with oil and frankincense from the sinner. Thus the Torah states: for it is a sin-offering, which Rashi explains: and it is proper that it should not be adorned.

The reason for this is that the intention of one who brings a sacrifice is to draw closer to Hashem, to repent of his sins and to become a different person with the proper character traits and complete faith. He must realize that his entire being belongs to Hashem, who has given him everything, and as such it is not his "gift" to Hashem which brings about his atonement.

This is the principle of the burnt-offering. It is improper for a sin-offering to be adorned; on the contrary, Hashem should not accept his offering at all. Only because Hashem accepts the repentance of the wicked does He accept this sacrifice, if and only if, the sinner understands that he must behave as one who recognizes that everything is a gift from Hashem. Therefore, the residual money is used to purchase burnt offerings.

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Rabbi Yonasan Sacks Shevuas Haeidus - The Oath of Testimony

Parshas Vayikra describes the different types of oaths - shevuas bitui - an oath of utterance, and shevuas haeidus - an oath of testimony. A shevuas bitui can refer to the past or the future. Whereas a shevuas bitui l'habah (an oath of utterance referring to the future) obligates an individual to engage in or refrain from a given activity, a shevuas bitui l'shavar affirms or denies what has already occurred. A shevuas haeidus allows a litigant to insist that

an individual either testify or assert through an oath that he is unaware of any relevant testimony. Should that individual swear falsely, he must offer a Korban Oleh V'yored.

Unlike a shevuas bitui which an individual initiates himself, a shevuas haeidus can be imposed by others. A litigant can approach a potential witness and adjure him to affirm his denial of testimony (mushba mipi acheirim). This might stem from the Torah's insistence that a witness testify - im lo yagid v'nasa avono.

The Netziv (Breishis 24:3, see Harchev Davar) explains that the right to impose a shavua can be broadened beyond the example of shevuas haeidus. When Avraham Avinu instructs his servant Eliezer to find a suitable wife for Yitzchok, the term "v'ashbiacha" is used, implying that Avraham Avinu imposed a shavuah. The Netziv explains that because a servant must obey his master, an oath can be imposed. Similarly Shlomo Hamelech confronted Shimmy stating (Melachim I:2:44) "halo hishbatacha b'Hashem" indicating that a king can impose an oath on his subjects. Furthermore, the Netziv suggests that the Sanhedrin has the right to impose a shavuah. Accordingly the Sanhedrin would impose an oath, mushba mipi acheirim, on the kohein gadol prior to Yom Kippur to ensure that the avodah would be performed properly. All of these examples are rooted in the model of shevuas haeidus, where the concept of mushba mipi acheirim originates.

At times, one who takes an oath must invoke Hashem's name. Rabbeinu Tam maintains (Ran Nedarim 2a) that this is only necessary in cases where an oath is imposed - mushba mipi acheirim. We mention Hashem's name as if to state: by virtue of the authority granted by the Torah I hereby impose this oath. The Netziv observes that in each of the above cases the name of Hashem is used in the passuk, supporting the distinction of Rabbeinu Tam.

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Fortunate Is The Generation Whose Leaders Goof... And Then Admit It

In this week's parsha, we learn about the laws concerning the situation "When a ruler sins (asher nasi yechtah), and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem that may not be done - unintentionally - and becomes guilty." [Vayikra 4:22]

Rashi comments on the peculiar expression "asher nasi yechtah" which literally means "THAT the prince sinned." The more common usage throughout the parsha is "v'im" (AND IF). Rashi explains that the word "asher" comes from the same root as "ashrei" (meaning fortunate) as if to say "Fortunate is the generation whose ruler sets his heart to bring an atonement for his unintentional sin." There are a variety of comments recorded by later commentaries on the intent of this statement by Rashi.

Rav Zalman Sorotzkin in his sefer Oznayim L'Torah suggests that aveiyros [sins] come about as a result of new initiatives. A person will normally not commit an averah when he sticks to the straight and narrow, merely repeating that which has been done in the past without attempting new approaches or enactments. Innovation and change sometimes leads to inadvertent mistakes. The pasuk [verse] is praising the Nasi [leader] who is willing to change and to try something new. Even though such boldness can sometimes lead to inadvertent error, the generation is fortunate to have a leader who is at least willing to try.

Rav Dovid Feinstein provides a different insight, which I believe may be closer to the simple interpretation (p'shat) of the pasuk. People in power are normally not inclined to admit that they did something wrong. A person

in power is normally afraid of criticism and second guessing by his opponents. He is very leery to publicly admit, "Guess what? I goofed!"

How many times have we heard the President of the United States - any President of the United States - admit, "I have made a mistake." The few times when a president does admit to a mistake, he gets lambasted by the press and all his political adversaries. Rare is the public leader who is prepared to stand up in front of his nation and admit to having made a mistake. Happy is the generation that has a leader who is not ashamed to admit that he erred. Fortunate are those led by one secure enough to admit that he is not perfect.

Rav Shimon Schwab explains the very same lesson in explanation of a very perplexing Gemara [Chagiga 14a]. The Gemara states that the prophet Yeshaya cursed the Jewish people with 18 different curses but his mind was not put at ease until he foretold the ultimate indignation: "The youngster will domineer over the elder and the base over the respectable" (lo niskarera da'ato ad) [Yeshaya 3:5].

What is the meaning of this Gemara? Did Yeshaya the prophet hate the Jewish people so much that he said, "I'm going to really give it to them and I won't rest until I give them the ultimate punishment"? Obviously not! That is not the role of a prophet. The role of a prophet is not to beat up the people or to indict them.

Rav Schwab explained that this Gemara is teaching the very same lesson as the pasuk quoted above from Parshas Vayikra as elaborated by Rashi. This final 'curse' actually includes a positive and optimistic message. When the children will point out the foibles of the elders - and perhaps the children were out of line for having such brazenness - but when their criticism will prompt the elders to respond, take stock, and admit that they in fact did make some errors, that is positive. That is in fact what appeased the mind of the prophet Yeshaya. In spite of the fact that the criticism was perhaps not offered with the proper derech eretz (manners and protocol), but the leaders were big enough that they could take the criticism and react with corrective action. That is the hallmark of a fortunate generation. It was this good fortune of the Jewish people that put the Prophet's mind at ease.

#### Fear of Heaven: Never Leave Home Without It

Later on in the parsha we read: "If a person will sin and commit one of all the commandments of Hashem that may not be done, but was unaware and became guilty, and he bears his iniquity" [Vayikra 5:17]. Rashi explains this pasuk to be referring to a case of someone who is in doubt regarding whether or not he has violated a kares bearing prohibition. For example there were two pieces of fat in front of him, one of the pieces was permissible fat (shuman) and one of the pieces was forbidden fat (chelev). He ate one of the pieces and was subsequently told that one of the pieces was forbidden, but he does not know which of the two he ate. In this case, he brings a korban [sacrifice] that is known as a 'conditional guilt offering' (Asham Talui).

This aveiyrah would seem to be even less offensive than an unintentional aveiyrah. Not only was it unintentional, there is a question as to whether he was in fact in violation of any prohibition at all. It is striking that he needs to bring any offering at all. An offering comes as atonement. What did this person do wrong that requires atonement? In fact, even in the case of a definite unintentional aveiyrah, is far from obvious that any aveiyrah requires the atonement of a sin offering (Korban Chatas).

Rav Eliyahu Dessler [Michtav Eliyahu Part 3] explains that Torah must become such a part of a person's existence that it is literally impossible for him to forget and commit an aveiyrah. The atonements of Korban Chatas and Korban Asham are required because he failed to achieve this level of integration with Torah that requires.

I will give an example and ask your pardon for suggesting such an example. Does anyone ever leave home in the morning having forgotten to put on his pants? Never! We may forget our watch, our keys, our tie, or some other article of clothing, but never our pants. Pants are so integral to

our existence, that it is literally impossible for a person to even make the mistake of walking outside his front door without his pants on.

Torah, mitzvos, and fear of G-d, need to be such an integral part of a person's existence that he should not even be able to commit an aveiyrah unintentionally. Imagine if a person wakes up Shabbos morning and goes into the bathroom, turns on the light, starts brushing his teeth and shaving and then remembers "Oh my gosh! Today is Shabbos!" It is true that his aveiyrah was unintentional. It is true he forgot. It is true he was half asleep. But Shabbos is clearly not as vital and integral to him as wearing his pants. He never forgot to put on his pants before leaving the house. How could he forget it was Shabbos?

This is the concept of the atonement of 'Asham Talui' and 'Korban Chatas'. The atonement is about the fact that fear of sin was not real enough and not integral enough and not essential enough in a person's life to prevent him from even unintentionally and even possibly unintentionally committing an aveiyrah.

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Vayikra The Fragrance of a Sacrifice

**Rosh Hayeshiva Harav Chaim Yaakov Goldvicht, zt"l**

(Adapted from Asufat Ma'arachot vol. IV)

"When a man brings an offering to Hashem from you ... the Kohen shall cause it to go up in smoke on the Altar -- a burnt offering, a fire offering, a satisfying aroma to Hashem." (Vayikra 1:2:9) Maran Rosh Hayeshiva zt"l explained the essence of sacrifices based on one of the purest of offerings, that of Noach: "Then Noach built an altar to Hashem ... and offered burnt offerings on the altar. Hashem smelled the pleasing aroma, and Hashem said in His heart, 'I will not continue to curse again the ground because of man.'" (Bereishit 9:20-21) The very first thing that Noach did, immediately after he exited the ark in peace, was offer a sacrifice: "Noach sat down and said, 'G-d saved me from the waters of the flood, so I am obligated to offer before Him a sacrifice and burnt offerings.'" (Pirkei D'Rabbi Eliezer 23) What was so special about this sacrifice, on account of which the world was promised a covenant of eternal existence? Chazal explain this in the Midrash (Bereishit Rabbah 34:9): "Hashem smelled the pleasing aroma." He smelled the aroma of Avraham Avinu rising from the furnace; the aroma of Chanania, Mishael and Azaria rising from the furnace; ... the aroma [of the self-sacrifice] of the generation of persecution. This act of Noach, our Sages teach us, was not merely an emotionless act of sacrifice. It was a sacrifice saturated with the aroma of self-sacrifice. It was this sacrifice that granted the entire world an enduring covenant of existence, something that was not granted to the "pre-flood" world. We would like to uncover the secret treasure of this sacrifice. "The world shall be built with chesed." (Tehillim 89:3) This pasuk teaches that the cornerstone of the creation is the trait of chesed. There are various attributes with which G-d directs His world. The

attribute of chesed is unique, in that, in addition to being an attribute of guidance, like the rest of the attributes, it also serves as the founding block of the world. Moreover, our tradition from the giants of Jewish thought is that G-d created the world only to do good to His creatures. (See Ramchal, Derech Hashem, I:2) His attribute of doing good sought, so to speak, a means of expression. Therefore, He created this great world, so that His chesed would have a place to express and apply itself. Chazal established that since this pasuk teaches us that the foundation of the world emanates from chesed, it also forms the cornerstone for the activity of Man in his world. This is what is taught, "On three things the world stands: on Torah, on worship, and on gemilut chasadim." The founding blocks of creation and the foundations of Man's activities in it are two sides of the same coin. Since the creation is established on the foundations of chesed, it must also serve as the basic measure of its continued existence. The capacity to give is thus a basic trait whose existence is necessary in order for the world to continue. Every tendency towards chesed, every arousal to give, whether in action or in thought, comes as the result of inner nullification. Man's nature is such that his material instincts drive him to seek pleasure and gain. If, in spite of this, he is able to withhold himself, in body or money, it is only because it has been preceded by some degree of nullification of his material base. Thus, the trait of "giving" is rooted in the ability of self-nullification that is inherent in Man. Our Sages already established, "The true 'chasid' is one who does chesed with his Master." (Zohar Devarim 281a) The ultimate fulfillment of the trait of giving is clearing out room from our individuality for the Divine Presence to dwell. This is the essence of the form of worship known as sacrifices. A sacrifice is the ultimate and fullest expression of the self-nullification that is in chesed, because a sacrifice symbolizes the nullification of Man, with all his limbs, for the Sanctity of His blessed Name: A person should think when he does all this that he sinned to his G-d with his body and soul, and deserves that his blood be spilt and his body burnt, were it not for the chesed of the Creator, who took from him a substitute and atonement in this sacrifice, that this blood should be in place of his blood, and a life in place of a life. (Ramban Vayikra 1:10) It is not the lamb that is offered up on the Altar, but the person himself. The owner of the sacrifice is, so to speak, offered up completely. His personality, all his character, his very existence, is completely nullified before G-d. "When a man brings an offering -- from you. From here emerges the secret of the pasuk said in the parsha of the Akeidah, "Avraham raised his eyes and saw -- behold, a ram! -- afterwards, caught in the thicket by its horns; so Avraham went and took the ram and offered it up as an offering instead of his son." (Bereishit 22:13) -- "Instead of his son!" From this flows what Chazal say: "May You forgive all iniquity and accept good [intentions]." (Hoshea 14:3) R. Simon says: "Tov" in gematriya (At-Bash) is "nefesh." Yisrael said, "When the Temple was erect, we would burn fats and sacrificial pieces and we would gain atonement. Now, our fat and our blood and our souls -- May it be [His] will that they should be an atonement for us." With the destruction of the Temple, we lost only the "symbolic act" that is laden in the offering of sacrifices. However, the very being of atonement that is embedded in the burning exists and remains for generations. Dedication to G-d can be expressed in other ways. The fasting that we accept upon ourselves as an expression of Teshuva also indicates that same purpose. Based on this, we can reach a deeper understanding in the words of the prophet and of our Sages (Avot D'Rabbi Natan 4:5): "For I desire chesed, not sacrifice." (Hoshea 6:6) We have another atonement that is like the service of the Temple. What is this? This is gemilut chasadim.

As we have explained, "chesed" means sacrifice. A person of chesed gives of his strength, his resources, his wealth, and all the treasures of his soul; all that he could have, and is entitled to use for himself, he directs and gives to another. Thus, the root of this trait is the

nullification and submission of his individuality. Bringing a sacrifice is, as explained, the pinnacle of this perspective, the ultimate level of nullification -- "A life instead of a life." Therefore, one whose heart is devoid of the trait of chesed is devoid of the meaning of a sacrifice, and, in fact, degrades it and defiles it. He should deal first with the subject of chesed, and then come forward to offer the sacrifice. "For" -- when I commanded about a sacrifice -- "I desire chesed, not sacrifice." Not an emotionless sprinkling of blood on the Altar, but an act of coming close and making a sacrifice of the foundations of the soul. One who is not capable of this is disqualified from offering! This is the basis of what the Kabbalists ruled, that a person who did not marry is considered to be unqualified for offering. A person who lives by himself is, by definition, void of knowing chesed. From this we learn that we have another atonement, similar to the service of the Temple -- gemilut chasadim itself! Noach and his sons -- who learned, practiced and trained in the trait of chesed for a full year in the ark -- became worthy for offering. This was, indeed, the first act they did immediately upon exiting the ark. This was, as mentioned, a sacrifice completely saturated with the aroma of self-sacrifice: He smelled the aroma of Avraham Avinu rising from the furnace, the aroma of Chanania, Mishael and Azaria rising from the furnace ... the aroma [of the self-sacrifice] of the generation of persecution.

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Covenant & Conversation

Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from

**Sir Jonathan Sacks**

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth [From several years ago 5764]

<http://www.chief Rabbi.org/tt-index.html>

Vayikra - The Sins of a Leader

SOMETIMES THE TORAH CONVEYS ITS MOST PROFOUND IDEAS BY A MERE NUANCE, one that becomes apparent only by attentive listening. In an earlier study we saw how, in the long list of instructions about the making of various articles for the sanctuary, a simple shift in the verb from the second person singular ("you shall make") to the third person plural ("they shall make") conveyed one of Judaism's most glorious ideas - that everyone has a share in the ark, in knowledge and the dignity it conveys. A similar stylistic device figures in this week's sedra.

The Torah describes the various kinds of sin offering, brought in the case of inadvertent wrongdoing (shegagah). It lists different types of offender: the High Priest, "the whole community" (understood to mean the great Sanhedrin, the supreme court), "the ruler (nasi)," and an ordinary individual. In three cases, the law is introduced by the word im, "if." In the case of the ruler, however, the law is prefaced by the word asher, "when." It is possible that a high priest, the community, or an individual may err. But in the case of a ruler, it is probable. When talking about the sin of a nasi, the Torah uses the word "when," not "if."

To understand why, we must first clarify what the word nasi signifies. Nasi is the generic word for a ruler, leader, king, judge, elder or prince. It means the holder of political power. The nasi is not a cohen, a mediator between G-d and the people; nor is he a navi, the mouthpiece of G-d to the people and the people to G-d. He is one who guides the affairs of the community, settles disputes and establishes the rule of law. In Mishnaic times, the Nasi (the most famous of whom were leaders from the family of Hillel) had a quasi-governmental role as representative of the Jewish people to the Roman government. The Hatam Sofer in one of his responsa (Orach Chayyim, 12) explains that this is why it passed, like kingship, through dynastic succession, unlike the role of Av Bet Din (and Torah leadership generally) which went to the most able and was not a privilege of birth.

The Jewish people has experienced many forms of political leadership - by elders, judges, kings, community councils and currently, in the State of Israel, by democratically elected government. There are overall constraints within which any form of Judaic government must work. One is the overarching sovereignty of the Torah: the priority of right over might. Any command of a ruler which conflicts with Torah law is ultra vires. Another is accountability to the people. In the phrase adopted by the American Declaration of Independence (a document which owes much to the biblical faith of the American founding fathers), governmental authority rests on "the consent of the governed."

Why should this type of leadership be particularly prone to error? Sforzo cites the verse (Deut. 32: 15) "But Yeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." Those who have advantages over others, whether of wealth or power, tend to find their consciences dulled. Rabbenu Bachye suggests that rulers tend to become arrogant and haughty. Already in these commentators - it is in fact a central theme of Tenakh as a whole - is the idea later stated by Lord Acton in the aphorism, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."

There are two other motifs among the commentators. R. Elie Munk, citing the Zohar, points out that the High Priest and the Sanhedrin were in constant touch with the holy. The king or political ruler, by contrast, was involved in secular affairs: war and peace, the administration of government, and international relations. He was more likely to sin because his day to day concerns were not religious but pragmatic.

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

There is, however, another dimension to political leadership. Politics is inherently an arena of conflict. It deals in matters - specifically the pursuit of wealth or power - that in the short term are zero-sum games. The more I have, the less you have. Seeking to maximise the benefits to myself or my group, I come into conflict with others who seek to maximise benefits to themselves or their group. Politics is the mediation of conflict by justice backed with power. Whatever course a politician takes, it will please some and anger others. From this, there is no escape.

Politics also involves difficult judgements. A leader must balance competing claims, and will sometimes get it wrong. One particularly striking example involved Solomon's son and successor, Rehoboam:

Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all the Israelites had gone there to make him king . . . [Jeroboam] and the whole assembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three days and then come back to me." So the people went away. Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked. They replied, "If today you will be a servant to these people and serve them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants." But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. 9 He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?" The young men who had grown up with him replied, "Tell these people who have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter' - tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge

you with scorpions.' " Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." The king answered the people harshly. Rejecting the advice given him by the elders, he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." So the king did not listen to the people . . . Rehoboam was faced with a dilemma. Solomon had been a wise and successful king, but the people had grown restive. The building of the Temple involved turning Israel into a vast labour camp. His court was expensive and sustained by high taxation. He himself had grown rich, while the people groaned under the burden.

Jeroboam, one of Solomon's officials, led a rebellion. Solomon sought to put him to death, but he escaped to Egypt, returning after the king died. Rehoboam now had to make a strategic decision. Should he strengthen his authority by a show of power? Or should he win the people over by loosening and lessening their burdens? The senior advisors counselled the second course; the "young turks" argued the opposite, anticipating Machiavelli's famous rule that it is better for a ruler to be feared than to be loved.

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

Rehoboam and Jeroboam were both political animals. Yet a not dissimilar rift occurred at a later era, this time not between rulers but between sages. On three occasions Rabban Gamliel, the Nasi, and Rabbi Joshua, head of the Bet Din, disagreed on matters of halakhah. On each occasion Rabban Gamliel asserted his authority, at the cost of humiliating Rabbi Joshua. The third time was, for the sages, one too many:

Rabban Gamliel remained sitting and expounding, and Rabbi Joshua remained standing, until all the people there began to shout and say to Hutzpith the expounder, "Stop!" and he stopped. Then they said, "How long is [Rabban Gamliel] to go on insulting him? . . . Come, let us depose him."

Rabban Gamliel was then stripped of office until he had made an act of apology to Rabbi Joshua.

Again the issue was then authority versus respect. We do Rabban Gamliel an injustice if we see his high-handed behaviour as simply the mark of an authoritarian personality. The more likely explanation is that he had lived through the last days of the Second Temple period, during which Jewry was fatefully divided between Pharisees and Sadducees and moderates and zealots. The rabbis themselves were divided between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, to the point when it was said that there was a danger of the Torah itself being split into "two Torot." Rabban Gamliel's assertion of authority was an honest attempt to avert further fragmentation. Yet it was the wrong policy. The rabbis resented the attempt to curtail debate, and Rabban Gamliel was removed from office.

Two further passages shed light on the hazards of communal leadership. The first is a striking interpretation given by the mishnaic sage, R. Nehemiah, to the verse, "My son, if you have put up security for your neighbour, if you have struck your hand in pledge for another" (Proverbs 6:1)

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

punished on account of him, and the holy spirit cries out: "My son, if you have put up security for your neighbour" - meaning, you are responsible for him. . . You have entered the gladiatorial arena, and he who enters the arena is either conquered or conquers. A leader of the community becomes responsible for the failings of the community -- at least those he might have prevented. The Talmud puts it simply:

Whoever can prevent the members of his household from sinning and does not, is seized for the sins of his household. If he can prevent his fellow citizens and does not, he is seized for the sins of his fellow citizens. If he can prevent the whole world from sinning, and does not, he is seized for the sins of the whole world. With power comes responsibility: the greater the power, the greater the responsibility.

There are no rules, there is no textbook, for leadership. Every situation is different and each age brings its own challenges. A ruler, in the best interests of his or her people, may sometimes have to take decisions that a conscientious individual would shrink from doing in private life: waging a war knowing that some will die, levying taxes that will leave some impoverished. In many cases, only after the event will the leader know whether the decision was justified, and it may depend on factors beyond his control.

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

Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai summed it up with a brilliant double-entendre on the word *asher*, "When a leader sins." He relates it to the word *ashrei*, "happy," and says:

Happy is the generation whose leader is willing to bring a sin offering for his mistakes. Leadership demands two kinds of courage: the strength to take a risk, and the humility to admit when a risk fails.

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From: Rabbi Goldwicht [rgoldwicht@yutorah.org] Sent: Wednesday, March 29, 2006 12:57 PM Subject: Parashat VaYikra 5766 WEEKLY INSIGHTS BY RAV MEIR GOLDWICHT Parashat VaYikra

Parashat VaYikra opens with Hashem commanding Moshe Rabbeinu to tell B'nei Yisrael, "A man, when he sacrifices from you (*adam ki yakriv mikem*) an offering to Hashem, from the animals, from the cattle and from the flock shall you bring your offering." This *passuk* could have been written more succinctly as follows: "When you bring a sacrifice to Hashem..." leaving out the superfluous words "adam, a man," and "mikem, from you." Why does the Torah add these words?

Rashi explains that the word "adam" teaches us that, like Adam HaRishon, who sacrificed animals belonging to him, we must not bring sacrifices from stolen animals. Rashi does not, however, address the superfluousness of "mikem." What is the reason behind the Torah's uncharacteristic verbosity here at the beginning of VaYikra?

Additionally, in next week's *parasha*, Tzav, the Torah discusses the daily service of the kohen, beginning with the *siluk hadeshen* (removal of the ashes and leftovers of the *korbanot*), as it says, "And he shall separate the ash (*deshen*) of what the fire consumed" (VaYikra 6:3). The question that must be asked is why the daily service of the kohen doesn't begin in an active, positive way, such as sacrificing a *korban* or lighting the Menorah. Why does the daily service of the kohen begin with the removal of the *deshen*?

To answer these two questions, it is helpful to understand the following: After we eat a *k'zayit* of bread, we recite *Birkat HaMazon*, consisting of four *brachot*. After eating any one of the seven species for

which Eretz Yisrael is praised (grapes, figs, pomegranates, etc.), we say only one *bracha*, the *bracha achat me'ein shalosh*. Why the difference? R' Soloveichik explains that bread represents a partnership with HaKadosh Baruch Hu. We actively participate in the "creation" of bread, planting, plowing, harvesting, etc. This enables us to recognize our Partner that much more, and our gratitude is therefore much greater. For fruit, on the other hand, our input is much less significant. We plant the tree and HaKadosh Baruch Hu basically does the rest. Our partnership is much less recognizable and therefore so is our gratitude.

If we develop the Rav's reasoning a bit further, it becomes clear that HaKadosh Baruch Hu wants us to be His partners in all acts of creation. This is perhaps the reason why the first *mitzvah* a Jew does is *brit milah* - through this act, HaKadosh Baruch Hu allows us to complete ourselves, so to speak, thereby completing our own creation.

But in order to truly be partnered with Hashem, we must make room for Him in our lives. This is why the first part of the daily service in the Beit HaMikdash was the *siluk hadeshen*, making room both literally and figuratively.

This may explain why the Torah says, "Adam ki yakriv mikem *korban laShem*, A person, when he sacrifices from you an offering to Hashem." Everyone must sacrifice of himself, a part of himself, to make more room for HaKadosh Baruch Hu in his life.

This is why the midrash homiletically derives from the word "mikem," which totals 100 in *gematria*, that one who recites 100 *brachot* per day is as if he offered a sacrifice. The Tur explains in *Orach Chaim* that in the time of David HaMelech there was a terrible plague during which 100 people died mysteriously on a daily basis. David didn't know how to end the plague, until it was revealed to him through *ruach hakodesh* that the plague would end if he instituted the practice of saying 100 *brachot* per day. The Tur's explanation poses some difficulty, however, because the *gemara* in *Menachot* (43b) suggests that this practice was already instituted in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu. What did David HaMelech add? The answer is that in the time of Moshe Rabbeinu, every person would make 100 *brachot* of his choosing. David HaMelech instituted a specific set of 100 *brachot* to be recited over the course of the day, realizing that the *brachot* would then "escort" a person from the moment he woke up until he went back to sleep that night, protecting him from danger and granting him long life.

Chazal say on the words "lech lecha," again totaling 100 in *gematria*, that when a *neshama* descends to this world, HaKadosh Baruch Hu tells it to remember one thing: I give you 100 "keys of *brachot*," with which you must open doors for Me to make room for Me in the world. This is how our lives begin.

The first to harness the power of the 100 *brachot* was Avraham Avinu, who opened doors for the Creator in places His Name had never been. Therefore "Hashem blessed Avraham with everything (*bakol*)" - *bet kol*, twice *kol*, again totaling 100. The reason why the recitation of this *passuk* after *Hallel* on Rosh Chodesh is a *segulah* for longevity is now quite clear.

One who recites 100 *brachot* per day is as if he offered a sacrifice because through the 100 *brachot*, this person realizes that his task in this world is to increase the glory of Hashem and to make more room for Him, even if this requires sacrificing of himself. This is the very idea that lies behind bringing a *korban* in the Beit HaMikdash.

This is also the meaning of the *gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (7a): "When the love between my wife and I was strong, we were able to lie together on the blade of a sword." In other words, neither of us took up space, each of us giving space to the other. "But when our love was weak, there was not enough room for us to lie together even in a bed of 60 *amot*." The more we let HaKadosh Baruch Hu into our lives, into our world, the more room we will have with which to continue to sanctify His Name in all of our actions.

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Young Israel Weekly Dvar Torah From: National Council of Young Israel [YI\_Torah@lb.bcentral.com] Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2006 8:02 PM Subject: NCYI Dvar Torah: Parshat VaYikra

Parshat Vayikra 3 Nissan 5766 April 1, 2006

Daf Yomi: Pesachim 74

Guest Rabbi: **Rabbi Steven Pruzansky**

Associate Member, Young Israel Council of Rabbis

The Jewish people are not particularly good at holding grudges, so our preoccupation with Amalek, now more than 33 centuries old, is startling. The Torah admonishes us to "Remember what Amalek perpetrated against you on the way when you left Egypt ... you shall obliterate the memory of Amalek from beneath the heavens, do not forget." (Dvarim 25:17-19). Indeed, HaShem promises Moshe that "I will totally obliterate the memory of Amalek from under the heavens" (Shmot 17:14). Of all the enemies of Israel, why is Amalek singled out for eternal enmity?

This historic hatred is almost as surprising as the original battle. Why did Amalek attack an unsuspecting, unprepared people? The Torah in its account of the battle is silent on Amalek's motivation, simply stating "And Amalek came and fought with Israel..." (Shmot 17:8, the beginning of the Torah portion we will read on Purim morning). So how was Amalek transformed into evil incarnate?

Some other details of the war stand out. Immediately after the start of hostilities, "And Moshe said to Yehoshua, choose men for us and go out to battle Amalek. Tomorrow, I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of HaShem in my hand. And Yehoshua did as Moshe told him, to battle Amalek, and Moshe, Aharon and Chur ascended to the top of the hill." (Shmot 17:9-10) But who is Yehoshua? The Torah assumes we know who he is, but this in fact is the Torah's first mention of Yehoshua! No biographical data of Yehoshua is provided here. Later, we are told that Yehoshua is Moshe's "attendant" (Shmot 24:13), and even later "And his youthful attendant Yehoshua the son of Nun did not leave the tent" (Shmot 33:11). Why doesn't the Torah introduce Yehoshua here, at the first reference to him? For that matter, why is Chur similarly not introduced at his first mention here?

Finally, why did Moshe, Aharon and Chur ascend the mountain? And why did Moshe build an altar (Shmot 17:15) after the battle?

My teacher and friend, Rabbi Joseph Schapiro, zt"l, once explained as follows: Amalek is an unusual enemy, one which challenges the very essence of our national existence. The Divine mission of the Jewish people encompasses two components. Avraham is told that he will be the progenitor of a great nation which will be the repository of a unique moral code, and given the responsibility to keep that moral code alive and accessible to mankind. We are designated the "first born" of HaShem, and this designation is transmitted to Yitzchok and Yaakov - but disputed by Esav, who claims the birthright for himself.

Avraham is also promised the land of Israel for himself and his descendants, and he builds an altar upon his arrival in the land. When the covenant of the land of Israel is reiterated to Yitzchok and Yaakov, they, too, build altars. Yet, historically, our rights to Eretz Yisrael were consistently challenged by Canaan and the other indigenous tribes.

In effect, the first-born status of Israel has two elements, rights to the Torah and to the land of Israel - and Amalek contests and wages war against both. After all, who is Amalek? Amalek is a mixed-breed - he is the grandson of Esav on his father's side (Breishit 36:12) and a descendent of Canaan through his mother Timna (see Sefer HaYashar). Amalek is

therefore a dangerous, volatile and frightening hybrid of Esav and Canaan who seethes with resentment and lives with a dual grievance against the Jewish people. As the seed of Esav, he denies our status as the Am HaShem and our religious legitimacy; as the offspring of Canaan, Amalek rejects our rights to the land of Israel, stridently proclaiming "listim atem - you are robbers of our land"(cf. Rashi, Breishit 1:1) Amalek always launches a two-pronged assault - on our religion and nationhood, on our legitimacy as G-d's people and our title to the land of Israel. Amalek's hatred is fierce, ideological and eternal; it cannot be assuaged or negotiated away. He is more than just a political or military foe.

Amalek's dual attack demands a dual response. The challenge to our claim to Eretz Yisrael can only be met by Yehoshua - not Yehoshua who is Moshe's attendant, but Yehoshua who will ultimately be the conqueror of the land of Israel. And Amalek waves the banner of Esav and his claim to the birthright; this assertion is defused by the prayers of the three people whose lives reflect the three expressions of the birthright; Moshe, the symbol of Torah and prophecy; Aharon, the representative of the priesthood; and Chur, the scion of Yehuda, the symbol of Jewish royalty.

Yehoshua and Chur require no formal introduction, because they appear here not as personalities in their own right - but as symbols of their respective missions; the conquest of Eretz Yisrael and the establishment of the monarchy of Israel.

The battle with Amalek is joined when Moshe ascends the mountains and raises his hands heavenward. And it is not merely a battle of men, swords and spears - but a battle of ideas which have shaped history, moved civilization forward and transformed mankind. In the battle, we succeed only when the people of Israel "turn our thoughts Above" (Rosh HaShana 29a), when we remember our cause and mission, and embrace our righteous destiny. Amalek aims to undermine the Kedushat Ha'Am and the Kedushat HaAretz (the sanctity of the people and the land) - and in every generation we must respond to their aggression vigorously and forcefully.

When that battle ended with the weakening (but not defeat) of Amalek, Moshe imitated the Avot and built an altar, confirming the destiny of the people of Israel in the land of Israel by elevating the earth itself to serve of HaShem. Even before we received the Torah, Amalek's surprising and dastardly attack was a brutal reminder of our mission and its opponents, and the source of our enemies' relentless and unending hostility to the Am HaShem.

"Zachor b'peh, al tishkach b'lev - Remember verbally, do not forget internally". We must remember Amalek in every generation, because Amalek still lives! Our standing as the Am HaShem is still under assault, and our claim to Eretz Yisrael is still under siege. We must therefore ever verbalize our remembrance of Amalek's evil, and never let our passion moderate or fade with time. We must never reconcile ourselves to the existence of the evil of Amalek, for accommodating that evil jeopardizes our existence and diminishes our national purpose.

To overcome the threats of Amalek requires strength of character, Torah knowledge and Jewish commitment - a willing soul and an able spirit.

In the end, our struggle with Amalek is the struggle for our national identity. In that struggle, we embrace our destiny and revel in our status as the nation whom Divine Providence protects and preserves in the face of intractable evil. To remember Amalek - who they are and who we are - is to hasten the day when HaShem's internal war with Amalek will reach its just and inevitable conclusion, when again "His name and His throne will be complete", and His kingship will reign supreme over all mankind, speedily and in our days.

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## Peninim on the Torah

by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum

- Parshas Vayikra <shemalst@shemayisrael.com> to peninim show details Mar 22 (19 hours ago)

PARSHAS VAYIKRA When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem. (1:2) In his Bircas Peretz, the Steipler Rav,zl notes that many mitzvos in the Torah are not obligatory. Rather, they are given over to man as optional mitzvos which he may - perhaps , should - perform at his discretion. These volitional mitzvos include the first contributions that were asked of the Jewish People, the nidvas lev, heartfelt contributions, for the construction of the Mishkan. This idea applies equally to most korbanos, such as: the Nedavah, free-willed offering; Olah, burnt offering; Shelamim, peace offering; Minchah, meal offering. The Korban Nazir is also not obligatory, but offered at the nazir's preference. We find this idea extended to other mitzvos, such as Terumah, which is given to the Kohen. Biblically, there is no designated amount that one must give to the Kohen. Indeed, even one stalk of wheat exempts an entire silo of grain. This idea applies as well to those contributions mentioned in the Mishnah in Peah, such as, Peah, leaving over a corner of the field for the poor, Bikurim, first fruit offering, Reiyah, pilgrimage, and gemilas chassadim, acts of loving kindness.

The Steipler asks a noteworthy question: If these mitzvos are, in fact, important, why are they not obligatory. If they are not that compelling, why were they given to us? What is the idea behind discretionary mitzvos? He explains that hisnadvut, optional mitzvos, acting on one's own initiative, is a singular experience in avodas Hashem, service to the Almighty. It is the primary principle upon which love for, and awe, of the Almighty may be acquired. From the fact that we have a distinct command to love Hashem, it is indicated that it is within the grasp of each individual Jew to attain this goal. This is difficult to understand, since not all people are alike. Not everyone's heart is beating passionately with a deep and unabiding love for Hashem. How does one achieve this awesome height?

In the second perek of Hilchos Yesodei HaTorah, the Rambam writes that love for Hashem is achieved through analysis and a depth of understanding into the ways of Hashem and His greatness. The Chovos Halevavos adds that one should delve into Hashem's beneficence and His boundless kindnesses. This will engender within him great love for the Almighty. Regrettably, man's timtum ha'lev, occluded heart, does not always allow for these positive feelings to take root and inspire him.

The Mesillas Yesharim explains that just as one's inner-passion and intensity catalyze his physical alacrity toward carrying out an endeavor, so, too, in reciprocity, will his external alacrity inspire and awaken within him an intensity, passion and joy for this endeavor. Thus, one who acts selflessly and gives whole-heartedly will generate within himself a sense of love and yearning for what and for whom he is acting.

This sense of reciprocity works in relation to one's love for the Almighty. As inner-love causes the individual to contribute freely and selflessly, so, too, will acts of free-willed contribution give rise to greater love, cementing his relationship with the Almighty. Therefore, the more one contributes on a discretionary and voluntary level, the greater and more concrete will be his love for Hashem. This applies in all areas of endeavor in which one serves Hashem. It may occur during Torah study, in which one delves deeper and expends more time and effort to understand and master the Torah. The greater the effort, the greater will be the love that is engendered within him. Others might manifest their overextending themselves in the area of tefillah, prayer. This intensity and alacrity, the passion and fervor, is beyond the scope of the common prayer service. This self-sacrifice for tefillah will be reflected in the individual's inner love for Hashem. Yet others, will choose gemilas chesed, acts of loving-kindness, for their opportunity to contribute of themselves to Hashem. Kindness takes on many guises, whether it be financial, or giving up time to help those in

need, those that are ailing, those who are spiritually deficient, with the list continuing on. As much as one gives up, commensurate with his ability to concede and renounce, he will gain for himself a deeper and more abiding love for Hashem.

The Steipler suggests that this might be the reason that the Torah has included korbanos nedavah, free-willed discretionary sacrifices. These sacrifices elevate one's level of love. Had they been obligatory, the end result of increased love for the Almighty would not have occurred as readily.

Perhaps this is why geirim, converts, and baalei teshuvah, those who have returned to the fold, stand on a higher spiritual plane. They have come to mitzvah observance on their own volition. No one has compelled them to do what they are doing. They were inspired and took the initiative, coming forward to join the ranks of Torah Judaism. They often exhibit greater passion, intensity and conscientiousness in carrying out mitzvos assiduously and punctiliously. They have come on their own and, therefore, have developed a deeper bond with the Almighty.

The Rokeach comments that chassidus, piety, is never again the same as it has been during its inception. Simply, as time goes on, the passion diminishes, the fervor wanes, the intensity dissipates. The Steipler adds that at its inception, piety is an act of hisnadvus, free-willed subscription of one's self to become closer to the Almighty. Hence, the baal teshuvah manifests passion and religious fire. After awhile, his piety becomes a part of his life. He obligates himself to act piously. Once his piety becomes an obligation, it can no longer generate that same inner love and passion as it had at the point of its inception.

The lesson for us is simple: A parent that wants to see his child address his Torah studies with love and enthusiasm should see to it that he is encouraged to turn to these studies of his own volition, out of free-willed, heartfelt desire - not because he is compelled to study. A child that is forced to learn will soon lose his sense of joy and his desire to achieve. Torah study will become something that he must do, he must get it out of the way, a way of life that he is duty-bound to maintain. These feelings of negativity produce negative students and unhappy Jews. Optimism generates initiative, which, in turn, breeds love and enthusiasm about one's work. For what more can one ask?

And when any soul will offer a meal-offering to Hashem, his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall bring it to the Bnei Aharon, the Kohanim, and he shall take from it his handful. (2:1,2)

The Talmud Megillah 16a relates an intriguing incident that took place during the Purim miracle. Haman was dispatched by Achashveirosh to find Mordechai, dress him in royal garb and parade him throughout the city. Haman went and discovered Mordechai teaching a class about the laws of Kemitzah to his students. The evil Haman asked the students, "What topic are you studying?" They replied, "When the holy Temple was still in existence, one who pledged a Minchah offering would bring a fistful of flour and gain atonement through it." After hearing this, Haman told them, "Your fistful of flour has come and pushed aside my ten thousand talents of silver."

When Mordechai noticed Haman approaching the study hall, he was gripped with fear. The evil man could only be coming with a single intention, one that would not bode well for Mordechai and his young students. Immediately, Mordechai instructed his students to disperse, lest they be captured with him. He feared the worst was about to occur.

Mordechai was acutely aware of the ingredients necessary to prevail over the Hamans of every generation: Adherence to Torah and mitzvos. Had the Jews maintained their fidelity to the Almighty, they would not have had reason for concern. Regrettably, they had not. Against sound advice, they had attended Achashveirosh's party, indicating that their moral and spiritual posture was seriously declining. Many had already drifted away from the traditions maintained by their ancestors. Assimilation was rampant, to the point that only a small group of dedicated individuals still clung strongly to the Torah and mitzvos. Their rebbe was Mordechai, and they were

staunchly committed to him. The question was: Can such a small group of dedicated individuals make a difference? Could they stop the gaping breach in observance which the majority had accepted? What could this small group achieve?

Suddenly, at the point of hopeless despair, Mordechai studied the laws of Kemitzah, the fistful of flour. Here he was able to sense a glimmer of hope. A spark of faint sunshine was penetrating the darkness and gloom that had suddenly enveloped him. The Kohen consumes the entire measure of flour after a small fistful is placed upon the altar. We see from the law of Kemitzah how a small representative amount, which is consecrated for the fire, exempts the entire sacrifice. The incredible effect of this small measure is far-reaching.

Horav Mordechai Rogov, zl, explains that Mordechai derived a powerful lesson from the Kemitzah. If only a fistful of flour can have such a compelling effect, then a handful of sincere students committed to Torah and mitzvos can have the power to consecrate the entire Jewish community in Persia! These dedicated few could have the power to atone for the many who had strayed. Mordechai understood that he should not be overcome with fear, for his students would atone for the others. Their dedication would have the power to dispel the ill effects of Haman's decree.

Haman was no fool. He realized the underlying message of the day's lesson, and he understood its validity. Even the evil Haman recognized that the key to Jewish survival was the existence of a remnant that was untainted and committed to Torah, regardless of its size. As long as this group of young people was prepared to defend the values and virtues of the Torah, then Klal Yisrael would not be lost. This "handful" would consecrate the rest of the nation. That is the lesson of the Kemitzah.

The power of the Kemitzah is the power that comes with dedication, with commitment, with self-sacrifice. These qualities take the power of "one" and give it greater strength and greater meaning. It is not what we do or how many are actually involved in carrying out this activity; it all depends on how we act, the sincerity, the determination and the commitment. Rabbi Yechiel Spero writes about Horav Gershon Liebman, zl, legendary Rosh Yeshivah of Novordok in France. Even as an inmate in the infamous concentration camp of Bergen Belsen, he continued his regimen of Torah study and mitzvah observance to the best of his ability, exhibiting almost superhuman powers of devotion and self-sacrifice. His spirit never waned, his devotion never faltered.

It was the first day of liberation, and understandably the camp and its prisoners were in a state of turmoil. The Nazis had shut off the water supply and taken the last morsels of food, causing the deaths of thousands more. Those who still had a modicum of strength left in their bodies went around scrounging for whatever morsels of food they could find. There was one person who, despite all that was going on around him, had curled up in a corner with a Talmud Bava Kamma that he had miraculously obtained and was studying. An American Jewish soldier came upon this sight and was stunned. "How could you be doing this after all your suffering?" he asked.

"We have wasted enough time over the past six years. I have decided to establish a yeshivah - the first yeshivah in Bergen Belsen," Rav Gershon replied.

"Who will be the Rosh Yeshivah?" the soldier asked.

"I will," Rav Gershon responded.

The soldier thought that certainly the frail rav was a victim of his suffering and had lost it. "Who will be the yeshivah's fundraiser?" he jokingly asked.

"That's no problem. I will be the fundraiser," was the quick retort.

"O.K. So you have a Rosh Yeshivah and a fundraiser, but what about students? A yeshivah must have a student body to survive."

"I will be the student," was his emphatic reply. Rav Gershon stood up and explained the following to the young soldier, "When someone seeks to achieve, he must not worry about who, what or when. He must do and trust in the Almighty. Our goal is to be marbeh kavod Shomayim, increase the honor of Heaven. By opening this yeshivah, I am doing just that! There is no question in my mind that the particulars will all follow." Shortly

thereafter, the soldier joined Rav Gershon in his yeshivah. That is the power of the Kemitzah.

If he cannot afford two turtledoves or two young doves, then he shall bring as his guilt offering for that which he has sinned, a tenth of an eiphah of fine flour for a sin offering. (5:11)

The Korban Olah V'Yoraid, variable offering, was unique in that it had no designated shiur, measure, for its composition. It basically depended upon the financial status of the makriv, the sinner who brought the offering. If he were wealthy, he would be required to bring a sheep or a goat for his atonement. If these were beyond his means, he could carry out his obligation with two turtledoves or two young doves. If he could not afford even these, he could then bring a tenth-eiphah of flour, and this would be sufficient to earn forgiveness for him.

It is important that we understand what type of misdemeanor catalyzed this need for atonement. It was for one of three sins: One who observes a situation that led to a monetary dispute, then denies that he saw this occurrence and swears falsely to this fact, only to admit to the truth later on, brings such a korban. Another instance is one who enters the Bais Hamikdash or eats kodoshim, sanctified food, when he is in a state of ritual impurity. Last, is he who swears falsely concerning something that he either will or will not do or regarding something that either did or did not occur.

In these three cases, the choice of the korban is determined by the sinner's financial portfolio. Chazal teaches us in the Talmud Kerissus 28a that if a wealthy man were to bring the Korban Oleh V'Yoraid designated for a poor man, he is not yotzei, has not fulfilled his obligation. Furthermore, it is considered as if he has brought chullin, unconsecrated flesh, in to the Azarah, Sanctuary, which is a serious violation. The Chafetz Chaim, zl, derives from here that in contemporary times, when we do not have a Bais Hamikdash, we contribute tzedakah, charity, in lieu of certain sacrifices. Hence, just as in ancient times a wealthy man could not absolve himself with a korban reserved for a poor man, so, too, a wealthy man may not acquit himself with the tzedakah that a poor man would normally give. One must give in consonance with what one has. To give based upon the financial status of one who has much less than he does, would be gross chutzpah.

Interestingly, the Chafetz Chaim writes that one can make the same remark concerning two different people, and, in one instance, it is considered innocuous, while in the other case, it constitutes a violation of lashon hora, slanderous speech. For example, if one were to comment that an individual who is involved in commerce spends four hours a day learning Torah, this would be considered exemplary. If the individual had made the same remark concerning a kollel fellow whose vocation in life is to study Torah all day, it would constitute a lashon hora violation.

In his commentary on Chumash, Horav Avraham Pam, zl, anthologized by Rabbi Sholom Smith, says this same idea applies to tzedakah. To report that a wealthy man who is capable of contributing on a grand scale gave a donation worthy of a poor man violates the laws of lashon hora. It is not how much one gives that is conclusive, as much as the donation's consistency with the benefactor's ability to give. If one gives less than he is able to give, this remark would be far from complimentary.

What about a poor man who squeezes out every penny that he possesses in order to bring a korban fit for a wealthy man? Has he fulfilled his obligation? One would think that he has. The Sefer HaChinuch (123) cited by Rav Pam disagrees, explaining that since Hashem has taken pity on the poor man and has permitted him to satisfy his obligation with a tenth-eiphah of flour, it is improper for him to overextend himself by bringing more than he can afford. Rav Pam explains that a person must learn to live within his means. When one spends more than he can afford, he flirts with disaster. Eventually, he will be compelled to satisfy his desire for spending by doing something illegal. One who habitually seeks more than he can sustain has a habit that will most likely destroy him.

Rav Pam feels that the Sefer HaChinuch's remarks--written in a different time and addressed to a different generation-- still carry tremendous weight today. We should underscore their relevance for contemporary society. American Jews have enjoyed a sense of prosperity and standard of living unlike any generation preceding us. There are many wealthy Jews who live a lifestyle which sixty years ago was but a distant dream. Yet, by contrast, many Jews are poverty-stricken or hardly able to make ends meet. Their dire circumstances are compounded by their neighbors and friends who have "made it." Sadly, envy is alive and well in the Jewish community. People go out of their way to go into debt, so that they can keep up with others. They purchase luxuries they do not need, for which they remain in debt for years to come. Many of us know firsthand the overwhelming stress placed upon us by financial insecurity. Yet, we continue to overextend ourselves, with no regard to the dire consequences. The Korban Oleh V'Yoraid teaches us an important lesson: live within your means. Do not spend your hard-earned money on foolishness or trivial items that will not enhance the tranquility of your life. Spend within your means and spend on those items that make a difference in the quality of your life.

Va'ani Tefillah Glory and majesty are before Him, might and splendor are in His place.

The Malbim defines hod as the intrinsic glory, which is the true essence of Hashem. Hadar is the external majesty, which is visible to the observer. The Chafetz Chaim, zl, cites the Zohar Hakadosh who writes that when a person does a mitzvah, the action merits for him Gan Eden l'matah, below, in which he enjoys pleasures which are of a physical nature. For the appropriate machshavah, thoughts, devotion and intention connected with the act of carrying out the mitzvah, he receives Gan Eden l'malah, above, which is like the machshavah, a spiritual form of pleasure. Therefore, explains the Chafetz Chaim, those who merit pleasure in the Gan Eden of above will enjoy hod v'hadar, the light that shines from Hashem's Presence. Those, however, who are privileged only to share in the Gan Eden of below will enjoy the might and splendor that is in His Place. They do not get into the close proximity of lefanav, before Him.

The Kedushas Levi notes that the word hadar in Aramaic-Hebrew means to return. Thus, he interprets the pasuk in the following manner: Hashem is generous in bestowing vitality and hod, glory, upon all of His creatures. In gratitude, all of His creations reciprocate and praise Him, reflecting glory back to Him. The glory which they reciprocate is called hadar. This is the glory that comes from lefanav, before Him - the glory which we return to Hashem.

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