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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYIKRA - 5773

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subject: **Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum - Parshas Vayikra**

PARSHAS VAYIKRA He called to Moshe. (1:1) The Baal HaTurim notes that, in this verse, the summons to Moshe, Vayikra is spelled with a diminutive aleph. From afar, it appears as vayikar, not Vayikra. In his great humility, Moshe Rabbeinu wanted to describe the way in which Hashem appeared to him in much the same manner as He appeared to Bilaam. G-d's prophecy to Bilaam is introduced as vayikar, without the aleph. This word connotes chance and spiritual contamination. Hashem, however, instructed Moshe not to ignore the aleph. Our quintessential leader had great difficulty accepting this. He acquiesced, of course, and wrote the aleph - but in miniature. The Kli Yakar adds, "The aleph of Vayikra is written in miniature. The word aleph is related to Torah study as we find V'aalfa chochmah, 'And I will teach you wisdom'" (Iyov 33:33). This alludes to the notion that, in order for one's Torah study to endure, he must belittle himself. Humility is the key to "growth" in Torah. Arrogance is antithetical to Torah study.

In a drashah, homiletic rendering, of the prayer V'eienu meiros ka'shemesh v'cha'yareich, "And our eyes are as brilliant as the sun and the moon" (Tefillas Shabbos, Nishmas), the Bover Rebbe, zl, the Kedushas Tzion, asks a practical question. If we are blessed to have our

eyes illuminated by the sun, whose brilliance is the actual source of the moon's light, why would we need the light of the moon? He explains that einenu, our eyes, is not a reference to our personal ability to see, but rather to the einai ha'eidah, the "eyes of the congregation," the gedolei Yisrael, Torah leaders. These visionaries of our People have penetrating insight and vision which extend beyond the normal capabilities of the average person. We express that although these illuminaries shine like the sun, they nonetheless personally consider themselves to be like the moon. They downplay and even negate their own brilliance, so great is their humility. Just as the moon receives its ability to illuminate from the sun, so, too, do the Torah leaders of each generation feel that their ability to shine is the direct result of the merit and virtue of their generation.

Indeed, the Brisker Rav, zl, found support for the humble demeanor manifest by Torah giants from a verse at the end of Megillas Esther. The Megillah cites Mordechai's acceptance by all Jews, his distinction in the eyes of all people, Ki Mordechai haYehudi mishneh lamelech... "For Mordechai HaYehudi was (appointed as) second to the king..." v'doveir shalom l'chol zaro, "And he would speak peacefully to all of (Hashem's) offspring" (Megillas Esther). The Brisker Rav added a new "flavor" to the interpretation of this pasuk, "Despite the fact that Mordechai had quickly risen to the exalted and available position of mishneh lamelech, this did not deter him from acknowledging his brethren." He did not become aloof, ignoring the "guy on the street," the amcha, simple Jew, who could not aspire to such distinction.

Yes, it does happen. An individual achieves a position of power. He either rises through the ranks or is simply in the right place at the right time. He is catapulted over his friends and colleagues to a position of significance. Suddenly, he no longer "remembers" who his friends "were." Not so Mordechai. He always remembered his roots; he never ignored his brethren. Perhaps this is why he is called HaYehudi. He never considered himself special. He was just "another Jew."

Horav Sholom, zl, m'Sassov was once questioned concerning why the position of the baal gaavah, arrogant person, is denigrated more so than any other baal aveirah, sinner. Indeed, it is only concerning the baal gaavah that Hashem declares, Ein Ani v'hu yecholim la'dur b'kefifah achas, "I and he are unable to live together in one domain." Hashem distances Himself from he who is arrogant. We do not find this concerning any other type of sinner.

The Rebbe explained that, wherever there is purity and righteousness, no semblance of spiritual contamination or evil can be found; they just do not mix together. Evil and impurity are aware of their places. They are just too "uncomfortable" in the proximity of holiness. Gaavah, arrogance, does not have this "restriction." It attaches itself to anyone, under any condition. The only way to prevent this vile character trait from infesting a person, from worming itself into the most sublime, the most virtuous, is by decree that it is a persona non grata. Arrogance has no place in the proximity of G-dliness.

In describing the requirements for the Parah Adumah, Red Heifer, the Torah (Bamidbar 19:2) writes: Asher ein bah mum, asher lo alah alehah ol, "Which is without blemish, and upon which a yoke has not come." The Koznitzer Maggid, zl, interprets this homiletically as a reference to the moral and spiritual deficiency associated with gaavah. For a man who arrogates himself, saying that "he has no blemish," he is perfect, it is a clear sign that "Upon (him) a yoke has not come." The yoke of Torah does not prevail upon this individual. Otherwise, he would never claim to be unblemished. This idea is consistent with a statement made by the Chovas Halevavos: "A person who is free of all sin is at risk of the greatest character defect: to consider himself a tzaddik, righteous person."

Actually, this is not the first instance in the Torah in which we find Hashem calling Moshe. In Parshas Yisro (Shemos 19:3,20), the Torah writes Vayikra eilav Hashem min ha'har, "Hashem called to him (Moshe) from the mountain"; Vayikra Hashem l'Moshe el rosh ha'har, "Hashem

summoned Moshe to the top of the mountain." Why does the Torah not write the miniature aleph in these earlier places? Horav Yitzchak, zl, m'Vorka explains that, in order to be humble, one must act with modesty in private. Public humility is subtle arrogance. When Moshe was summoned to the mountain, it was in the presence of the entire Jewish nation. It was no secret. It would then be no kuntz, trick, to be humble. The true test of Moshe's humility is in our parsha, at the point when he was called to the Ohel Moed. Rashi writes, "The sound of Hashem's voice was powerful. Yet no one other than Moshe heard it." For Moshe to conceal this awesome summons was a test of true humility.

The blood of the Korban Olas Nedavah, Free-Will-offering from an animal is sprinkled on the lower half of the Mizbayach, Altar. The blood of a Korban Chatas, Sin-offering, is sprinkled on the top of the Mizbayach. The process changes obversely when the offering is a fowl offered by a poor man. The blood of the Olas Nedavah is sprinkled on top of the Mizbayach, while the Chatas is on the bottom. Why?

Horav Meir Shapiro, zl, offers a practical explanation. A wealthy person who brings a Korban feels good about himself. He can afford the best, and he demonstrates his fiscal ability. The Torah has a problem with such deep-rooted arrogance/ pride being part of a korban. Therefore, the blood of this animal is sprinkled on the bottom of the Mizbayach. This curbs some of the man's haughtiness. When this man brings a Sin-offering, however, he is already depressed. The sin has knocked him down a tad, as he is now filled with humility and remorse. In order not to add insult to injury, the Torah has him sprinkle blood on top of the Mizbayach.

A poor man cannot afford to bring an animal as a korban. If he could afford a cow, he would have it for dinner. Instead, he scrapes together his meager earnings, the leftovers of his begging, and he purchases a small bird as a korban. He wants to thank Hashem for His benevolence. Regrettably, this is all he can afford. The Almighty accepts his offering with love, and, as a caveat, has him sprinkle the blood on top of the Mizbayach. When the poor man comes to the Altar with a Sin-offering, it is an entirely different story. Since this offering is obligatory, he sprinkles the blood on the bottom of the Mizbayach. It is all about humility and one's emotions. Hashem exalts he who denigrates himself. One need not be brilliant to complete the other half of the hypothesis.

In his later years, the Steipler Gaon, Horav Yaakov Yisrael Kanievsky, zl, would give his annual shiur, lecture, in memory of his brother-in-law, the Chazon Ish, to an assembly of thousands of Jews. To observe this scene was to experience an incredible Kiddush Hashem, sanctification of Hashem's Name. One evening, following a shiur that had seen an unusually large crowd, the Steipler, in his great humility, said, "It is only because the shiur is given only once a year that I have such a large crowd. If I were to give this lecture on a weekly basis, I would be lucky to have a minyan to say Kaddish D'Rabbanan," the Rabbinical Kaddish recited following public Torah study.

One Purim, an especially large contingent of young children were brought by their parents to the Steipler to receive his brachah. The Steipler commented, "The large crowd is the result of their day off from cheder. Children are home, and the mothers have to occupy them with something to do. The easiest avenue is to bring them to an old man for a blessing." This reflected the humility of the gadol hador.

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

In the Talmud Chullin 60a, Chazal teach that the bull offered by Adam HaRishon as a korban, sacrifice, was quite unique. Its horns appeared before its hooves. They derive this from the pasuk in Tehillim 69:32, V'sitav l'Hashem mishor par makrin mafris, "It shall be more pleasing than a yearling bull with horns, with hooves." Apparently, the primordial bull, first shor to be created, was fashioned fully grown from the earth, with it rising from the earth the way it stands. Thus, its horns materialized prior to its hooves. Indeed, as the Talmud continues, Rabbi

Yehoshua ben Levi said, "All of the works of Creation were created in their full stature, with their consent, and according to their wish." Therefore, the bull was created standing straight up. When it emerged from the earth, its horns preceded its hooves, then its body emerged, with its legs and hooves being the last component of the bull to emerge.

Every bull that followed was born with its hooves first and its horns growing in later. The primordial bull was the only bull whose horns were created before its hooves. This is the meaning of the term makrin mafris - its horns (makrin) preceded its hooves (mafris).

Makriv mafris is an unusual term. The perasos, hooves, carry great significance vis-?-vis the bull, due to the fact that they comprise one of the signs of a kosher animal. A kosher animal must have split hooves. We, therefore, understand why the Torah places great focus on the animal's hooves. What about the horn carries such significance that the Torah not only mentions the fact that the primordial bull had horns, but that it preceded the hooves?

Horav Yaakov Kamenetzky, zl, elucidates this anomaly, explaining why emphasis is made on the unusual creation of the primordial bull. Cattle go through life serving mankind, and they do so with just about every fiber of their body, except their horns. They shlep/pull a wagon and a plow; they breed; their females are our source for milk. When they die through the medium of ritual slaughter, their bodies become the source for our meat. None of these benefits, however, are connected with the animal's horns.

The Rosh Yeshivah notes that, while the horns do not serve us, they do, however, serve the animal. They enhance its power and beauty. A bull is resplendent with its horns; it lends it "dignity." B'chor shoro hadar lo, v'karnei re'eim karnav, "His firstborn bull is his grandeur, and its horns are like the horns of a re'eim" (Devarim 33:17). Since the horns do not benefit mankind, why is it necessary for the Torah to state that they were a part of the korban of Adam HaRishon?

Rav Yaakov explains that horns give the animal a sense of power, a feeling of pride and glory, an appearance of grandeur. They grant it the ability to attack or defend itself if the need arises. It is this aspect: the pride that we offer upon the Mizbayach as part of a Korban Olah, Elevation/Burnt-offering. With the use of the word Adam, invoking the name of Adam HaRishon, Adam ki yakriv mikem korban l'Hashem, the Torah recalls the first sacrifice offered by the progenitor of mankind. It was the only animal of its kind - ever, for it was the only animal whose horns appeared prior to its hooves. This alludes to glory and pride preceding usefulness. As it was slaughtered as part of the Divine service, every individual who offers a korban is aware, understands, and demonstrates that he, too, is prepared to sacrifice his gaavah, pride, for the Almighty.

He shall offer an unblemished male; he shall bring it to the entrance of the Ohel Moed, voluntarily. (1:3)

The Midrash relates the story of a recalcitrant ox whose owner wanted to bring it as a korban. The ox, however, refused the honor. No matter how many people the owner sent to move the ox, they were unsuccessful. The ox was not budging. A poor man came along and noticed the owner's predicament. He walked over to the ox and produced a single blade of grass from his pocket. He waved the blade of grass in front of the ox's nose, causing the ox to give a mighty sneeze. As the ox sneezed, it coughed up a needle that had been lodged in its throat. Once the needle was out, the ox went along obediently to be slaughtered in the Bais Hamikdash. Had the ox not expelled the needle, such that had he been slaughtered in its present state, the korban would have been invalidated, since a needle in the esophagus renders an ox treifah, unkosher. The korban was saved by the "sneeze."

There is, however, more to it. The Midrash Shmuel employs this story to interpret the above pasuk, Tamim yakrivenu, "Complete and perfect it should be offered." If one wants to be assured that his korban will not be

blemished, yakriv oso lirtzono, "He should offer it with the animal's free will." When one observes an animal willingly proceeding to the Mizbayach, Altar, it is an indication that it is kosher. An unkosher animal would not willingly advance to the Mizbayach. In his Chinuch Malchusi, Horav Mordechai Hominer writes that a similar approach will prove effective in successfully educating our children. To educate a child, one must do so in conjunction with the child's free will. To force-feed a child academically will only cause the child to regurgitate its lessons. An educator's function is to coax the child, to encourage and empower him, while he removes the obstacles that stunt his ability to learn. He does not force the child. Otherwise, one might produce a child that is a treifah, a wounded child, who has no desire to learn Torah, and, often, even less desire to remain frum, observant.

I must add that it is not necessarily what one says, but how one expresses himself. Attitude, emotion and sincerity play crucial roles. The quintessential teacher, the individual who is probably most responsible for making Torah-She'bKsav, Written, and She'Baal'Peh, Oral Law, available to generations of Jews is Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki or - as he is popularly known - Rashi. Our great teacher was obviously born with incredible potential, but his mother's self-sacrifice encouraged and empowered his vast erudition. She did not coddle her only son. A single parent, she raised Rashi with a deep reverence for Torah.

Rashi was orphaned of his father at a young age. His mother was all alone in the world. Thus, she could easily have demanded that her prodigious child remain home with her until he was age-ready to enter the family business. One does not become Rashi, however, with a mother like that. She sent him to Worms, Germany, to the yeshivah of the gadol hador, the pre-eminent Torah leader of the time, Rabbi Yaakov ben Yakir. What she told him as she sent him off should inspire us; "My son, you are going off to study in the yeshivah of the gadol hador. If you do not return from there an accomplished Torah scholar, replete in your thorough knowledge of the Torah - I will not be happy to see you!"

Such a statement might ruffle the sensitivities of some contemporary Jewish mothers - and fathers. I guess Rashi's mother knew what she was doing. She knew her son's unusual capabilities. These words were engraved in the heart of the young scholar-to-be. His commentary, as well as the teachings of his distinguished grandsons, the early Tosafists, are the result of this admonition. All this came about in the merit of a Jewish mother who did not fear telling her young son that she demanded excellence in return for her sacrifice.

We often sugar coat an incident, mollify an experience, in order to present it in a more appealing manner. While, at times, this may be necessary, it can backfire and destroy an exceptional inspirational occurrence. A young boy's world is pure and pristine. He has no 'shtick' in his perception of an incident. He sees black and white, and he reacts accordingly. At times such as these, it might be best to allow for the child to perceive the experience according to what he sees - without us attempting to soothe the situation. The following incident is a prime example. A young man was davening in shul with his four-year-old son standing next to him... watching. Suddenly, the father became so overwhelmed by the meaning of the words he was reading that he began to weep. The quiet sobs became loud crying, as a torrent of tears began to roll down his cheeks onto the table where he was hunched over. What does a four-year-old boy do when he sees his father weeping bitterly? He also begins to cry. Now there were two people weeping bitterly - a father and his son.

A man observed what was taking place. As a "good neighbor," he was not minding his own business, so he attempted to convince the boy that his father was not crying for any serious reason. He had just been overcome with emotion. One does not have to cry during davening. This individual meant well, and he soothed the child's fears. Nothing was wrong. The boy's father got a little "carried away" during davening. Think nothing of it. He was not crying as a result of the davening. No

emotion is to be connected to prayer. His father was just overtired and overreacting. While this worked for the child, the kindly man, who truly meant no harm, just blew the opportunity for a once in a lifetime inspirational lesson: Yes, people do cry when they daven! That is what tefillah is all about. One speaks with Hashem, and when he really gets into it, he expresses his emotions. Regrettably, it was too late for the child. The experience and its positive vibes vanished.

In memory of our beloved parents Rabbi Dr. Avrohom Yitzchok Wolf Rebbetzin Anna Moses Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family Ari and Rivky Wolf and Family Abba and Sarah Spero and Family Pesach and Esther Ostroy and Family Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family

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The Gates of Prayer

And God called to Moses...(Vayikra 1:1) Rosh in his commentary to the Torah explains that the aleph in the word vayikra, with which the third book of Torah begins, is reduced in size to reflect the humility of Moshe Rabbeinu. Remaining to be understood is why this hint to Moshe's humility is placed specifically at the beginning of Sefer Vayikra.

Vayikra opens with the numerous and complex laws concerning the Temple sacrifices. With the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, prayer - avodah (service) of the heart - replaced the avodah of the sacrifices. Yet in the Gemara (Berachos 32b) we are informed that from the time the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, the gates of prayer were also locked. But the gates of tears were not locked. Rashi explains that the gates of tears refers to another type of prayer - prayer with tears.

Thus we learn that there are two distinct types of prayer - prayer with tears and prayer without tears. Let us examine these two types of tefillah.

Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin in Nefesh HaChaim, describes how Hashem created the world with an intricate system of spiritual powers, through which God's bounty and influence is brought into the physical world. This system is activated by Torah learning, mitzvos and tefillah. God put us into this physical world so that we could earn the ultimate spiritual reward which He desires to bestow upon us - an intimate relationship with Him. We do not simply earn this reward. Rather we create that relationship through our actions in this world. By learning Torah, doing mitzvos and davening, we furnish the energy to activate the framework through which God relates to this world.

It is in this context that the Gemara says in Berachos (7a) that Hashem prays. Rashbah explains that Hashem's desire is to bestow His Divine benevolence upon us. But He has decreed that we must initiate this relationship. It is as if He prays for us to do our part so that He can fulfill His true desires. When we daven to 'Give power to Hashem', it is this to which we refer. By fulfilling the conditions He has set, we give, as it were, the power to Hashem to shower His bounty upon us.

Berachah, the Rashbah continues, refers to something which increases, enhances and intensifies. (A breichah, for instance, is a stream in which the flow of water is constantly increasing and intensifying). Our berachah is a means to open up the conduits of Hashem's good to the world by entering into a relationship with Him. When one makes a berachah before he eats, he activates those spiritual realms through which God provides food and opens wider the conduits of God's bounty. He thereby replenishes that which he is eating. On the other hand, one who does not make a berachah is like a thief, for he does not compensate for what he removes from the world (Berachos 35a).

Rabbi Yosef Leib Bloch in Shiurei Da'as on the korbanos (sacrifices) shows how the sacrifices served to unite and elevate all mundane powers towards the service of Hashem and thereby activated the system God

created to bring the world to fulfillment of His purpose. Maharal adds that the greatest power to activate the spiritual realms emanated from the Beis Hamikdash and with its destruction those specific gates were locked. (One can still penetrate even locked gates but only with great effort and difficulty.)

There is, however, another type of tefillah that was not affected by the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash, the passive tefillah of tears and submission. In this context, berachah has a totally different connotation. The Jew stands before God and bends his knee and says: "Baruch - You, God, are the source of all blessing and without You I don't even have a leg to stand on. I bend my knees in recognition of this, Atah - It is you, God, and not I, who can provide for my very existence and for my most basic needs." At the beginning of Shemoneh Esrei, which replaced the temple sacrifices, the Jew bows his body in total subjugation and submission as he proclaims these words. But once he recognizes this fact and submits himself into God's hands and calls upon His name - Hashem - then he can stand erect knowing that Hashem is his support. This is the tefillah of tears, a passive, yet very potent power.

All of tefillah expresses this idea: "Heal us God and we will be healed." is not only an entreaty but also a statement of dependence and submission. Even when the sacrifices were still brought and were offered with the intention of affecting the celestial realms and opening the conduits of Hashem's blessing, this attitude of complete submission was still part of the offering. Both Ramban and Sefer Hahinuch explain that one must identify with the animal being slaughtered as an act of self-negation and submission to God.

R' Simchah Bunim of Pshischa, said that even though the gates of tears remain open, nevertheless gates are necessary to prevent improper tears from entering. The tefillah of tears must be composed of tears of hope, trust and faith that God will help, not tears of depression, dejection or despair.

Sefer Vayikra, which details the sacrifices of the Bais Hamikdash, begins with a hint to Moshe's humility because all avodah - whether avodah of the heart or that of the sacrifices - requires self-negation and submission. It requires, even in its active form, a realization that ultimately all emanates from God and all that we do is, in the final analysis, only an expression of submission to God's will. For this one needs humility. Hence, the small aleph - both a sign of humility and the letter which represents God's oneness and unity. It is with this word: Vayikra, with its small aleph, that God calls to man to serve Him both actively and passively, to bring the world to its completion.

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Parshas Vayikra Pesach 2013: Frequently Asked Questions
Question: When it comes to non-edible items such as toiletries, cosmetics and medications, which items must be chametz free and which items do not?

Discussion: Some families have the tradition not to use on Pesach any item which may contain any chametz or chametz derivative. Those families should continue following their hallowed and praiseworthy tradition. The answer below is directed towards those families who do not have such a custom and are looking to follow the basic halachah:

Medications: Coated tablets, flavored medications, pleasant tasting cough syrups and all chewable medications need to be researched to see if they contain any chametz or chametz derivative. All other medications are permitted to be used regardless of the content. [Oral medications containing kitniyos should only be used for someone who is ill, not someone who is merely suffering from a minor discomfort. If you are unsure of your status, clarify it with a Rav.] Vitamins are generally not considered medications, and should not be used unless they are chametz-free. It goes without saying that no medications should be discontinued without prior consultation with a Rav and a doctor.

Toiletries and Cosmetics: Deodorants, hair sprays, colognes, perfumes, shaving lotions and all items which contain denatured alcohol should be avoided. Toothpaste and mouthwash should not be used unless it is verified that they contain no chametz. All other products, such as soaps, shampoos, creams, powders, stick and gel deodorants, lotions, blush, eye shadow, eye liner, mascara and nail polish, may be used regardless of their content. Question: May I kosher my microwave for Pesach use?

Discussion: It is not recommended that you do so. If you absolutely must use a microwave on Pesach, we suggest you buy a new one for Pesach and keep it for Pesach use for future years. Question: How do I kosher my countertops for Pesach?

Discussion: There are many different types of countertops available today, and how to kosher them would depend on which type of countertop you have: Group 1) Stone countertops (marble, limestone, granite, soapstone, slate, onyx) may be koshered by thoroughly cleaning them, waiting 24 hours and then pouring boiling water over them. Group 2) Glass, cement (Buddy Rhodes, Cheng Design), porcelain or ceramic countertops may not be koshered; they must be covered with a non-porous material which will not easily rip or tear. Group 3) Butcher block or wood surfaces countertops (John Boos, Spekva, Omega) may be koshered by the hot water method, but only if they contain no cracks that may have trapped chametz; otherwise they must be covered. Group 4) Countertops made out of synthetic materials or plastics (Formica, acrylic, Corian, Avonite) are debatable; some poskim permit them to be koshered via the hot water method provided they are not scratched or stained and cleaned re al well, while others maintain that these material may not be koshered and cannot be used unless they are covered.

Question: Is it permitted to get a haircut or do laundry on erev Pesach after midday (chatzos)?

Discussion: It is forbidden to do melachah, "work," even if it is needed for Yom Tov, on erev Pesach after chatzos. Two basic reasons are given for this rabbinic prohibition: 1) When the Beis ha-Mikdash stood, erev Pesach was considered a Yom Tov, since the Korban Pesach was brought on that day. It retains the status of Yom Tov today even though the Korban Pesach is no longer offered. 2) To give everyone a chance to properly prepare for the Seder.

Certain forms of personal grooming and certain households chores that are halachically classified as "work" are forbidden to be done on erev Pesach after chatzos. Thus it is forbidden to get a haircut or a shave, to sew new clothing or to do laundry on erev Pesach after chatzos. One must arrange his schedule so that these tasks are completed before midday. L'chatchilah, one should even cut his nails before chatzos.

If, b'diavad, one could not or did not take care of these matters before midday, some of them may still be done while others may not: sewing or completing the sewing of new clothes may not be done at all; a haircut and shave may be taken only at a non-Jewish barber; laundry may be done only by a non-Jewish maid or dry cleaner. Other chores, such as ironing clothes, polishing shoes, cutting nails, sewing buttons and other minor mending, may be done with no restrictions.

Question: What type of chicken or meat may I serve on Seder night?

Discussion: When the Beis ha-Mikdash was standing, the only roasted meat permitted to be eaten on the Seder night was the meat of the Korban Pesach. Nowadays, although the Beis ha-Mikdash is no longer

standing and we no longer eat the Korban Pesach, we still do not eat any roasted meat on the two Seder nights.

“Meat” includes meat from any animal which requires shechitah (ritual slaughter), including chicken and turkey. Roasted fish, however, is permitted. “Roasted” includes any type of roasting, including pot roast. (Pot roast refers to meat or chicken which is roasted in a pot or pan in its own juice, without adding any water or other liquids.) Even if the item was cooked first and then roasted it is forbidden. But if it was roasted and then cooked it is permitted according to most poskim. A minority opinion forbids that as well. Fried, barbecued, broiled over an open fire or smoked meat is considered like roasted meat and is forbidden. Liver, which is broiled, is not eaten on the Seder night. Deep fried, however, is considered like cooked and is permitted.

Based on the above, it is important to remember that at the Seder, it is forbidden to eat the zeroa which is placed on the Seder Plate. But it is permitted to eat the zeroa during the daytime meal. In any case, the zeroa should not be discarded, as it is considered a bizyaon mitzvah to do so, and one should make sure that it is eaten at an appropriate time.

Question: At many Seders the recital of the Hagadah takes a long time. Is it permitted to drink during that time?

Discussion: When necessary, it is permitted to drink water or soda between the first and second cups. A shehakol is recited over the water, unless the water was on the table during Kiddush, or if one intended during Kiddush to drink water or soda during the recital of the Hagadah.

Coffee, tea, milk, or pure fruit juices may also, when necessary, be drunk between the first and second cups, but only if they will not require their own berachah. In order for them to be covered by the ha-gafen recited over the first cup, they would have to have been on the table during Kiddush or one would have had to intend to drink them while reciting Kiddush. Since these beverages are considered chamar medinah, reciting a separate berachah and drinking them would make it appear as if one is adding an additional cup to the four prescribed ones.

Wine and other intoxicating beverages should be completely avoided between the drinking of the first two cups. It is permitted, however to drink wine and all other beverages after the second cup is drunk and throughout Shulchan Orech when the meal is served.

Question In the first day of Yom Tov, is it permitted to take food out of the freezer so that it will be defrosted come night time?

Discussion: It is forbidden to prepare food (or any other need) on the first day of Yom Tov for the second day of Yom Tov - hachanah. Thus one may not cook or warm any food on the first day of Yom Tov if it is being prepared to be eaten on the second day. Some poskim maintain that removing food from the freezer is considered a significant act which would be classified as “preparation” and is therefore forbidden. Other poskim, however, argue that merely removing food out of the freezer is not a significant enough act to be considered hachanah, and is therefore permitted. L’chatchilah, therefore, one should plan her meals in a way where she would not need to defrost food on the first day to the next. Under extenuating circumstances, or if one failed to plan and now finds herself unable to serve the Yom Tov properly, she may rely on the lenient opinions. The defrosting should take place as early in the day as possible, thus giving the impression that the food may be eaten on the first day of Yom Tov.

The Vaad Harabbonim wishes the entire community a happy and inspiring Yom Tov!

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http://ohr.edu/this_week/parsha_q_and_a/

PARSHA Q&A

For the week ending 16 March 2013 / 4 Nisan 5773

Parshat Vayikra

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

Who does the word "eilav" in verse 1:1 exclude? 1:1 - Aharon.

Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week's Parsha. 1:2,14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (torim), and doves (bnei yona).

What two types of sin does an olah atone for? 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.

Where was the olah slaughtered? 1:5 - In the Mishkan Courtyard (azarah).

What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-kohen perform? 1:5 - Ritual slaughter.

Besides the fire the kohanim bring on the altar, where else did the fire come from? 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.

At what stage of development are torim (turtledoves) and bnei yona (young pigeons) unfit as offerings? 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, bnei yona are too old and torim are too young.

What is melika? 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one's fingernail.

Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not? 1:16 - An animal's food is provided by its owner, so its innards are "kosher." Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with "theft."

Why does the Torah describe both the animal and bird offerings as a "satisfying aroma"? 1:17 - To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.

Why is the term "nefesh" used regarding the flour offering? 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, G-d regards it as if he had offered his nefesh (soul).

Which part of the free-will mincha offering is burned on the altar? 2:1 - The kometz (fistful).

The Torah forbids bringing honey with the mincha. What is meant by "honey"? 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.

When does the Torah permit bringing a leavened bread offering? 2:12 - On Shavuot.

Concerning shelamim, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately? 3:7 - Because they differ regarding the alya (fat tail). The lamb's alya is burned on the altar but the goat's is not. For most offerings the kohen may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the mizbe'ach.

For which korban may he apply the blood using only his finger? 3:8 - The chatat.

Who is obligated to bring a chatat? 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries the karet (excision) penalty.

Where were the remains of the bull burnt while in the wilderness? Where were they burnt during the time of the Beit Hamikdash? 4:12 - Outside the three camps. Outside Jerusalem.

What two things does a voluntary mincha have that a minchat chatat lacks? 5:11 - Levona and oil.

What is the minimum value of a korban asham? 5:15 - Two shekalim.
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Thanks to hamelaket@gmail.com for collecting the following items:

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
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Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein

In My Opinion :: Rabbi Berel Wein
Common Sense

The problem with common sense is that it is none too common. In fact, one could characterize it as a rare commodity or even as an endangered species. Does not common sense tell us that Shas, United Torah Judaism and Bayit Hayehudi, all of whom proclaim their loyalty to Torah, should form one bloc in order to influence the country and its government? Yet we are witness to terribly vicious and damaging infighting between them that can only weaken their influence and erode the respect for Torah amongst the general population. Bayit Hayehudi needlessly excluded Shas and United Torah Judaism when forming its coalition cabinet. In turn, parts of the Haredi sector publicly declare they will boycott products from the settlements in Judea and Samaria. Europe, are you listening? Is there a greater insanity than this? Self-inflicted wounds go deepest and are the most painful of all blows. Of course Bayit Hayehudi is exacting revenge for the passive attitude (and sometimes active support of the Rabin and Sharon governments) during the debates on the Oslo Accords and later with regard to the destruction of Gush Katif.

Anger against the Haredim may be justified for their past mistakes and policies but common sense should be able to overcome inner anger. Tearing the religious world in Israel asunder will accomplish little for any of the antagonists and nothing positive for the society as a whole. Believing one's own political rhetoric is a sign of the lack of common sense.

Common sense also tells us that sanctions and diplomacy are not likely to deter Iran from pursuing its decades-long goal of possessing nuclear weapons of mass destruction. For over a half century the world has tried to control North Korea in this fashion. As the current situation indicates, these policies have in no way deterred the mad leaders of North Korea from pursuing their risky game of atomic chicken.

Common sense and history, past and recent, has taught us that megalomaniac dictators can never really be appeased. Sooner or later they have to be confronted and usually the sooner is better. Common sense teaches us that there is good and evil, right and wrong, aggressor and victims in the world. Common sense excludes concepts of moral equivalency and the thinking that everybody is okay no matter what. Common sense impels nations and individuals to defend themselves against unwarranted assaults and terror. Common sense prohibits relinquishing the existing tangible assets for intangible promises of the future. Munich and Oslo are pretty good examples of the lack of common sense. Churchill famously said that at Munich, Chamberlain sacrificed honor in order to avoid war - but that he then had both dishonor and war. And so it was.

The reason that common sense is so often ignored is that it usually leaves one with a painful decision to make. Human nature abhors having to make painful decisions. Hence, common sense is relegated to one's subconscious and reappears as regret and attempted repentance. It is interesting to note that Judaism and Jewish tradition placed great emphasis on common sense. The two books of the Bible authored by King Solomon, Kohelet and Mishlei, are books of common sense – with their universal qualities and practical views of life and the world. My teachers in the yeshiva would often refute some ingenious answer that I would come up with to answer a difficult Talmudic conundrum by simply saying that it did not fit the common sense of the subject under discussion.

Basically they taught that if it does not make sense then it is not Torah true. In Judaism, faith and the unknown is balanced by logic and good common sense. Even rigorous scholarship has to be tempered by common sense. In Mishlei, King Solomon's main object of scorn is not so much the sinner – for who does not sin at some point of life – but the fool, the one who lacks common sense.

In King Solomon's view, as expressed in this immortal book, the lack of common sense will inevitably lead to profound error and eventual disaster. No one sets out to make disastrous errors or foolish judgments. Yet if one's thought processes are not distilled through the instinctive common sense that exists within all of us, grave mistakes of judgment will continually plague us. Judaism believes in a collective common sense in society as a whole. "See what the people think" is a common refrain in the Talmud, We should strive to make common sense more common in our daily personal and national life.

Shabat shalom
Shabat shalom

From Destiny Foundation/Rabbi Berel Wein
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Subject Weekly Parsha from Rabbi Berel Wein
Weekly Parsha :: Rabbi Berel Wein
Vayikra

This week's parsha marks another new beginning in our public reading and personal understanding of the Torah. Whereas the first two books of the Torah are mainly narrative in nature and content, the book of Vayikra is mainly a book of laws and commandments and of the nature of purity and impurity, sacrificial offerings and priestly obligations.

Vayikra not only offers us a change of content, it offers a change of tone. It is less personal than were Bereshith and Shemot and it concentrates on the halachic and detailed aspects of Judaism rather than on the broad scope of Jewish national experience. In this way the Torah teaches us that Judaism is an all-encompassing faith, both public and private in nature and observance, general and particular all at one and the same time.

This becomes a large order for the Jewish people to handle and balance properly. We see throughout the works of the prophets of Israel that the people and the priests themselves unduly emphasized the public nature of the commandments. They also emphasized the sacrificial nature of the service of the Temple at the expense of the private and social commandments of the Torah.

We see the strong condemnation in the prophetic words of Yeshayahu and Yirmiyahu, of reliance on the Temple public worship, of the sacrifices and altar-offerings of Israel and the priests, as an assurance of Godly favor and national salvation. The absence of the private nature of Torah service, without the observance of the detailed personal commandments and the emotional connection to God and sensitivity to others that only the private side of Judaism can convey, led to the destruction of the Temples - no matter how grand and generous the

public offerings of the Temples were.

When the Jewish people were forced into their long exile, when public Temple services were no longer possible, much of the contents of the book of Vayikra apparently were no longer particularly relevant to daily Jewish life. Our faith and our national preservation then lay almost exclusively in observance of the private commandments of the Torah and in the study of Torah itself.

Without a land of our own and with no central temporal power base, Jews turned inward to connect with their past and their Creator. The entire nature of defining purity and impurity atrophied in Jewish life and education, and the Temples and their glory became a distant point in a clouded memory of Jewish nationhood.

The public nature of the Book of Vayikra faded into being only historical recall. This was due to the length and bitterness of the millennia-long exile. But the Jewish people in our time has miraculously rebuilt itself and regained a national power and its ancient homeland. The debate over the relevance of the book of Vayikra has returned to the fore.

The Temple has become a living force once more in Jewish life and scholarship – especially in certain yeshivot devoted to the study of its laws and commandments. This is happening even though practically there is, as of yet, no physical Temple existing on Mount Moriah. Nevertheless, the book of Vayikra now speaks to us in a way that it has not done for many centuries. Let us concentrate on understanding its contents and absorbing its tone into our inner selves.
Shabat shalom

From Ohr Somayach <ohr@ohr.edu>

To weekly@ohr.edu

Subject Torah Weekly

Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Vayikra

For the week ending 16 March 2013 / 4 Nisan 5773

by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com

Insights

The Biggest Bar-B-Q In The World

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

Imagine you're an alien traveler flying over Jerusalem some two and a half thousand years ago.

Your intergalactic GPS detects a beautiful building coming up on the horizon. Opening your "Earth on five dollars-a-day", you read about what you're seeing. "The Beit Hamikdash is the most spiritual place on earth." Something doesn't seem quite accurate about this description because everywhere you aim your scanner all you can see are very physical things.

For a start, animals are being slaughtered, dissected and burned on what looks like the world's biggest bar-b-q. Wine is being poured down two holes on top of a square monolith on which the meat is being burned. Nearby, bread is being baked. Oil is being mixed with flour and fried in open pans. There are animals in pens, along with birds. Everywhere there are all kinds of cooking utensils. Men are washing their hands and feet. There is a column of black smoke rising perpendicularly into the sky. This is spirituality?

You make a mental note to write to the editors of "Earth on five-dollars-a-day" that their description of this tourist spot is way off the mark. Our intergalactic traveler could be forgiven for mistaking what he saw, for indeed the Beit Hamikdash ostensibly was a very physical place. Our fearless voyager, however, failed to notice a key item in the Beit Hamikdash — the Aron, the Holy Ark. Inside the Ark was the Torah. It was only through the Holy Torah that the Divine Presence rested on the Beit Hamikdash and turned the most physical of places into the most spiritual.

The Beit Hamikdash is a microcosm of the Universe, and a macrocosm of the body of a human. If you look at a person he seems to be a very

physical thing. He consists of sinew and flesh, fluids and membrane. And yet, he is so much more.

Just as the Torah caused the Divine Presence to rest on the Beit Hamikdash and the Mishkan, so similarly the Torah turns flesh and blood into a dwelling place for the Most High.

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http://www.ou.org/torah/author/Rabbi_Dr_Tzvi_Hersh_Weinreb

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

Orthodox Union / www.ou.org

Rabbi Weinreb's Parsha Column, Parshat Vayikra

"Forgiving Fallibility"

"I was wrong. I am sorry. Please forgive me."

These are rare words indeed, but I heard them pronounced clearly by a woman I once worked for, and whom I still admire.

She was the superintendent of a small school district just outside of Washington, DC. Several of the school districts in that geographical area were under a federal court order to guarantee desegregation of the races in the public schools. Believe it or not, the court found that even as late as the early 1970s, proper integration of the races was still not achieved in many of these schools.

The superintendent, whom I will call Dr. Cassidy, had selected a group of school system employees to serve as part of a specially trained team to deal with the tensions in the community that were caused by the implementation of this court order.

I was then working as a school psychologist in this school district, and was one of those chosen to serve on this team. We had spent several weeks training for this sensitive human relations project. She had initially assured us that federal funding for our salaries was guaranteed, and that we could be confident that our jobs were secure once certain formalities were finalized.

One Monday morning we were summoned to an urgent meeting. She informed us that the funds were not available, and that we would be denied not only our future salaries, but even remuneration for the time we had already spent. It was then that she uttered the words, "I was wrong. Please forgive me."

I have subsequently witnessed many situations in which a leader made a terrible mistake impacting upon the lives of others. But, almost invariably, those leaders shirked responsibility, blamed others, or concocted ludicrous excuses for their failures. Very few had Dr. Cassidy's courage.

This week's Torah portion, Vayikra (Leviticus 1:1-5:26), describes an individual who demonstrated just such courage, and who indeed was expected to do so.

Chapter 4 of our Torah portion lists a number of individuals who occupied special roles in the ancient Jewish community. They included the High Priest; the judges of the central court or Sanhedrin; and the Nasi, or chieftain. Of the latter we read:

"In case it is a chieftain who incurs guilt by doing unwittingly any of the things which by the commandment of the Lord his God ought not to be done, and he realizes his guilt... He shall bring as his sin offering a male goat without blemish... Thus the priest shall make expiation on his behalf for his sin, and he shall be forgiven." (Leviticus 4:22-26)

The Hebrew for the first phrase in the above quotation, "in case", is "asher". Rashi notes the similarity between the word "asher" and the word "ashrei", or "fortunate". Based on that similarity he comments: "Fortunate is the generation whose leader is concerned about achieving forgiveness for his unintentional transgressions. How much more so will he demonstrate remorse for his intentional misdeeds."

Fortunate indeed is the community which is blessed with leadership

which can acknowledge error unambiguously. Even more fortunate is the community whose leaders ask for forgiveness.

Our commentators note that it is to be expected that leaders will commit moral errors. Rabbi Obadiah Sforno, the medieval Italian physician and Torah scholar, comments that it is unavoidable that men in positions of power will sin. He quotes the phrase in Deuteronomy 32:15 which reads, "Jeshurun grew fat and kicked", indicating that when one becomes "fat" with power he will "kick" sinfully. How similar is this insight to Lord Acton's famous quote: "Power corrupts. Absolute power corrupts absolutely."

If the Torah assumes that misdeeds by leaders are unavoidable, it also expects that those leaders will humbly acknowledge their misdeeds and beg forgiveness for them. That is the lesson of the passage in our Torah portion.

However, the process cannot end with the leader's apologies. His followers must accept his sincere regret, and, much more difficult, must bring themselves to forgive him. In the passage in our Parsha it would seem that it is the Almighty who forgives a leader, and not necessarily the people.

My personal experience has taught me that just as it is difficult for people, especially those in power, to confess their shortcomings and to appeal for forgiveness, so is it all the more difficult for people to grant forgiveness to those who have offended them.

Yet, our sages point out that the Almighty wants us to be as forgiving as He is. Thus, there is a verse in the book of the prophet Micah which reads, "Who is a God like You, forgiving iniquity and remitting transgression...?" Upon this verse the Talmud comments: "Whose iniquities does God forgive? Those of he who remits the transgressions of others." (Talmud Bavli, Rosh Hashana 17a).

So, let's return to the story with which I began this column. Dr. Cassidy proved herself to be capable of confessing that she was mistaken, and of asking us to forgive her. But I also remember our reaction, the reaction of the small group of hard workers who learned that they were not only out of a job, but would not even be getting paycheck that they earned. Our reaction was one of great anger. I imagine that the feelings in the room were close to those of a lynch mob. We vented some of those feelings, but then moved on to feelings of frustration and impotence. We asked Dr. Cassidy to leave the room so that we could plan our next step rationally, which she did.

I won't report on the details of the long discussion which ensued. Suffice it to say that we moved from anger and frustration to acknowledging Dr. Cassidy's good intentions, to empathizing with her dilemma, and finally, as a group, deciding to express to her our understanding and forgiveness. She reentered the room, and was visibly touched by our compassionate response.

I must conclude by telling you dear reader, that although happy endings are generally confined to fairy tales, this particular story did have a happy ending.

Perhaps emboldened by the support she felt from our group, Dr. Cassidy renewed her efforts to obtain the grant from the federal agency, enlisted the assistance of several regional congressman, and obtained the funds available for this training program.

The lessons of ordinary life often parallel the lessons of the Torah. For a society to advance, its leaders must be self-aware and courageous enough to recognize and confess their failures, and to seek forgiveness from those whom they have affronted. Equally important, those who have been affronted must find it in their hearts to sincerely forgive.

Then, and only then, can problems be solved, and greater goals achieved.

**Orthodox Union / www.ou.org
Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

Between Destiny and Chance

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

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

To understand this we must note that there is something unusual about the way the word appears in a sefer Torah. Its last letter, an aleph, is written small - almost as if it barely existed. The standard-size letters spell out the word *vayikar*, meaning, "he encountered, he chanced upon." Unlike *vayikra*, which refers to a call, a summons, a meeting by request, *vayikar* suggests an accidental meeting, a mere happening. With their sensitivity to nuance, the sages noted the difference between the call to Moses with which the book begins, and G-d's appearance to the pagan prophet *Bilaam*. This is how the midrash puts it:

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

Rashi is more explicit:

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

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

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

Something of great significance is being hinted at here, but before taking it further, let us turn to the end of the book. Just before the end, in the sedra of *Bechukotai*, there occurs one of the two most terrifying passages in the Torah. It is known as the *tokhachah* (the other appears in *Devarim* 28), and it details the terrible fate that will befall the Jewish people if it fails to keep its covenant with G-d:

from: *Shabbat Shalom shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org*
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subject: *Parsha - Shabbat Shalom from the OU*

I will bring such insecurity upon those of you who survive in your enemies' land that the sound of a driven leaf will make them flee from the sword. They will fall with no one chasing them . . . The land of your enemies will consume you. (26: 36-38)

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

I will remember My covenant with Jacob, as well as My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham. I will remember the land . . . Even when they are in their enemies' land, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking My covenant with them. I am the Lord their G-d. But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their G-d, I am the Lord. (26: 42, 44)

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

"If in spite of this you still do not listen to Me but continue to be hostile towards Me, then in My anger I will be hostile towards you, and I myself will punish you seven times for your sins." (26: 27-28) What does the word *keri* mean? I have translated it here as "hostile". There are other suggestions. The Targum reads it as "harden yourselves", Rashbam as "refuse", Ibn Ezra as "overconfident", Saadia as "rebellious".

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

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

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

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

We are now in a position to understand the remarkable proposition linking the beginning of *Vayikra* to the end - and one of the most profound of all spiritual truths. The difference between *mikra* and *mikreh*

- between history as G-d's call and history as one event after another with no underlying purpose or meaning - is, in the Hebrew language, almost imperceptible. The words sound the same. The only difference is that the former has an aleph while the latter does not (the significance of the aleph is obvious: the first letter of the alphabet, the first letter of the Ten Commandments, the "I" of G-d).

The letter aleph is almost inaudible. Its appearance in a sefer Torah at the beginning of *Vayikra* (the "small aleph") is almost invisible. Do not expect - the Torah is intimating - that the presence of G-d in history will always be as clear and unambiguous as it was during the exodus from Egypt and the division of the Red Sea. For much of the time it will depend on your own sensitivity. For those who look, it will be visible. For those who listen, it can be heard. But first you have to look and listen. If you choose not to see or hear, then *Vayikra* will become *Vayikar*. The call will be inaudible. History will seem mere chance. There is nothing incoherent about such an idea. Those who believe it will have much to justify it. Indeed, says G-d in the *tokhachah*: if you believe that history is chance, then it will become so. But in truth it is not so. The history of the Jewish people - as even non-Jews such as Pascal, Rousseau and Tolstoy eloquently stated - testifies to the presence of G-d in their midst. Only thus could such a small, vulnerable, relatively powerless people survive, and still say today - after the Holocaust - *am yisrael chai*, the Jewish people lives. And just as Jewish history is not mere chance, so it is no mere coincidence that the first word of the central book of the Torah is *Vayikra*, "And He called". To be a Jew is to believe that what happens to us as a people is G-d's call to us - to become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

To read more writings and teachings from the Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, please visit www.chiefrabbi.org.

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Subject Rabbi Frand on Parsha

Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Vayikra

Suffering In Lieu Of Sacrifice

A great deal of Sefer *Vayikra* deals with sacrifices. One of the sacrifices a person brings is a sin offering (*korban chatas*), which is brought to attain atonement for an inadvertent transgression [*Vayikra* 4:2]. The Ramban explains the reason for the offering: All transgressions cause a person's soul to become blemished in an unseemly way. Inasmuch as it is inappropriate for a creature to face his Maker with a blemished soul and we all want to experience in the World To Come that which the early sources express by the term "receiving pleasure from the aura of the Divine Presence" (*ne'heneh m'Ziv haShechina*), therefore the Ramban writes, the soul who has sinned is charged with bringing an offering which will allow it to come close again to its Maker.

A sacrifice cleanses one's soul. *L'Havdil*, it is analogous to one who has smashed his car in an accident. He takes the car to a body shop and it comes out looking like new again. This is what a *Korban* does to a person's *neschama*. Therefore, we appreciate - writes the Ramban - the great Chessed [kindness] the Almighty has done for us by providing us with the institution of sacrifices.

However, what do we do in our time? As a result of our many sins, we do not have a *Bais HaMikdash* and we do not have sacrifices to provide atonement for our inadvertent sins. The Ramban writes: When there is no *Bais HaMikdash*, He sends them suffering to cleanse them of their sins. In lieu of sacrifices, the Almighty causes people to suffer illness, financial troubles, and the list of problems that people face. These "*yisurim*" have the same effect as the sacrifices. They purge the soul of its blemishes. It would be much easier and more pleasant to be able to

bring sacrifices. The Rambam says that "just as the sacrifices were given to us with Divine Love to draw us near to Him so that we may be brought close under the "Wings of the Divine Presence" so too the "yisurim" that befall man are sent with Love and Mercy.

This is a concept which is obviously much easier to verbalize than to internalize, but this is the reason troubles befall us – to trigger the same effect as that achieved by sacrifices: To draw us closer to Him.

There is one other avenue which can achieve a similar effect. The Talmud teaches: "One who occupies himself in study of the laws of the Chatas [sin offering] and the Olah [burnt offering] is considered as if he brought them. [This is part of the idea of the custom of reciting the portion of sacrifices prior to beginning our prayer services].

The Maharal in his Netzach Yisrael presents a very interesting idea.

There is no place where we find a concept that if for some reason you cannot shake a Lulav but you will learn the laws of the Four Species that you will receive credit as if you shook the Lulav. Similarly we never find that if you cannot eat matzah on the first night of Pessach, you can achieve virtually the same benefit by studying the laws of matzah that night. Why, asks the Maharal, is learning the laws of the sacrifices considered "as if one brought the sacrifice"?

The Maharal answers that it is because bringing a Korban is about bringing oneself closer the Almighty. There is something else in life that brings a person close to the Almighty as well – that is the study of Torah. The effect of offering a sin offering is to bring a person back (korban=>karov=>drawing close) to Hashem. Studying the laws of Chatas also bring a person closer to Hashem.

The Symbolism of the Bird Offerings

If a person who sinned cannot afford to bring an animal for atonement, in certain situations, he is allowed to bring a certain type of bird offering consisting of "torim" or "bnei yonah" (from the dove family). The Ramban explains why the Torah allowed specifically "torim" to be brought as atonement: This species of birds have the amazing quality that they mate for life. With other species of the animal kingdom, there is no real "matrimonial connection" between the male and the female.

However "torim" mate for life to the extent that when one of the pair dies or is captured, the remaining partner will remain alone for the rest of its life! Symbolically, the Ramban writes, it is the same with Israel. They cling to Hashem alone forever and will never associate with other gods. The Ribono shel Olam likes these birds because they are similar to the Jewish people.

The other option besides "torim", are "bnei yonah" – the immature (small) species of the dove. They are still young and have never mated. Mature Yonim, unlike "torim" are jealous birds and they switch partners, therefore the Torah rejected them as suitable offerings. But the "bnei yonah", the young of the species, who have never mated, are acceptable as sin offerings. What is unique about this species? The Ramban explains that "bnei yonah" always stay in their nest. No matter what happens, they always go back to the nest in which they are hatched. A young dove always returns to the nest in which they were hatched, regardless of what has happened to that nest.

In other words the "torim" demonstrate loyalty to their spouse and the "bnei yonah" demonstrate loyalty to the place of their birth. The Almighty appreciates loyalty and therefore has designated these birds as the appropriate vehicle to help re-establish the relationship of loyalty between the poor unintentional sinner and Him.

Rav Simcha Zissel Brodie, the Rosh Yeshiva of the Chevron Yeshiva, makes an interesting comment. If we see that the Torah values loyalty to the nest in which you were hatched, how much more so must a person have loyalty to the Yeshiva in which he learned. Just as the "bnei yonah" never forgets and always values the environment and surroundings in which it was created, so too, a person should remember and value the environment in which he was "spiritually created and nursed" in his early

days as a serious student of Torah.

The lack of demonstration of such loyalty is the indictment which Chazal attribute to the Jewish people when they left Mt. Sinai. On the pasuk "They journeyed from the Mountain of Hashem..." [Bamidbar 10:33], the Rabbis employ the simile "like a child running away from the schoolhouse". Rav Simcha Zissel asks, "How could they run away from Har Sinai? Har Sinai is what made us into a nation! The place where we received the Torah has to be so dear to us that we do not want to leave! To charge them with running away is an indictment of their loyalty to Torah and to the Giver of Torah." He says the same indictment is applicable to those who abandon -- be it mentally or be it physically -- the Yeshiva which nurtured them spiritually. Such abandonment demonstrates a lack of "hakaras haTov" [gratitude] that even "Bnei Yonah" possess.

Giving All That One Can

In connection with the person who brings a flour offering (korban mincha), the Torah states: "And when a nefesh [soul] will bring a meal offering to Hashem." [Vayikra 2:1]. Rashi asks why the person is called a "soul" (nefesh) in connection with the bringing of the Mincha offering and this is not the case with any other offering. Rashi explains that we are dealing here with a person who is too poor to bring an animal and too poor even to bring a bird offering. All he can afford is an inexpensive flour offering. Rashi writes: "The Holy One, Blessed is He said: Although the poor man's offering is modest, I consider it on his behalf as if he offered his soul."

A taxi driver in Eretz Yisrael once told the following story to an American Yeshiva student:

I once gave the Steipler Gaon a ride in my taxi. The Gaon asked me "Do you set aside times for learning Torah? Do you learn Gemara?" I told him the truth: I am exhausted when I come home from a long day of driving, but after supper I go to a Gemara shiur in the neighborhood. The nightly shiur is 1 hour long, but inevitably after 5 minutes, I fall asleep and I am only woken 55 minutes later by the sound of the Maggid Shiur [teacher] closing his Gemara. That is the end of the shiur. I pick up about 5 minutes worth of Gemara study every night. The Steipler responded by quoting the above referenced pasuk from our parsha: "When a soul shall bring a meal offering..."

The Steipler was saying this taxi driver is giving all that he can. The fact that he falls asleep every single night by the Gemara after 5 minutes is due to the fact that he is dead tired. But he makes an effort to come to the shiur and he is giving all that he can give. Giving all that one can give is all that the Almighty ever asks from a person.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD

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Moshe and Korbanos: Lessons in Humility

Each letter in a sefer Torah teaches us countless lessons. The letter alef of the word "Vayikra" teaches us the significance of humility. According to tradition, this letter is written smaller than other letters in a sefer Torah. Chazal explain that this is because Moshe was humble and would have preferred that the word have been "vayikar" rather than "Vayikra". What is the difference of meaning between these two words, and how does this distinction symbolize the trait of humility that characterized Moshe?

In contrast to Moshe, there was another navi who the word vayikar is used to describe Hashem speaking to him; Vayikar is how Hashem addresses Bilam. The word vayikar is related to the word mikra - an event that "happens" to take place. Hashem does not speak to Bilam with regularity. Rather, whenever the need arises Bilam receives a prophecy. In contrast, Moshe is spoken to by Hashem all the time. Moshe even initiates conversation with Hashem several times when he needs guidance from Hashem about a particular halacha such as Pesach Sheini and the claim of benos Tzafchad.

Although Moshe and Bilam were both nevi'im, they related to their nevuah in radically different ways. Bilam constantly boasts of his role as a navi. He describes himself in glorious terms as one who hears the word of Hashem and who has knowledge of the Divine. He only eventually admits to Balak that "Oo'ly yikrah Hashem likrosi - maybe Hashem will appear to me." Balak is elated when called upon to prophesize and he uses this gift to amass great personal wealth. In contrast, from the first time Hashem speaks to Moshe at the sneh he shies away from the nevu'ah. He sees himself as a kvad peh - one who has difficulty speaking and not worthy of being a navi. Even when finally accepting his role as anavi, Moshe would rather be referred to as vayikar - as one who is on a lower level of nevuah not meriting the constant word of Hashem. It is precisely this difference between Moshe and Bilam that resulted in the very different culminations of their roles as nevi'im. Bilam, who constantly sought glory for his gift of nevu'ah, is ultimately humiliated; the nevu'ah that is granted to him blessing the Jewish People are the final words he speaks in the name of Hashem. Moshe, on the other hand, who was the humblest man ever to live, became the greatest of all nevi'im and merited the highest level of nevu'ah, i.e. conversing with Hashem "peh el peh". Bilam, who prided himself on his ability to see, eventually saw less than his donkey. Moshe became the one to see b'aspaklaria ha'me'irah, i.e. the clearest vision given to man.

The reason this fundamental lesson of humility is taught to us specifically at the beginning of sefer Vayikra which focuses on korbanos is that the offering of a korban is an expression of humility, since many korbanos are brought as akapara for a cheit. The teshuva process which culminates with the offering of a korban is predicated on the ability to humble oneself before Hashem, in contrast to the arrogant individual who cannot admit he made a mistake. Thekorbanos that are brought as an expression of thanks also require a sense of humility. How so? One who views his success as a result of his own accomplishments will not acknowledge that it is Hashem who really has bestowed upon him these gifts; he will feel no need to offer thanks. A korban of thanks to Hashem, by contrast, is the ultimate expression of the realization that we are humbled by the goodness He performs for us.

Bilam, who was the antithesis of humility, also offers korbanos.

Throughout Parshas Balak he draws attention to these korbanos and prides himself on bringing them. He uses them as a way to demand that Hashem grant him nevu'ah. Rather than internalizing the lesson of humility signified by korbanos, he uses them to advance his arrogance as he attempts to further his personal status and wealth.

As we begin Sefer Vayikra, the very first word teaches us about the proper spirit that must accompany a korban. We look to Moshe as a role model of humility to guide us in how to use korbanos as a vehicle for teshuva and as an acknowledgement of our complete dependence on Hashem for the gifts He bestows upon us.

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Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

Vayikra: Black Fire on White Fire

With the construction of the Tabernacle complete, the holy structure began to fulfill its primary purpose: a conduit for communication between God and Moses. "I will commune with you there, speaking to you above the ark-cover" (Ex. 25:22). Before each actual communication, God would first summon Moses to the tent, with a Voice that only Moses could hear: "God called to Moses, speaking to him from the Communion Tent" (Lev. 1:1).

What was the nature of this Divine call?

The Miniature Aleph and the Four-Pronged Shin

The word Vayikra ('He called') is written in an unusual fashion. The last letter, the aleph, is written in miniature in the Torah. Did God command Moses to write it that way? Or was this an expression of Moses' extraordinary humility - an attempt to 'hide' the aleph, so to speak, so that it would appear that God only happened ("vayikar") to speak with Moses, similar to the chance prophetic experiences of evil Balaam? We find a second unusual letter in the tefillin (phylacteries) worn on the head. Usually, the letter shin is written with three upward strokes, but the shin embossed on the left side of the tefillin has four. Some commentaries connect this peculiar shin to the Midrashic description of the Torah's transmission to Israel via black fire engraved on white fire. What does this mean? What are these black and white fires?

Black Ink on White Parchment

When we think about a Torah scroll, we usually only consider the letters themselves, written in black ink. Yet, the Talmud (Menachot 29a) rules that every letter in a Torah scroll must be completely surrounded by parchment. This requirement is called mukaf gevil. In other words, the white parchment around the letters is an integral part of the Torah; without it, the Torah scroll is disqualified. In fact, the white space is a higher form of Torah. It is analogous to the white fire of Sinai - a sublime, hidden Torah that cannot be read in the usual manner. There is a delicate balance between black and white in the Torah. The shirot, the poetic portions in the Torah, are written in a special fashion, like a wall constructed from layers of black and white bricks. These poetic sections are the loftiest parts of the Torah. Consequently, they have more white space, as they contain a greater measure of the esoteric white fire. If a scribe were to write other sections of the Torah in this special layout, the Torah scroll would be rendered invalid. After the Torah was revealed and restricted to our limited world, it must be written with the appropriate ratio of black to white.

What about the four-pronged shin on tefillin? The mitzvah of tefillin is closely connected to the manifestation of Torah after its revelation into the finite world. "All of the peoples of the land shall see that the name of God is called upon you, and they shall be in awe of you" (Deut. 28:10; see Menachot 35b). Thus, tefillin correspond to the lower realm of black fire, and are marked with a shin bearing an extra measure of black.

We can deepen our understanding of the white and black fires by considering another example of white space in the Torah. Extra space is left blank to separate sections of the Torah. The Sages explained that these separations allowed Moses to reflect upon and absorb the previous lesson. In other words, the white fire corresponds to the loftier realm of thought and contemplation. The black fire of the letters, on the other hand, is the revelation of intellect into the realm of language - a contraction and limitation of abstract thought into the more concrete level of speech.

The Divine Call Before Revelation

The distinction between white and black fire also sheds light on God's

call to Moses before speaking with him. The Voice summoning Moses to enter the tent was in fact the divine call from Sinai, an infinite call that never ceased (Deut. 5:19). The summons would reach Moses as he stood outside the tent, before being constrained within the four walls of the Tabernacle. This Voice was not a revelation of Torah, but an overture to its revelation. It belonged to the esoteric white fire of Torah, before its restriction and revelation into the physical world.

This is the reason that Moses made the aleph of the divine call smaller. Since it belonged to the realm of white fire, the summons required an extra measure of white space over black ink. Superficially, Moses' miniature aleph humbly implies a diminished state of the revealed Torah of black fire, but on a deeper level, it reflects an increase in the esoteric Torah of white fire.

(Gold from the Land of Israel, pp. 179-181. Adapted from Shemuot HaRe'iyah IV)

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By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Preparing Food on Yom Tov

By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

The Torah teaches that, although most melachos are forbidden on Yom Tov, cooking and most other food preparation are permitted.

Nevertheless, some types of food preparation are prohibited on Yom Tov, such as catching fish, picking fruit, and squeezing juice. Why are these activities different from cooking, kneading, and the other food preparatory activities that are permitted on Yom Tov?

To understand the answer to this question correctly, we must imagine ourselves preparing a meal in the days of Chazal: Refrigeration and most modern methods of preserving food do not exist, and preparing a festive meal requires baking and cooking on the day of the occasion. Although it may seem strange to us, even shechitah and soaking and salting the meat are performed the day the meal is served. Thus, the Torah permitted any activity necessary to prepare a meal that will be served on Yom Tov. It is even permitted to skin the hide off an animal that has been shechted on Yom Tov since one cannot remove the meat properly without first removing the hide.

However, some food preparatory activities are usually performed in advance of the day one intends to serve the meal. Even in earlier days, one did not begin preparing the day's meal by catching fish. One who planned fish for dinner would catch or purchase the fish the day before, and then leave the fish in water until it was time to prepare it. Therefore, one may not fish on Yom Tov, even if one intends to fry fish for the day's meal.

Similarly, fruits are usually picked and squeezed when they ripen, and then the juice or oil is stored. Thus, picking and squeezing fruit is not permitted on Yom Tov, even though they are steps in the preparation of food. Even picking or squeezing a small amount of fruit is prohibited, since these activities are usually performed in quantity and stored for a longer period of time.

In a like manner, the day one prepares a meal is not the time to begin grinding the wheat into flour, and it is certainly not the time to harvest the grain or to thresh it. One would grind the grain into flour at an earlier date and then store it for subsequent use. However, someone serving fresh bread or pastry prepares the dough the day the meal is to be served. Therefore, it is permitted to mix flour and water on Yom Tov. This subject leads us to a more extensive discussion about the melacha of kneading on Yom Tov.

Kneading on Yom Tov

One of the thirty-nine melachos of Shabbos is kneading, which includes any instance of combining fine particles with a liquid until they stick together. Thus, one may not mix grains or powders with liquid to create an edible cereal on Shabbos. However, since one may knead dough on Yom Tov, all kneading is permitted on Yom Tov. Thus, one may prepare oatmeal, pudding, or baby cereals on Yom Tov the same way these foods would be prepared on a weekday. (One may not mix these foods in the usual fashion on Shabbos.)

Separating Challah

When one kneads dough on Yom Tov, the challah portion is separated (assuming that one kneaded a sufficient quantity of dough). However, one does not burn the separated challah portion on Yom Tov. Instead, one sets the portion aside to be burnt after Yom Tov (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 506:4).

If one baked before Shabbos or Yom Tov, one may not separate the challah portion on Shabbos or Yom Tov. What happens if you realize on Shabbos or Yom Tov that you forgot to separate challah? The answer to this shaylah depends on whether the dough was kneaded in Eretz Yisrael or in chutz la'aretz. If the dough was kneaded in Eretz Yisrael, then there is no solution but to leave the bread until after Shabbos or Yom Tov, and then separate the challah portion. However, if this dough was kneaded in chutz la'aretz, there is a different solution: One may eat the bread on Shabbos or Yom Tov as long as one makes sure that some of the bread remains until after Shabbos or Yom Tov. After Shabbos or Yom Tov, one separates the challah portion from the leftover bread. This separating "after the fact" is sufficient to fulfill the mitzvah of separating challah in a dough produced in chutz la'aretz (Rama 506:3). The reason for this distinction requires a bit of explanation.

Min HaTorah there is a requirement to separate challah only on dough that is made in Eretz Yisrael. (In actuality, the requirement is min hatorah only when the majority of Jews live in Eretz Yisrael.) The requirement to separate challah on dough mixed in chutz la'aretz is only out of concern that Jews living in chutz la'aretz should not forget that there is a mitzvah to separate challah. However, since the mitzvah in chutz la'aretz is only midrabbanan, Chazal allowed the leniency of separating the challah portion "after the fact" (Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 322:2-3).

Grating, Grinding, and Mashing on Yom Tov

The melacha of grinding is different from the melachos previously discussed. Some foods are ground or grated as the meal is being prepared, whereas others are ground well before the meal is prepared. For example, when preparing a kugel, the potatoes are grated as the meal is being prepared; similarly, a gourmet chef might crush fresh pepper and other spices specifically for the meal. These types of grinding are permitted on Yom Tov, as I will explain. On the other hand, one does not grind wheat the day one plans to bake bread, and it is therefore prohibited to grind flour on Yom Tov.

The laws of Yom Tov divide the various items that might be ground into four categories:

1. Items that are usually ground well in advance of preparing a meal, such as flour, may not be ground at all.
2. Items that might be ground while preparing the meal, but could have been ground earlier without affecting their flavor, such as salt, may be ground on Yom Tov, but only by grinding them in a way that is different from the usual method. For example, the Mishnah states that one may grind salt on Yom Tov with a wooden pestle rather than one of stone (Beitzah 14a). Therefore, if someone discovers on Yom Tov that he has no table salt in the house, only coarse koshering salt, he may crush the salt on Yom Tov on the table, but not with a mortar and pestle, or with a salt or pepper mill.
3. Items that taste better fresh but are usable if ground before Yom Tov

may be ground or chopped on Yom Tov, but only by grinding or chopping them with a slight shinui (Rama 504:1), such as by placing a napkin on the plate or mortar on which they are being ground (Mishnah Berurah 504:19). Therefore, someone accustomed to freshly crushed pepper or spices may grind them on Yom Tov slightly differently from usual, but may not use a tabletop pepper mill.

4. Items that will become useless if ground or chopped before Yom Tov may be ground or chopped on Yom Tov in the way that they would usually be ground or chopped on a weekday. Therefore, one may mash avocado and banana, chop potatoes and onions into fine pieces, and dice salad and apples on Yom Tov the way one would on a weekday (Piskei Teshuvos 504:3).

Measuring

In general, it is prohibited to measure on Yom Tov, just as it is prohibited to measure on Shabbos. Thus, one may not measure how much flour, sugar, or oil to use in a recipe (Shulchan Aruch 506:1). However, one may approximate how much flour, oil, or sugar is needed. It is permitted to use a measuring cup as long as one does not fill the cup exactly to its measuring points (Mishnah Berurah 506:3).

The Poskim dispute whether one may measure spices on Yom Tov, some permitting (even though it is prohibited to measure other items), because approximating spices may ruin the recipe if one errs (Beitzah 29a). However, Magen Avraham (504:10) contends that since most women cook without measuring spices on weekdays, but simply estimate how much they use, they may not measure spices on Yom Tov. Others contend that someone who measure spices on weekdays may measure them on Yom Tov.

Cooking that is Prohibited

One is permitted to cook and prepare food on Yom Tov only when one intends to eat that food on Yom Tov, but one may not cook for after Yom Tov or on the first day of Yom Tov for the second day. For this reason, it is important that all preparations of meals for the second night of Yom Tov wait until the first day of Yom Tov is over. Thus, there was a custom in many communities in Eastern Europe to delay the davening the second night of Yom Tov to allow sufficient time for the preparations of the night meal.

One may cook amply for the Yom Tov meal, knowing that there will certainly be leftovers that can then be served on the second day of Yom Tov. However, one may not prepare individual units of a food item, knowing that one is preparing more than can possibly be eaten on Yom Tov.

One is not permitted to cook on Yom Tov for a non-Jew, since he does not observe Yom Tov. Furthermore, Chazal forbade inviting a non-Jew for a Yom Tov meal, out of concern that one might cook special for him on Yom Tov. One may invite a non-Jew, such as domestic help, for whom you would not prepare a special dish. However, one may not cook for him on Yom Tov.

It is also forbidden to cook or do other melacha for an animal. Thus, although one is permitted to mix dry grains with liquid to create an edible cereal on Yom Tov for a person, one may not mix these items to feed a pet.

Use of Stoves and Ovens on Yom Tov

Chazal prohibited kindling a new flame on Yom Tov (Mishnah Beitzah 33a). Thus, although one may turn up an existing flame, one may not strike a match on Yom Tov (Aruch HaShulchan 502:6), nor may one light a stove or oven by using an electric igniter, since this is considered lighting with a new flame (Igros Moshe 1:115). If someone has a stove or oven that does not light with a gas pilot, it is a good idea to have a twenty-four hour candle burning over Yom Tov to facilitate lighting the stove on Yom Tov. Another advantage to igniting this candle before

Yom Tov is that it enables the lighting of the Yom Tov candles on the second night of Yom Tov.

One is permitted to lower a flame in order to cook on Yom Tov.

However, there are poskim who rule that one may lower a flame only when there is no option for turning up or on a different flame. According to the latter opinion, if one is cooking on a stove and one wants to lower the fire so that the food does not burn or boil out, one can do so only if there is no option for turning on another flame (Magen Avraham 514:2). However, Rav Moshe Feinstein ruled that it is permitted to lower a flame when one desires to cook with a lower flame or so that the food does not burn or boil out (Igros Moshe 1:115; 4:103).

Hashkafah of Preparing Food on Yom Tov

The Torah refers to the Yomim Tovim as moed. Just as the word ohel moed refers to the tent in the desert which served as a meeting place between Hashem and the Jewish People, so too a moed is a meeting time between Hashem and the Jewish People (Hirsch, Vayikra 23:3 and Horeb). Although on Shabbos we are to refrain from all melacha activity, on Yom Tov the Torah permitted melacha activity that enhances the celebration of the Yom Tov as a moed. Permitting the preparations of delicious, freshly prepared meals allows an even greater celebration of the festivities of the Yom Tov as we celebrate our unique relationship with Hashem.