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ON VAYIKRA - HACHODESH - 5778

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Weekly Parsha - VAYIKRA

The opening words of this the third book of the Torah highlights for us an important idea. It is that God so to speak calls upon the people for service, position and action. Moshe is called on by God to order the services in the Temple. He used to see this task as being his personal responsibility. This idea that God calls upon people regularly to accomplish the will of Heaven is expressed in many examples in the Bible and in traditional rabbinic literature. It even resonates in the non-Jewish world where for a long time entering the clergy as a profession was described as being a calling. All of this is based on the idea that God communicates with his creatures on a regular and multifaceted basis. The rabbis have taught us that the Lord has many messengers and many means of delivering these messages. One should not think that this is random or haphazard. Therefore the word vayikra is employed rather than the word vayikar, which would imply a much more chancy and random situation. So it appears that God calls unto people regularly and with a divine purpose. The question is whether people are tuned to hear the call and act upon it. One of the great challenges of life is to do the right thing at the right time. This is true in personal life and in commercial enterprises, as well as in national and religious affairs. Being able to hear the voice of heaven challenging us and calling us is key to doing the right thing at the right time. God calls out to us in a still small voice as the prophet Elijah was told when he expected to hear the voice in the mighty wind or the frightening earthquake or the monstrous thunderstorm. Rather, the voice does not register in our ears but in our inner mind and heart. In describing the call of God to the mighty hero of Israel, Shimshon, the voices are being described as beginning to pound within him with the force of a tongue inside a bell.

When the prophet Isaiah is called to service he hears a voice that proclaims: "Who shall I send and will go for us?" These questions are eternal and repetitive in every generation and under all circumstances. It is the still small voice that is heard that rings in our mind and pricks our conscience. It is how we feel that the Lord is calling us and allowing us to become His chosen partner in the process of creation and the evolution of civilization. There are times in life when one has to strain mightily to hear that voice. There are other times in both our personal and national lives when that call is self-evident and clearly heard. But the response to the call is always up to human beings, individually and communally. Certainly in our time, with the rebirth of the Jewish people in so many miraculous and unexpected ways, this call is heard pounding within us and guiding us towards the fulfillment of our mission as a people.

Shabbat shalom
Rabbi Berel Wein

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Vayikra
For the week ending 17 March 2018 / 1 Nisan 5778
Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com
Insights

Netilat Yedayim Part 3

"If a person will sin and commit a treachery against G-d by lying to his comrade regarding a pledge or loan or a robbery, or by defrauding his comrade." (5:21)

Those of you who follow this column regularly (Hello Mummy!) may remember back in Parshat Lech Lecha the following story: As we get older, we fall into two groups: Those who exercise, and those who are waiting for their doctors to tell them to exercise. A few years ago I left the first group and joined the second. I try to swim a few times a week. Outside the changing room of the pool there is a washbasin. Once in a while someone puts there a grubby looking white plastic natlan — a cup for netilat yadayim. It vanishes after about two days. Six weeks or so go by. Someone puts another cup there, but this time it's secured to the faucet with a serious plastic-covered metal cable. It also vanishes after about two days. A few months ago, someone went out and bought this beautiful eau-de-nil colored metal washing cup with chrome handles. It must have set them back a hundred-odd shekels. I thought to myself, "This one isn't going to last two days; it's going to last two minutes!" I was wrong. It was there the next time and the time after that. Two months later it's still there. I thought to myself, "What's the mindset here? Why will someone take something cheap but leave something expensive?" In Parshat Eikev Rashi explains the unusual use of the word 'ekev' to mean 'if'. Ekev can also mean a heel. Says Rashi, a person must be as careful with the mitzvot that are typically down-trodden with the heel as he is with more serious sins. I can rationalize taking a cheapo plastic cup, worth a couple of shekels at most, when I need it more than them, but to take an expensive item? What me? I'm no thief! That's how I understood the psychology. My good friend and colleague Rabbi Yitzchak Dalah had a different, and I think rather beautiful, explanation. He told me a story that a wall in a certain town square was constantly being defaced with graffiti. The local authority had large signs put up on the wall saying, "NO GRAFFITI!" The result was that the signs were defaced with graffiti. Someone had a bright idea: They

got an artist to paint a beautiful mural on the wall. The result? No more graffiti.

When you show me how beautiful the world is, it elevates me into being a higher person, so why would I want to spoil it? When you put something very aesthetic in front of people, it brings out the mensch in them.

I told the above to my Rebbe and asked him how he understood the

underlying psychology of why the beautiful natlan was still there.

He thought for a good few minutes, as is his way, and then answered:

“Someone who steals money will take money whether it’s a little or a lot, but what he won’t take away is someone else’s giving to the community. That is something he won’t take away from the giver.”

“If a person will sin and commit a treachery against G-d by lying to his comrade regarding a pledge or loan or a robbery, or by defrauding his comrade.” (5:21)

The verse starts by speaking of treachery to G-d, and continues to discuss man cheating his fellow. This seems like a non-sequitur.

In truth, the breakdown of all social behavior is predicated by treachery to G-d, i.e. atheism, because without the Ultimate Authority of the Creator, man’s baser side will find ways to violate even the most widely accepted norms of human behavior. It will start with theft, pure-and-simple, but eventually it will degenerate into the callous theft of even the intangible and the noble.

Source: based on Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik

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subject: Rabbi Reisman’s Chumash Shiur - Audio and Print Version

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman - Parshas Vayikra 5773

1. We begin Sefer Vayikra this week and it is an appropriate time to be Mizareiz (to remind people) that there is a Parsha of Korbanos at the beginning of the Siddur. People should be more Zahir than they are in the saying of the Korbanos. As I have mentioned numerous times, if Korbanos seems too long and for that reason you ignore the entire thing, it is K’dai to know that the main parts of the Korbanos section are the Korban Tamid and the Ketores which is 8 Pesukim and 5 Pesukim and as I have mentioned numerous times a person should be Mizareiz with himself to say it and to learn it Baal Peh and say it on the way to Shul. It is something which a person should be more careful with.

Let’s talk about Korbanos. A Korban Chatas is a Korban which is brought if a person violates (he is Oiver) on any of the 34 Lav D’oraissa which are Chayuv Kareis (any of the 34 negative prohibitions in the Torah for which you are Chayuv Kareis, if someone does one of those Aveiros B’shogeig (he does it by accident) because he forgot, then he is Chayuv to bring a Korban Chatas. This could happen today if for example someone wakes up in the middle of the night and doesn’t remember it is Shabbos and turns on the light (Chas V’shalom), such a person is Chayuv a Korban Chatas.

The question is what do we do today? Today let’s say someone was Oiver on for example Chilul Shabbos B’shogeig is he actually obligated to bring a Korban Chatas? When Mashiach comes will we be obligated to bring a Korban Chatas for each of the Aveiros that we did B’shogeig in the years before the Bais Hamikdash was rebuilt?

On this question there are 2 Gemaras in Shas which seems to say that you will be obligated to do and there are 2 Gemaras in Shas which seem to say the reverse. First, the Gemara that seems to say that we are Patur. In Megillah 31b (3rd wide line) the Gemara says (אמר לפניו רבש"ע תינה בזמן שבית) המקדש קיים בזמן שאין בית המקדש קיים מה תהא עליהם אמר לו כבר תקנתי להם סדר קרבנות כל זמן שקוראין בהן מעלה אני עליהן כאילו מקריבין לפני קרבן ומוהל אני על כל (עונותיהם) that Avraham Avinu asked HKB"H when the Bais Hamikdash is standing I understand that Jews will have Kappara (forgiveness). At the time that the Bais Hamikdash is not standing what will be in regards to forgiveness? HKB"H responded and the Gemara says B’fairush that when there is no Bais Hamikdash you don’t have to bring a Korban, you read the

Seder Korbanos Chatas and with that I am Mochel them as if they didn’t sin. So the Gemara says that Bizman Hazez there is no obligation to bring a Korban and it is enough to learn the Parsha.

A similar Gemara in Menachos 110a (16 lines before the end of the Masechta) (אמר רבי יצחק מאי דכתיב זאת תורת החטאת וזאת תורת האשם כל העוסק) (בתורת חטאת כאילו הקריב חטאת וכל העוסק בתורת אשם כאילו הקריב אשם) the Torah’s expression which refers to the Chatas as Zos Torah Hachatas somebody who studies the Parsha of Chatas it is as if he brought a Korban Chatas. Therefore, we have these 2 Gemaras which seem to say very clearly that Bizman Hazez we learn the Parsha of Chattas and for that we are forgiven K’ilu we brought a Korban.

Many Siddurim have in the Eizehu M’koman section a Lashon of (אם נִתְחַבְּתִי) K’ilu Hikravti Chatas as if I brought. According to this first approach there will no Chiyuv Korban when Moshiach comes.

On the other hand there are 2 Gemaras which seem to say the reverse. Most famous is a Gemara in Shabbos 12b (12 lines from the bottom) (ר' נתן אומר) קרא והטה על פנקסו אני ישמעאל בן אלישע קריתי והטיתי נר בשבת לכשיבנה בהמ"ק (אביא חטאת שמנה) where Rav Nassan relates that Rav Yishmael Ben Elisha once was reading on Shabbos by the light of an oil lamp and he adjusted the flame on the lamp because he forgot that it was Shabbos. He wrote on his notebook that I Yishmael Ben Elisha was studying and forgot that it was Shabbos and I adjusted the flame on Shabbos. When the Bais Hamikdash comes I will bring a fat animal as a Korban Chatas. Here the Gemara is saying clearly that you actually have to bring the Chattas when the Bais Hamikdash is rebuilt.

There is a second Gemara in Maseches Yoma 80a (17 lines from the top) (א"ר אלעזר האוכל חלב בזמן הזה צריך שיכתוב לו שיעור שמא יבא בית דין אחר וירבה) (בשיעורין) which says similarly that someone who eats Cheilev which is something that is an Issur Kareis someone who eats it accidentally nowadays he has to write in his notebook how much Cheilev he ate, he has to know that when Mashiach comes if the amount you ate is enough to obligate you in a Korban. So we have 2 Gemaras that say you are Chayuv a Korban and 2 Gemaras that say you are not and we are left with something of a Kasha that I have not seen an answer for.

I will add though that there is a Rama in Hilchos Shabbos in Siman 334 who says something about this. He says something which fits with neither of the above. The Rama says that someone who is Michaleil Shabbos B’shogeig should fast numerous days as a Kapparah and he should give in place of a Korban Chatas a certain amount of money to Tzedakah. So here it is clear that he will not have to bring a Korban Chatas when Moshiach comes, but the Rama is saying that it is enough to give Tzedakah in its place. Why does he not demand that he study the Parsha? This is a confusing Inyan.

Let me suggest an answer. When someone violates Shabbos or any Issur Kareis by mistake (B’shogeig) of course he is Chayuv a Korban Chatas. He has options, the Chiyuv is there. He has options, either he can go and take an animal and say Zu Chatas or he can verbalize and say Harei Alai Chatas, make a Neder to bring a Korban. In that case that will be his Kapparah as Rav Yishmael Ben Elisha did. He said Harai Alai (אביא חטאת שמנה) and of course that Neder is Chal. That is an option that somebody has. If he feels regret for his Cheit to say I will bring a Chatas. However, it is also true that there is a way out. A person can get a Kapparah. If a person studies the Parsha and reads the Parsha of the Korban Chatas then HKB"H forgives him and then when Moshiach comes he will not have to bring a Korban Chatas. The Rama recommends as Kapparah that you still spend some money and give it to Tzedakah in place of the Chatas which you are now not obligated to bring. So essentially you have a choice. Your choice is to bring a Korban and you can obligate yourself in that, or you can read the Parsha. Study the Parsha of the Chatas which means that you have to think what you are saying, understand it and it is K’ilu Hikravti Chatas, it is as if I brought the Korban.

What we have gained with all this is the understanding that those people who do not say Korbanos will have a big bill when Moshiach comes. For each Aveira that they did B'shogeig (each Issur Kareis that they did B'shogeig) they will have to bring a Korban and a Korban is expensive (it costs a couple of thousand dollars). Those who are wise enough to say the Parsha of Korbanos will be Yotzi K'ilu Hikravti Korban Chatas and when Moshiach comes they will be Pattur. This seems to be the way to resolve this contradiction, they are both true and either one is a Kapparah. This should serve as a reminder (as a Ziruz) to people to actually say the Parsha as we really should.

2. Let me move on to something else in this week's Parsha. Regarding the Korban Shlomim Rashi says that it is called a Korban Shlomim because (שמטילים שלום בעולם). They bring about in the world peace. When somebody brings a Korban Shlomim it causes from Shamayim that there is an influence on the world that there be Sholom. Rashi in 3:1 says (שמטילים שלום בעולם). Of course this needs an explanation.

Rav Shteinman in the Ayalas Hashachar page # 20 asks, people have free will as to whether to make Machlokes or Sholom, therefore, it is difficult to understand what does it mean the Korban Shlomim brings Sholom.

He answers that there are certain moments in life which cause him to lack Sholom. There are certain situations in life which are stressful and difficult and they bring problems with Sholom to the world. The idea that is being mentioned in the Korban Shlomim is that from Shamayim HKB"H will grant people situations which will make it less likely there will be Machlokes. There can still be Machlokes. So if a person is for example very tight financially that is a situation that is common to bring about in the world Machlokes in a family and stress in a family. A person who works to put himself in a situation to avoid stress is going to have more Sholom in his house. That is the idea of the Korban Shlomim.

I would add, we say in Shemoneh Esrei (שים שלום) we ask HKB"H (היא יעשה) (שלוש עשרה) to make Sholom among us. I guess we think of things like war and things that have to do with the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. But according to this, even things that have to do with individuals, people who find a lack of Sholom (Lo Aleinu) in a home should Daven for situations in which there is less stress in the home. Of course better yet you should be Mishtadeil, you should put effort into creating situations in the home where the stress is resolved. As it says in Koheles 2:14 (הַהֶקֶם עֵינָיו בְּרֵאשׁוֹ) you should prepare ahead of time. The insight is a great insight. The battle against Sholom is a battle against causes which all human beings are the same. Human beings under certain situations are less prone to having a proper attitude of Sholom.

3. The Rambam in More Nivuchim writes that the reason Hashem commanded Korbanos is because there would be Jews who would have a Yeitzer Hora to have Avoda Zora and so that you won't have a Yeitzer Hora to bring a Korban to an Avoda Zora Hashem said bring Korbanos to me. The Ramban in this week's Parsha and others argue and say the only reason we bring Korbanos is as a S'yag and a Geder against Avodah Zora? A Korban itself is a Raich Nichoach to Hashem, there is something positive about it. Noach brought Korbanos when he left the Taiva, he had no Yeitzer Hora for Avoda Zora. The Rambam is a Pliya. Many Meforshim seem to give answers and there is a nice Meshech Chochmo on this week's Parsha who gives a rather famous answer.

At the moment I would like to share with you the answer of Rav Tzadok in Tzidkos Hatzaddik Os 42, at least the answer the way I understand it. The words are a bit cryptic and this is the way I understand his answer. It is human nature that when you give you develop a bond with the one you give to. It is not the one who receives that develops the main feeling of gratitude to the one who gives rather it is the giver. That is human nature. People who give develop a love to the person to whom they give. A mother has a love for a child to whom she gives from birth and on. When one brought Korbanos to Avoda Zora there is a certain Geshmak, a feeling of a person giving of himself for some type of a higher cause, some type of an abstract spiritual idea. That developed a Keshet and that Keshet is attractive to thinking

people who want to have a feeling of spirituality. Says the Rambam, HKB"H said that feeling use it for me, use it as a Korban. That is not to say that the Korban is pointless and that it is only a S'yag L'avoda Zora. No. Once a Jew brings a Korban it is a Raiach N'choach L'hashem and it develops a bond, a connection. When one gives one develops a connection, a love, a caring for the cause to which he gives. So too with the Korbanos. Says Rav Tzaddok at the very same time both are true it is a Raiach N'choach because when you give you develop a bond. It is also a S'yag against Avodah Zora because human beings especially Jews who like to feel the spirituality have a tremendous Taiva and a tremendous desire to have this type of a spiritual sacrifice. Sacrificing for something Ruchnios. Therefore, when you donate to a Yeshiva, you donate to a cause, you will find that you become closer to the cause and you are more likely to donate again.

4. Let me end with a Kasha which I had when I was learning Chumash and Rashi. Right at the beginning of the Parsha 1:2 it is talking about (אָדָם כִּי-יִרְרַ מִטַּפֵּל בַּהֲבֹאמוֹ עַד) a Korban Olah. Rashi in 1:3 says (מִטַּפֵּל בַּהֲבֹאמוֹ עַד) מהו אומר יקריב יקריב, אפילו נתערבה עולת ראובן בעולת שמעון, יקריב כל אחת לשם מי שהוא. וכן עולה בחולין, ימכרו החולין לצרכי עולות, והרי הן כולן עולות ותקרב כל אחת לשם מי שהוא. יכול אפילו נתערבה בפסולין או בשאינו מינו, תלמוד לומר יקריבנו it says (2) (יקריב) times. Why does it say Yakriv 2 times? So Rashi says even if Reuvain's Korban Olah and Shimon's Korban Olah became mixed in a way that one is not distinguishable from the other, the Kohen is allowed to take the Korban, sacrifice it, and bring it Lishma of who? Reuvain or Shimon? You tell Hashem that Hashem you know if it is Reuvain's or Shimon's and whoever it belongs to I am bringing it Lishma for that owner and then the same for the second Korban. Therefore, Posuk 3 says that this Parsha is alluding to 2 Korbanos that became mixed one with the other and you can't tell which is which you are still Makriv it.

In Posuk 4 it says (וְעַל רֵאשׁ הָעֵלָה) you are obligated in this Korban which Posuk 3 is talking about to do Semicha. There is a Mitzvah to lean on the animal and the Ramban on Posuk 4 (ולא ידעתי אם כן למה כתב בכל שאר) "הסמיכות" את ידו ואולי להוציא ממנו מה שדרשו (מנחות צג ב): ידו ולא

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**Rav Yissocher Frand - Parshas Vayikra
The Plight of the "Flour People"**

In Parshas Vayikra, the Torah talks about atonement offerings that a person brings after having sinned. Following a listing of various iniquities [Vayikra 5:1-4], the Torah concludes: "When one shall become guilty regarding one of these matters, he shall confess what he has sinned. He shall bring as his guilt offering to Hashem, for his sin that he committed, a female from the flock – a sheep or a goat – for a sin offering; and the Kohen shall provide him atonement from his sin." [Vayikra 5:5-6].

The Torah then specifies an alternate offering that may be substituted if the person who sinned cannot afford the aforementioned animal: "But if his means are insufficient for a sheep or goat, then he shall bring as his guilty offering for that which he sinned, two turtledoves or two young doves to Hashem, one for a sin offering and one for an olah offering." [Vayikra 5:7] Thus, a poor person is given a dispensation – he does not need to bring an expensive animal as a sin offering, he may bring doves. However, when an animal is brought, it serves as a single sin offering, when birds are bought, the sinner brings a double atonement — a sin offering and an olah offering. This needs to be understood. The atonement for a sin requires a sin offering, not an olah offering — as is evident from the requirement to bring a single female sheep or goat (for one who can afford it). We understand that someone who cannot afford the animal offering may bring a substitute bird

offering. However, why now does he need to bring one for a sin offering, and also one for an olah offering?

The Ibn Ezra offers an interesting idea: Most people bringing a sin offering can afford a lamb. The fellow in the second category is unfortunately a pauper. He cannot afford a lamb. What goes through his mind in this situation? Why is the Ribono shel Olam doing this to me? Everyone else can afford a lamb, and I cannot afford a lamb! I am so poor, I cannot even buy a decent sin offering! He has an “evil thought” (machshava ra’ah).

That itself — his complaint against the Almighty — is a sin in its own right, which requires additional atonement. A person who “sins with his thoughts” is required to bring an olah offering for atonement. He brings the first dove as a sin offering for the original sin. He brings the second dove as an olah offering for the negative thoughts he had, complaining to G-d, as it were, about his inability to afford an animal sacrifice.

The Chida, in his sefer Pnei Dovid, quotes the Ibn Ezra’s explanation, but is troubled by a question. There are actually three levels in the Torah regarding the bringing of a sin offering. As mentioned above, there is the person who can afford to bring an optimal sin offering — a lamb. Then there is a person who cannot afford a lamb. He needs to bring the two doves, one as a sin offering and one as an olah offering. But then there is a third level — the poorest of the poor. “But if his means are insufficient for two turtledoves or for two young doves, then he shall bring, as his guilt offering for that which he sinned, a tenth of an ephah of fine flour for a sin offering; he shall not put frankincense on it, for it is a sin offering.” [Vayikra 5:11]. Thus, the “poorest of the poor” brings a flour offering, which almost everyone can afford.

The Pnei Dovid asks the obvious question — why does he not need to bring an olah offering as well? If the fellow who could not afford the lamb, but could afford the birds, has complaints against the Almighty, which trigger an obligation to bring an olah, then certainly this extremely poor person, who cannot even afford bird offerings, must harbor animosity towards the Almighty for his plight in life, such that he too should need the additional atonement of an olah offering!

The Pnei Dovid answers that the “poorest of the poor”, despite the fact that he will have complaints about his extreme poverty, is shown leniency from the Almighty. The Ribono shel Olam says, “I understand. I sympathize with his plight and with the resulting grievances. I will not demand the atonement of an olah offering from him.” When a person is in such pain, the Almighty does not hold him accountable for what he may think or say. Considering his dire straits, he is given some slack regarding the thoughts that enter his mind, and the words that come out of his mouth.

Chazal say, regarding Iyov, “A person is not held accountable (for what he says) in the time of his (extreme) pain.” [Bava Basra 16b] Likewise, the Pnei Dovid says that the poor person, who must bring bird offerings (rather than an animal), has negative thoughts about his poverty and needs atonement for that; however, the Almighty has mercy on the totally destitute person, who cannot even afford birds, and has complaints against G-d and is angry with Him. Hashem empathizes with his situation, and does not ask for atonement for such understandable feelings of resentment and complaint.

The sefer Bei Chiyah by Rav Elisha Horowitz of Long Island uses this idea to explain a pasuk in Tehillim: “Recall not against us the sins of the ancients (avonos Rishonim); may Your mercies meet us swiftly, for we are exceedingly impoverished.” [Tehillim 79:8] He interprets the words of Dovid HaMelech to mean “Please do not hold against us the avonos Rishonim — the fact that we have, in the past, had evil thoughts against the Ribono shel Olam — Your Mercy should overpower the recollection of those sins.” Why? Because we are so poor! We are like the “poorest of the poor.” Just like You do not hold the “poorest of the poor” accountable for the extra atonement of an olah offering for their sinful thoughts, so too, do not hold us accountable either.

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<http://www.etzion.org.il/en/korban-and-service-heart>

The Sacrificial Service

By Rav Michael Hattin

Introduction

This week we begin to read Parashat Vayikra. In early Rabbinic literature, the book is known as Sefer Kohanim or the 'Book of the Priests,' and many of its words are in fact directed towards the Kohanim. The Ramban (13th century, Spain) expands on this theme in his introduction to the Book:

"This Book tells of the laws pertaining to the Kohanim and Leviim (Levites) and it explains the precepts of the sacrificial service and the rules of maintaining the sanctity of the Mishkan. The previous Book (of Shemot) described the first exile and the redemption from it and was completed with a description of the Tent of Meeting and of how God's presence filled that place. This Book continues this theme by describing the sacrifices and the laws relating to the protection of the Sanctuary so that those sacrifices can achieve atonement for the people, and their transgressions will not bring about the disappearance of the Shekhina (God's presence manifest)... Most of the Book is devoted to the sacrificial cult and pertains to the offerings themselves, those that are fit to offer them, as well as where those offerings may take place. A few other mitzvot relating to this subject are also enumerated... the laws of 'Tum'a' ('impurity') and 'Tahara' ('purity') are also conveyed because of their relevance to the Sanctuary..." (Ramban, Introduction to Sefer Vayikra).

The twin topics of Sacrifice and Tum'a/Tahara, both of which revolve around the Mishkan, are not only the major subjects of Sefer Vayikra, but also among the most conceptually difficult subjects in the Torah. Their importance, though, cannot be underestimated, for although we have ceased to practice them in the aftermath of the Temple's destruction almost two thousand years ago, these two subjects nonetheless constitute a significant part of codified Jewish law and lore. A full two of the six orders of the Mishna are devoted to their laws, and it is therefore a grave mistake to dismiss them without so much as a second thought as necessarily archaic, antiquated, primitive and irrelevant. In the coming weeks we shall view some of these laws through the prism of Rabbinic tradition and commentary, and attempt to understand their profound significance and ongoing pertinence.

Insights for Eternity

As we begin our investigation, let us bear in mind the discerning words of the Abarbanel (15th century, Spain) in his closing remarks to Parashat Teruma (Shemot 27:10):

"Do not think for a moment that the descriptions of the Mishkan, its vessels and its construction, the sacrifices, the offerings of the Princes at its dedication, the priestly garments as well as the rest of the ordinances that were practiced in antiquity, have no relevance for us today in our present state of exile. Indeed, one may be tempted to ask concerning the above, as well as regarding the agricultural laws that pertain to the land of Israel, or with respect to the laws of Tum'a and Tahara, all of which are no longer practiced: what purpose do we achieve by studying and knowing them today?!

"The answer is that one must realize that any matter that is related in the Torah merits its inclusion because it constitutes supernal wisdom and divine knowledge. Anyone who possesses spiritual and religious sensitivity studies these matters in order to achieve perfection of his soul. The verse therefore states: 'You shall observe the matters of this covenant and perform them, in order that you might be successful ('yaskilu') in all of your endeavors' (Devarim 29:8). Our Sages remark: "'Observance' refers to study, and 'Performance' refers to practice." Those singular individuals who strive to achieve perfect wisdom act in accordance with prior study and learning, and

for them there is no appreciable difference between a matter that is applicable and one that is not.

"Therefore what we can understand about the Mishkan and its vessels today is as meaningful now as when it was fully practiced. In this sense, the sacrificial service has not been suspended (although in practice it no longer exists), for study of those matters need not cease. Through comprehending their eternal message, a person can yet achieve subservience and closeness to God, as the verse states: 'A contrite and broken spirit is true sacrifice to God' (Tehillim/Psalms 51:19)."

For the Abarbanel, as well as for countless other commentaries that have faithfully kept alive the memory of traditions and truths that would have otherwise been lost, the primary aim of the Torah remains the perfection of the human personality. Although as committed Jews we understand that the possibility of this perfection is fundamentally a function of deeds, namely the mitzvot of the Torah, Abarbanel indicates to us that the truest and most meaningful deeds are those that are predicated on knowledge and understanding. That being the case, it is still possible to 'offer sacrifices' on the non-existent altar or participate in the now-defunct 'Temple ritual' by studying the relevant (but no longer performed) laws, not only in the sense of their practical application but also in light of their deeper ethical, spiritual and religious truths. This aspect of the Divine potency of these laws is thus forever germane and within our reach.

The View of the Rambam

No proper discussion of the sacrificial service can begin without mention of the Rambam's (12th century, Egypt) explanation of its origins. Rambam, in his broader attempt to understand the mitzvot of the Torah according to rational criteria, provides a general overview of the sacrifices that is striking in its originality, remarkable in its candor, and seemingly attuned to modern sensibilities. It is an explication that has not ceased to stir up controversy and contention, as other commentaries both early and modern have either embraced it as a genuine expression of religious thought or else have rejected it as a dangerous and futile idea that undermines the very service that it seeks to defend.

The Rambam's thoughts on the matter are contained in his 'Guide to the Perplexed' and we shall quote from this work at length. Those who are familiar with the gist of his approach are frequently unfamiliar with its larger context, but this material is critical to appreciating the full scope of his idea. It is important to bear in mind that the Guide is a subject for discussion in itself. Let it suffice to relate that its circulation aroused great strife and dispute in the Jewish world of the Rambam's day and in the centuries afterwards, for the work raised the larger question of the relevance and role of philosophical reason in the explication of the Torah.

The Rambam's views on sacrifice are spelled out in Chapter 32 of the Third Section of the Guide: "...it is not possible to progress from one extreme to the other in a single moment. Therefore, it is not reasonable for people to abandon at once everything to which they have become accustomed. God sent Moshe Rabbenu to make us into 'a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Shemot 19:6) and this was to be achieved by coming to know and to understand Him...and by being separated and dedicated to His service. At that time, the universal practice was to serve the gods through the sacrifice of animals in the temples, by prostration and the offering of incense to graven images, and the Jewish people were much accustomed to these conventions in Egypt. Therefore, God in His wisdom and obvious guidance of His creatures, did not decree that we abandon all those forms of worship and completely relinquish them, for this would have been impossible to accept, according to our human nature that finds comfort in habit."

The Difficulty of Changing Human Nature

The underlying foundation of Rambam's thesis is the recognition that human nature cannot be reshaped and redirected in a single stroke of time. If a person has become accustomed to living their life according to certain beliefs and predicated on certain habits and practices, then these become

ingrained. They cannot realistically be summarily shed, no matter how great the desire to do so or how lofty the impetus to change. To make the matter more comprehensible to his readers, Rambam offers the analogy of a latter-day prophet appearing with the following demand: "God decrees that you serve Him not through prayer, fasting or calling out to Him in time of need, but rather through pure thought alone." In other words, although it could be argued that the purest form of Divine worship is silent, wordless meditation on His essence, such a service would be unthinkable for most of us who have been raised on the ceremony and liturgy of a conventional prayer service.

Human nature being what it is, God therefore sought not to completely uproot everything to which the Jewish people had become accustomed, but rather to subtly and incrementally redirect it to proper ends. Therefore, "God allowed those forms of sacrificial worship to persist, but transferred them from being directed towards images and imaginary gods, to His name. He therefore commanded us to build a sanctuary to His name, to erect an altar to His name, and to offer sacrifice, incense and homage only to Him... in this way, the practice of idolatry was blotted out from among the Jews, and the great and true fundamental idea that God exists and that He is one was able to take shape in our minds. Our natures were not shocked in the process and we felt no strangeness or reluctance in having to relinquish modes of worship with which we were familiar, in order to adopt new ways."

Rambam detects faint echoes of his thesis in the language of the Torah itself: 'let them make for ME a sanctuary' (Shemot 25:8), 'an altar of earth shall you set up for ME' (Shemot 20:21), 'if a person desires to offer sacrifice TO GOD' (Vayikra 1:2). In all three cases, describing the building of a Mishkan, the construction of an altar and the bringing of sacrifice respectively, the directing of the action to God is stressed. This is not only a call to sincere worship, but also a subtle implication that the novelty of the sacrificial service consists in its being deflected away from idolatry and reflected towards the service of the one God.

The Precedent of the Exodus

In order to further bolster his claim that human nature is a significant factor in God's orchestration of events and in His promulgation of laws, Rambam reminds us of the events surrounding the Exodus. It will be recalled that when God took the people of Israel out of Egypt, the Torah relates that He did not direct them by "the way of the Pelishtim, though it was closer. For God said: '...lest the people be engaged in battle, and want to return to Egypt. Therefore, God caused the people to turn and go by the route of the wilderness of Yam Suf...' (Shemot 13:17-18). The most direct route from Egypt to the Promised Land is along the Mediterranean coast, by way of an important and well-trod road later called by the Romans Via Maris or the Way of the Sea. It would have been most reasonable for God to direct the newly freed Hebrews along that way, since the immediate goal was to enter the land of Canaan. Instead, surmising that the Hebrews would encounter the hostile coastal inhabitants enroute and be so frightened by the prospect of combat that they would abruptly do an about face and return to Egypt, God took them by the much more circuitous and less traveled route of the wilderness.

"Just as it is not within the power of human nature for a person raised in oppression and servitude, in hard labor of bricks and mortar, to hastily wash the clay off of his hands and then immediately engage the 'descendants of the giants' (Devarim 9:1-2) in battle, so is it impossible for one who was raised and nurtured on a multiplicity of modes of sacrificial worship to abandon them all in a single stroke." In other words, Rambam explains that the Primary Purpose of entering the land of Canaan seemed to be subverted by God when He instead took the people by way of a less direct route. In the end, though, this 'detour' turned out to be the most direct route imaginable, for had we instead gone by the alternative 'shortcut' of the 'way of the Pelishtim' we would have never succeeded in leaving Egypt at all. So too, the ultimate goal of coming to serve God is sometimes best served by methods that are not necessarily the most direct, particularly when issues of human nature are involved.

The Fundamental Question

Finally, Rambam raises a critical question. If God's ultimate aim is for us to achieve the Primary Purpose of serving only Him directly and without deviation, then why not command us to do so; let Him then inspire us with the strength to overcome our recalcitrant human natures that are reluctant to surrender more familiar idolatrous devotions and that are painfully slow to adapt? The Rambam broadens the question: why didn't God take Bnei Yisrael by way of the sea and then give them the fortitude to fight, if the goal was to enter the Land? Taken to its logical conclusion, Rambam queries, if God wants us to fulfill the words of the Torah and observe its precepts, then why not give us the spiritual strength to do so and thus render 'promises of reward or warnings of punishment' unnecessary? The answer in all three cases is the same: "although it is the case that God intervenes in the world to work miracles that change the state of nature, with respect to HUMAN NATURE God will never step in to alter it... not because it is beyond His capabilities, but because it is not His will now or ever." Since freedom of choice is at the core of the human personality, God never intervenes in a manner that would jeopardize that autonomy. To do so would be an abrogation of the basic tenets that govern the relationship between God and humanity.

Thus, Rambam offers an interpretation that is very much a function of understanding the predicament of being human. Often wanting to change, being expected to change, we are at the same time unable to do so except in small steps. At the same time, however, those small steps in the end make all the difference, for they can draw us away from even idolatry in order to be devoted to the service of God. Next week, we shall explore Rambam's view further, considering its difficulties and limitations, and investigating some heroic attempts to overcome them.

Shabbat Shalom

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Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha - Parshas Vayikra

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Fine Feathered Smells

The laws of the korbanos are difficult and complex. While the underlying theology and philosophy befuddle modern minds, the enormous symbolism, discipline, and commitment that they encompass leave lessons for the inhabitants of a techno-world to cherish. One of those lessons is garnered from the sacrifice of the poor man. The first chapter teaches us about the olah offering, one that is totally burned on the altar. The normal offering was a bull or male sheep; however, a pauper could bring a bird.

"He shall split it — with its feathers — he need not sever it; the Kohen shall cause it to go up in smoke on the Altar, on the wood that is on the fire — it is an elevation-offering, a fire-offering, a satisfying aroma to Hashem" (Leviticus 1:16-17).

The commentaries explain that as most of a bird's pickings are from someone else's property, and thus stolen, the Torah does not allow the innards to be served on the altar.

Therefore, in order to embellish an otherwise very paltry bird-offering (no pun intended), the wings remain, even though burning feathers emit a terribly foul smell.

What bothers me is the following question: Throughout the entire discussion of offerings, the theme of "a satisfying aroma to Hashem" is reiterated. And through our mortal nostrils we understand the concept of the succulent aroma of roast beef. But nothing smells worse than burning bird-feathers. So why do we end the chapter by seemingly feigning Heavenly pleasure by adding the words, "a satisfying aroma to Hashem"?

Rabbi Abraham Twerski tells the story of his grandfather, the Hornsteipler Rebbe.

The custom of the Chassidim was that when gathering for a meal, a large pot would be placed in front of the Rebbe, who would taste a mere morsel of its abundant bounty. He would then pass the rest shirayim to the Chasidim, who would wait anxiously to partake in the leftovers of the Holy Rebbe.

One Shabbos the Rebbe, accompanied by his Chasidim, stayed at the inn of a poor widow. The hostess brought out a sizeable bowl of cholent which was placed in front of the Rebbe.

As was his custom, he tasted a small portion and stopped. He licked his lips and smiled.

"This is truly delicious, I must have some more!"

The Chasidim were stunned. The Rebbe never ate more than a half-teaspoon before beginning the distribution. The Rebbe took a larger portion and again commented on its delightful taste. Then he ate more. He continued to eat, and within ten minutes the pot was empty. The Chasidim were shocked at the seemingly uncharacteristic gluttony of such a holy man.

Dismayed, the shammas returned to the kitchen with the empty pot, only to hear in disappointment that there was no more cholent. Coursing the inside of the pot with his index finger, the shammas tried to partake in some of the remnants of the cholent that the Rebbe had just devoured.

When he licked his finger and recoiled. As he rushed to find water, he realized why the Rebbe consumed the pot while singing the praises of its contents. He now understood why the Rebbe did not distribute it to the Chasidim. He did not want to embarrass the poor woman with a possible snide remark made by one of his flock. For the woman had accidentally added kerosene to the cooking oil. For the Chasidim it may have stank, but to the Rebbe the taste was truly delicious.

When the Torah tells us to leave the feathers on the bird so as not to embarrass the pauper, it tells us as well what the burnt feathers will smell like to the Almighty. They will smell as sweet as the most succulent beef. Sparing embarrassment produces the sweetest smells to the Almighty. In the Philadelphia Yeshiva, a homeless beggar would often visit and stand in the corner of the Bais Medrash. The boys were not able to physically stand near the man because of the terrible odor. But Dr. Shimon Askowitz, would not only cheer the man he would bring him home to give him food and a bath in a most friendly and charming manner. To Dr. Askowitz, it seemed as if the man was bathed in cologne.

Like the pauper's bird's burnt feather, the Doctor smelled a "a satisfying aroma to Hashem." Because to the nose that knows, the smell endured to save the embarrassment of a fellow Jew, is as fragrant as the finest epicurean delight.

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Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky is the Dean of the Yeshiva of South Shore.

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Britain's Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

blogs.timesofisrael.com

The call (Vayikra, Covenant and Conversation 5778)

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

It was never my ambition or aspiration to be a rabbi. I went to university to study economics. I then switched to philosophy. I also had a fascination with the great British courtroom lawyers, legendary figures like Marshall Hall, Rufus Isaacs and F. E. Smith. To be sure, relatively late, I had studied for the rabbinate, but that was to become literate in my own Jewish heritage, not to pursue a career.

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What changed me, professionally and existentially, was my second major yechidut — face-to-face conversation — with the Lubavitcher Rebbe, in

January 1978. To my surprise, he vetoed all my career options: economist, lawyer, academic, even becoming a rabbi in the United States. My task, he said, was to train rabbis. There were too few people in Britain going into the rabbinate and it was my mission to change that.

What is more, he said, I had to become a congregational rabbi, not as an end in itself, but so that my students could come and see how I gave sermons (I can still hear in my mind's ear how he said that word with a marked Russian accent: *sirmons*). He was also highly specific as to where I was to work: in Jews' College (today, the London School of Jewish Studies), the oldest extant rabbinical seminary in the English-speaking world.

So I did. I became a teacher at the College, and later its principal. Eventually I became — again after consulting with the Rebbe — Chief Rabbi. For all this I have to thank not only the Rebbe, but also my wife Elaine. She did not sign up for this when we married. It was not even on our horizon. But without her constant support, I could not have done any of it.

I tell this story for a reason: to illustrate the difference between a gift and a vocation, between what we are good at and what we are called on to do.

These are two very different things. I have known great judges who were also brilliant pianists. Wittgenstein trained as an aeronautical engineer, but eventually dedicated his life to philosophy. Ronald Heifetz qualified as a doctor and a musician, but instead became the founder of the School of Public Leadership at the John F Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. We can be good at many things, but what gives a life direction and meaning is a sense of mission, of something we are called on to do.

That is the significance of the opening word of today's parsha, that gives its name to the entire book: *Vayikra*, "He called." Look carefully at the verse and you will see that its construction is odd. Literally translated it reads: "He called to Moses, and God spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying..." The first phrase seems to be redundant. If we are told that God spoke to Moses, why say in addition, "He called"?

The answer is that God's call to Moses was something prior to and different from what God went on to say. The latter were the details. The former was the summons, the mission — not unlike God's first call to Moses at the burning bush where He invited him to undertake the task that would define his life: leading the people out of exile and slavery to freedom in the Promised Land.

Why this second call? Probably because the book of *Vayikra* has, on the face of it, nothing to do with Moses. The original name given to it by the sages was *Torat Cohanim*, "the Law of the Priests"[1] — and Moses was not a priest. That role belonged to his brother Aaron. So it was as if God were saying to Moses: this too is part of your vocation. You are not a priest but you are the vehicle through which I reveal all My laws, including those of the priests.

We tend to take the concept of a vocation — the word itself comes from the Latin for a "call" — for granted, as if every culture has such an idea. However, it is not so. The great German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) pointed out that the idea of vocation, so central to the social ethic of Western culture, is essentially "a religious conception, that of a task set by God." [2] It was born in the Hebrew Bible. Elsewhere, there was little communication between the gods and human beings. The idea that God might invite human beings to become His partners and emissaries was revolutionary. Yet that is what Judaism is about.

Jewish history began with God's call to Abraham, to leave his land and family. God called to Moses and the prophets. There is a particularly vivid account in Isaiah's mystical vision in which he saw God enthroned and surrounded by singing angels:

Then I heard the Voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

The most touching account is the story of the young Samuel, dedicated by his mother Hannah to serve God in the sanctuary at Shiloh, where he acted as an assistant to Eli the priest. In bed at night, he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed it was Eli. He ran to see what he wanted but Eli told him

he had not called. This happened a second time and then a third, and by then, Eli realized that it was God calling the child. He told Samuel that the next time the Voice called his name, he should reply, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." It did not occur to the child that it might be God summoning him to a mission, but it was. Thus began his career as a prophet, judge and anointer of Israel's first two kings, Saul and David (1 Samuel 3). These were all prophetic calls, and prophecy ended during the Second Temple period. Nonetheless the idea of vocation remains for all those who believe in Divine Providence. Each of us is different, therefore we each have unique talents and skills to bring to the world. The fact that I am here, in this place, at this time, with these abilities, is not accidental. There is a task to perform, and God is calling us to it.

The man who did more than anyone to bring this idea back in recent times was Viktor Frankl, the psychotherapist who survived Auschwitz. There in the camp, he dedicated himself to giving people the will to live. He did so by getting them to see that their lives were not finished, that they still had a task to perform, and that therefore they had a reason to survive until the war was over.

Frankl insisted that the call came from outside the self. He used to say that the right question was not "What do I want from life?" but "What does life want from me?" He quotes the testimony of one of his students who earlier in life had been hospitalized because of mental illness. He wrote a letter to Frankl containing these words:

But in the darkness, I had acquired a sense of my own unique mission in the world. I knew then, as I know now, that I must have been preserved for some reason, however small; it is something that only I can do, and it is vitally important that I do it... In the solitary darkness of the "pit" where men had abandoned me, He was there. When I did not know His name, He was there; God was there.[3]

Reading Psalms in the prison to which the KGB had sent him, Natan Sharansky had a similar experience.[4]

Frankl believed that "Every human person constitutes something unique; each situation in life occurs only once. The concrete task of any person is relative to this uniqueness and singularity." [5] The essence of the task, he argued, is that it is self-transcending. It comes from outside the self and challenges us to live beyond mere self-interest. To discover such a task is to find that life — my life — has meaning and purpose.

How do you discover your vocation? The late Michael Novak argued [6] that a calling has four characteristics. First, it is unique to you. Second, you have the talent for it. Third, it is something which, when you do it, gives you a sense of enjoyment and renewed energy. Fourth, do not expect it to reveal itself immediately. You may have to follow many paths that turn out to be false before you find the true one.

Novak quotes Logan Pearsall Smith who said, "The test of a vocation is the love of the drudgery it involves." All real achievement requires backbreaking preparation. The most common estimate is 10,000 hours of deep practice.

Are you willing to pay this price? It is no accident that *Vayikra* begins with a call — because it is a book about sacrifices, and vocation involves sacrifice. We are willing to make sacrifices when we sense that a specific role or task is what we are called on to do.

This is a life-changing idea. For each of us God has a task: work to perform, a kindness to show, a gift to give, love to share, loneliness to ease, pain to heal, or broken lives to help mend. Discerning that task, hearing God's call, is what gives a life meaning and purpose. Where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.

Shabbat Shalom.

[1] Hence the Latin name *Leviticus*, meaning, "pertaining to the Levites," i.e. the priestly tribe.

[2] Quoted in Michael Novak, *Business as a Calling: work and the examined life*, Free Press, 1996, 17.

[3] Viktor Frankl, *The Unconscious God*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1975, 11.

[4] Natan Sharansky, *Fear No Evil*, New York : Vintage Books, 1989

[5] Viktor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul*, Souvenir Press, 1969, 57.

[6] Michael Novak, *Business as a Calling*, Free Press, 1996, 17-40.

LIFE-CHANGING IDEA #23

For each of us God has a task. Discerning that task, hearing God's call, is what gives a life meaning and purpose.

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Ohr Somayach Insights into Halacha

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

Ohr Somayach :: Insights Into Halacha

Salting With Sugar?!

For the week ending 5 May 2012 / 12 Iyyar 5772

Rabbi Yehuda Spitz

One of the main topics discussed in Sefer Vayikra is that of Korbanos (loosely translated as sacrifices). Due to their complicated nature and exacting minutiae, as well as the relevant Parshiyos falling out during the hectic "Arba Parshiyos" Purim - Pesach season[1], they sort of get lost in the shuffle. But the most common reason why many do not appear so well-versed in this topic is the general feeling that the subject of Korbanos doesn't really "speak" to us, as it just does not seem that relevant to our daily lives, in view of the fact that our daily Tefillos have replaced them ever since the Beis HaMikdash's destruction[2].

Yet, there are some aspects of Korbanos that do have more of a noticeable effect on our everyday lives. For example, the Mitzva to have salt on the table when having a meal[3] is directly based on the requirement to have salt on every Korban[4], as our tables are compared to the Altar and our food to a sacrifice[5].

Another practice based on Korbanos is the proper size of salt needed to salt our meat and chickens when Kashering them. The Shulchan Aruch rules that medium-sized salt should be used (not too big, not too small, just right!)[6]. Rabbeinu Bachaye famously comments[7] that this can be inferred from the verse regarding Korbanos, "b'melach timlach"[8], "that you should salt them with salt". The fact that the Torah uses the same word twice to describe this action shows that it should be done with medium-sized salt. This affects everyone's lives (even if many think their kosher chickens are magically grown on the supermarket shelves), as the proper way to remove the blood from a slaughtered chicken, and thereby rendering it fit for kosher eating, is via this salting[9].

However, over the years, there are some who have stretched this Korbanos connection even more. The Mahar"i Chagiz[10] addresses the issue of whether sugar can be used as a substitute to "salt" a Korban. He maintains that it is indeed permissible to use sugar, as, although sugar is sweet, nevertheless, since it can be used as a preservative, it is considered a true salt. Rav Daniel Tirani, the famed Ikrei HaDa"t[11], takes this comparison a step further, noting that sugar in his time was in fact called by many "Indian salt". Interestingly, he concludes that just as sugar may be used to salt a Korban, so too, if one has no salt available to kasher his meat, he may use sugar instead!

Several authorities ruled similarly, allowing sugar as a substitute for kashering their chickens[12]. The Avnei Nezer[13] even testified that the Gaon from Lisa, the great Chavas Daas, once used sugar to salt his meat! Opposition was not long in coming, though. Many decisors vehemently argued against permitting sugar for salting. Their main objection was that the jump in logic equating Korbanos to salting our meat was tenuous at best. Even if sugar fits into the salt category as a preservative to allow it to be offered on the Altar[14], nevertheless, in order to be used as salt to kasher our meat and chickens, its proficiency in drawing out blood on an equal level as salt would have to be proven! The Yad Yehuda[15] even recorded that

when he asked scientists whether sugar can draw out blood as salt does, he was laughed at.

Due to this, the majority of Halachic authorities through the ages, including the Divrei Chaim, the Maharshak, the Ksav Sofer, and the Ben Ish Chai[16], forbade salting meat or chicken with sugar. Many contemporary poskim as well, including Rav Yosef Chaim Zonnenfeld, the Kaf Hachaim, Rav Moshe Feinstein, the Klausenberger Rebbe, Rav Shmuel HaLevi Vosner, the Tzitz Eliezer, and Rav Ovadiah Yosef[17], write very strongly that salting with sugar is not a viable option. Several authorities maintain that if one transgresses, he might even be required to kasher his utensils used[18]. Nowadays, most of us would consider this whole issue to be moot. However, there have been those who allowed this scenario in extremely extenuating circumstances[19]. Rav Moshe Halberstam zt"l told this author that during the 1948 Israeli Independence War, in the former Arab village now known as Har Nof, the Jews there were cut off from supply lines and were forced to rely upon sugar for salting!

So, the next time we add a "spoonful of sugar" (or a "salt substitute" substitute) into our coffee, we can remind ourselves of the intricacies of the Korbanos that are woven into our daily lives and hope we will soon merit to actually bringing them in the rebuilt Bais Hamikdash.

[1]See earlier article "Configuring The Arba Parshiyos Puzzle".

[2]See Gemara Taanis 27b and Megillah 31b. According to the Talmud, these prayers that are in lieu of Korbanos, are currently "holding up the world!"

[3]Shulchan Aruch and Rema O.C. 167, 5.

[4]Vayikra Ch.2, verse 13.

[5]Gemara Brachos (55a), Beis Yosef (O.C. 167, quoting the Shbolei Leket 141), Rema (ibid), Mishna Berura (ad loc. 30). See also Shla"h (Shaar HaOsiyos, Eimek Bracha 66) and Halachic World (vol. 2, pg. 151, "Table Salt").

[6]Y"D 69, 3 and relevant commentaries.

[7]Well, actually not so famous, but it should be. This astounding comment of Rabbeinu Bachaye's (a Rishon!) was first shown to this author way back when, during his Semicha Test from Rav Moshe Halberstam zt"l, member of the Badat"z Eida Chareidis and author of Shu"t Divrei Moshe.

[8]Vayikra Ch.2, verse 13. Another aspect of modern day salting inferred from this verse is how long the salt must stay on the piece of meat to do its job (Shiur Melicha) - approximately 18 minutes me'ikar hadin - as 'b'melach' has the same Gematriya as 'Mil' (80), the distance that takes approximately 18 minutes to walk. (Issue V'Hetter 1, 9, cited in Baer Heitiv Y"D 69, 21).

[9]Gemara Chullin 113a, in the statement of Shmuel's; Tur/Shu"t a Y"D 69, 4. This is done in order to remove the blood, as eating blood is prohibited - see Vayikra (Parshas Acharei Mos) Ch.17, verses 10 - 14 and Tur / Shulchan Aruch Y"D 65 - 68.

[10]Shu"t Halachos Ketanos (vol. 1, 218). The Ya'avetz (Mor U'Ketziach 318, s.v. kyotzai) appears to accept this as fact, that sugar is considered a type of salt (by bishul on Shabbos).

[11]Ikrei Dinim (O.C. 14, 36). This widely quoted commentary was standard in all older versions of the Shulchan Aruch. He writes that if salt is unavailable, one can use sugar instead without a second's hesitation. See also Darchei Teshuva (69, 328).

[12]Including the Minchas Chinuch (end Mitzvah 119), the Ma'aseh Avraham (Shu"t Y"D 30), the Misgeres Hashulchan (Y"D 69, 21), the Mizmor L'David (116) and the Mei Noach (Shu"t 29).

[13]Shu"t Avnei Nezer (O.C. 532). However, the Piskei Teshuva (pg. 71) posits that it is possible that he wasn't referring to our commercial sugar which "obviously cannot be considered salt".

[14]Which is also not so clear cut, as honey is also a great preservative, yet is banned from being considered a salt substitute on the Altar - Vayikra Ch.2, verse 11. It is worthwhile to read Rav S. R. Hirsch's commentary to this verse.

[15]Yad Yehuda (69, Pih"t 97).

[16]Including Shu"t Divrei Chaim (vol. 1, Y"D 25), Shu"t Tuv Taam V'Daas (Mahadura Kamma, 111), Shu"t Ksav Sofer (Y"D 37), Ben Ish Chai (Shu"t Rav Pe'alim vol. 2, Y"D 4; Ben Ish Chai - Year 2, Parshas Tazria 22), Shu"t Chessed L'Alafim (72), Rav Chaim Falag'i (Ruach Chaim Y"D 69, 5), Arugas HaBosem (Y"D 69, 17), and Shu"t Maharam Brisk (vol. 1, 7). It should be noted that the Mahar"i Chagiz himself was unwilling to make that much of a jump in logic, and only would allow sugar-salted meat if it was nullified with 60 against it.

[17]Including Shu"t Salmas Chaim (vol. 2, 3 - old print), Kaf Hachaim (Y"D 69, 322), Shu"t Igros Moshe (Y"D 3, 23), Shu"t Divrei Yatziv (vol. 2, 14 - 15), Shu"t Shevet HaLevi (vol. 2, 24 & 26), Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer (vol. 9, 35), Shu"t Yabea Omer (vol. 4, Y"D 2 & 3), and Sefer Bris Melach (8, 6, pg. 69a).

[18]Including *Shu"t Kol Mevasser* (vol. 2, 15), *Shu"t Rav Pe'alim* (ibid.), *Arugas HaBosem* (ibid.) and *Shu"t Tzitz Eliezer* (ibid.). See also *Shu"t Yabea Omer* (vol. 4, Y"D 3), and *Rabbi Yaakov Skoczylas' Ohel Yaakov* (on IV"H, expanded edition pg. 22 - 24) on this topic.

[19]See *Shu"t Rivevos Efraim* (vol. 7, 388) who allows salting with sugar for a sick person who can not have salt. However, the *Shevet HaLevi* (ibid.) sharply disagrees and instead allows *chalita* (sort of flash-searing; which ordinarily is not permitted for kashering purposes - see *Shulchan Aruch Y"D 73, 2; Rema Y"D 67, 6; Shach Y"D 67, 13 & 73, 10; R' Akiva Eiger Y"D 73, 2; and Mishna Berura 454, 11 & Biur Halacha 454, s.v. layka*). This is also the opinion of the *Minchas Yitzchak* (*Shu"t* vol. 9, 73) and the *Shmiras Shabbos K'Hilchasa* (Ch. 40, 87; - new print Ch. 40, 100; quoting the *Shu"t Yeshuos Moshe 47*). See also *Shu"t Yad Yitzchak* (vol. 2, 164, 1), *Shu"t Maharash Engel* (vol. 3, 121, 2), *Shu"t Tirosh V'Yitzhar* (178), *Shu"t Har Tzvi* (vol. 2 - Y"D, 66), and *sefer Darchei Halacha* (on IV"H 69, 3, s.v. b'davar) for various scenarios of mixtures that some allow if sugar was substituted. See also *Rav Y. S. Elyashiv's Ha'aros B'Meseches Chullin* (113a) who does not rule conclusively on this topic.

For any questions, comments or for the full *Mareh Mekomos / sources*, please email the author: yspitz@ohr.edu.

Disclaimer: This is not a comprehensive guide, rather a brief summary to raise awareness of the issues. In any real case one should ask a competent Halachic authority.

L'iluy Nishmas the Rosh HaYeshiva - Rav Chonoh Menachem Mendel ben R' Yechezkel Shraga, Rav Yaakov Yeshaya ben R' Boruch Yehuda, and l'zchus for Shira Yaffa bas Rochel Miriam and her children for a yeshua teikef u'miyad!

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Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

OU Torah

Vayikra: Forgiving Fallibility

Rabbi Dr. Tzvi Hersh Weinreb

"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 congressmen, 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 most find it in their hearts to sincerely forgive.

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