

## Weekly Internet Parsha Sheet Behaloscha 5772

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UNITY :: Rabbi Berel Wein

I believe that there is a great deal of difference between unity and conformity. Unity signifies a basic agreement upon principles, accepted values and a willingness to cooperate with others in spite of differences of opinion regarding particular details, tactics and quirks of personality. Conformity, on the other hand, demands complete agreement on details and an acceptance of outside authority that overrules individual initiative and expression.

Conformity as expressed in the coarse vernacular is "my way or the highway!" Of course there are many personal considerations that demand conformity. The Talmud records for us that the wicked Yeravam ben Nevat spurned the Heavenly offer of repentance and respect because he would not even then enjoy precedence over King David in the immortal Garden of Eden.

"Who should go first?" is a potent issue in all human affairs. Many times it is what drives people to leave the camp of unity and insist upon conformity. This is especially true when positions of authority and political or religious exercise of power and leadership are concerned. The Talmud records for us the statement of one of the great rabbis of the time, that when originally offered a position of authority he was most reticent to accept it but once having achieved that role and position he cannot be dragged away from it no matter what.

It is true that power corrupts and the use of unchecked power in any family, community or nation eventually leads to a rigid conformity, which by its very nature corrupts that family, community or nation.

It would seem self-obvious that faced with all of the problems and attacks that rain on the religious Jewish society here in Israel, a modicum of unity between the different factions within that society is a timely necessity. However the bitter truth is that each of the factions that make up religious Jewry are much more interested in conformity than in unity.

I believe that for mainly personal reasons, which are always cloaked in ideology and differences of detail and nuance, this goal of unity has never been achieved here in Israel. The inner disputes in the religious camp over leadership, patronage and personal advancement dwarf any basic ideological differences that may truly exist. This in turn leads to impossible demands of conformity from one group to another so that in turn this defeats any true possibility of unity from arising.

I found it to be very interesting that a change of leadership of the Kadima party here in Israel allowed a unity government to be formed. All of the previously publicized and emphasized ideological and policy differences between Kadima and the government coalition seems to have disappeared though in reality nothing of any import changed except the person that heads the party.

So to me it is pretty obvious that unity requires people of flexibility, tolerance and the willingness to put aside purely personal considerations of honor and reward for the general public good. And that apparently is a lot to ask from people who have clawed their way to top positions in their group or party. "Who walks first at the head of the line?" is a powerful impediment to unity.

A leading American politician once famously said that all politics are local. To a great extent all politics are also personal. The history of Israeli political life is one of bitter personal feuds. This has always been an impediment to a sense of unity in the country. While I certainly agree that it is difficult to overcome human nature, which turns all tactical disagreements and ideological differences into personal feuds, nevertheless we should expect – even demand – a certain greatness from our political and religious leaders that can counterbalance this all too human weakness.

In Jewish history we have the example of the Bnei Beteira who relinquished their rule in favor of Hillel in order to advance and unify the people. Because of their example we find that the later disagreements

between the houses of Shamai and Hillel never turned personal. These great people achieved a sense of unity within Israel by avoiding the temptation of trying to impose conformity. And when the personality differences are ignored or mitigated, conformity will not find any nurturing soil in which to grow.

The entire premise of the Mussar movement in nineteenth century Lithuania was based on the reduction of ego and personal disputes as the basis for achieving unity and not conformity in the Jewish world. Perversely, as all dictators have shown, it is easier to enforce conformity than to achieve unity. Nevertheless we should pursue the goal of unity in all areas of our individual, family, communal and national lives. Shabat shalom.

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### Weekly Parsha :: B'HALOTCHA :: Rabbi Berel Wein

The Torah instructs Aharon and through him all of his successors, the High Priests of Israel that when lighting the great menorah one should make certain that the six outside lamps should all face into the center lamp. There are various opinions amongst the commentators as to how this was to be accomplished. The wicks were bent inwards or perhaps the lamps themselves were tilted towards the middle lamp - or it could have been that this was only one of the recurring miracles that defined the Mishkan and later the Temple in Jerusalem. These are just some of the ideas advanced to explain how this matter was in fact accomplished.

Be all of this as it may have been, the greater question obviously is what lesson is the Torah imparting to us by this instruction that the outside lamps should face the middle lamp. I think that the idea that the Torah wishes us to internalize is that the light of the holy menorah requires focus. We know that in the physical world the more intense and concentrated the focus of the light, the greater is its ability illuminate and reveal. Diffused light creates mood and atmosphere but it does not really show what lies before us. The light of the menorah is symbolic of Torah in Jewish life. Torah, its study, support and observance, requires focus and concentration. It cannot serve its true purpose in our lives when it exists amongst us only in a diffused and generalized sense.

Our rabbis taught us what the focus of Jewish life is and should be: Torah, Godly service, human kindness and consideration for others. Other causes are only to be granted diffused light and they, by themselves, will not serve to erase the darkness of our existence and society. Every human life, every family, even every educational and commercial enterprise requires focus and concentration in order to be successful and productive.

We all have priorities in our lives. These priorities become the plans, actions and ideas that we focus our attention, talents and resources upon. Judaism demands that we focus upon love and study of Torah and its observances. We should concentrate upon our daily conversation, so too speak – our prayer services – with our Creator.

We are required to serve God and do His bidding. And that requires effort, sacrifice and devotion. It is perhaps the most challenging area of our religious life - and demands total focus and concentration. And kindness towards others certainly requires focus. In theory, in a world of diffused light, we all subscribe to the notions of good behavior, social responsibility and charitable ideals. However when we are faced with the individual test of performing a specific human kindness to a specific human being we oftentimes shirk that responsibility.

Our focus is not present and thus we are prevented, not out of malice but simply out of lack of concentration and devotion, from performing the necessary act of kindness that lies before us. Thus the lesson of the menorah is one of focus – the focus that will allow the light of spirit and Godliness to light our way through our lives.

Shabat shalom.

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**Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Beha'alotcha**

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by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - [www.seasonsofthemoon.com](http://www.seasonsofthemoon.com)

**Insights**

**Going Up**

**"In your lighting..." (8:2)**

Once there was a rich nobleman who had a friend who was a simple laborer. The rich man told his friend that he would eat in his home. The laborer did not stint in preparing his home to the maximum of his ability. He cleaned and arranged his meager furnishings, set the table as lavishly as he could, and lit candles to welcome his friend. As it grew dark, the laborer went to the window and saw rising on the horizon a glow. At first, he thought it was the setting sun, but as the sky darkened, the glow continued to get brighter. Suddenly, his friend the nobleman appeared on the crest of the hill with a large group of servants all carrying torches. These torches were so bright that they lit up the night as though it were day. When the laborer saw this entourage approaching his cottage, he turned and looked at his room. The candles that he had arranged paled into insignificance in the glow of the torches that approached his home. Quickly, he extinguished the candles and hid the candlesticks in a drawer. The nobleman entered his cottage and saw the darkness and said, "Were you not expecting me tonight?" "Yes, I was," said the laborer. "Why did you kindle no lights?" enquired the nobleman. "I did," replied the other, "but when I saw the wonderful blaze of lights from the torches of your servants, I was ashamed and hid my candles away."

On hearing this, the nobleman dismissed all his attendants and said, "Tonight I will dine only by the light of your candles so you will see how dear they are to me."

People often ask why G-d gave us so many commandments.

Altogether, there are 613. It's true, however, that not all of them can be performed by everyone. For example, there are mitzvot that only kohanim can do. There are those that only levi'im can do, ones that only women can do, as well as mitzvot that can only be done when the Beit Hamikdash exists. Nevertheless, that still leaves a tremendous amount of mitzvot.

Why does G-d need me to do all these things? What possible benefit is there to the Creator of the World if I put on tefillin, or if I love my neighbor as myself? Whatever little light I can shine into this world is infinitesimal compared to His Light. How can the little light that my kindness generates compare with G-d's eternal kindness in creating the world and giving me the opportunity to exist and create a relationship with Him? Isn't my little light swamped completely by His light?

This is exactly how Moshe felt when he entered the Sanctuary. When Moshe went in there he found the Sanctuary bathed in radiance of the Shechina, the Divine Presence. Moshe wondered how the poor earthly lights of the menorah could radiate any light. He thought they would be overpowered by the brilliance of the Shechina.

What possible use could G-d have for the wicks and oils of mere mortals?

G-d spoke to Moshe using the first word of this week's Torah portion, "Beha'alotcha". This word is usually translated as "When you light"; however it can also mean "In your elevation." G-d was telling Moshe that the mitzvah of the menorah would elevate him. And so it is with all the mitzvot. Every mitzvah is a chance to become spiritually elevated.

The Torah is 613 ways to become closer to G-d.

Based on the Midrash

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**Peninim on the Torah by Rabbi A. Leib Scheinbaum**

**Parshas Beha'aloscha**

**Speak to Aharon and say to him, "When you kindle the lamps." (8:2)**

Parshas Beha'aloscha commences with a brief description of the Menorah and the command that Aharon HaKohen be the individual to light it. He is to be followed by his descendants, the Kohanim, whose service

includes the lighting of the Menorah. This parshah is juxtaposed upon the previous parshah, which described in detail the Korbanos, offerings, brought by the Nesiim, Princes, leaders of each tribe, at the inauguration of the Mizbayach, Altar. The connection between the Chanukas HaMizbayach and the Hadlokas HaMenorah is expounded upon by Chazal in what has become a well-known Midrash.

All the tribes were commanded to bring offerings, with the exception of Shevet Levi. The Prince of Shevet Levi was none other than Aharon HaKohen who took this personally. He said, "Perhaps the Tribe of Levi is unacceptable because of me." Hashem instructed Moshe Rabbeinu to assuage his brother's feelings: "Go and say to Aharon, 'I have prepared greater things for you! As for the sacrifices brought by the Nesiim, they are only applicable as long as the Bais Hamikdash remains standing, but the lights of the Menorah endure forever - and all of the brachos, blessings, which I gave you that you may bless My children will likewise never be cancelled.'"

The Ramban questions this Midrash, wondering why Aharon was satisfied with the lighting of the Menorah, yet seems not to have been calmed by the twice-daily offering of Incense - which was quite praiseworthy - with the animal and daily flour offerings, or with the Yom Kippur service, which was to be performed only by him. Entering into the Kodosh HaKodoshim on the holiest day of the year was an unusual honor. Moreover, all of the members of the Tribe of Levi were to be servants of Hashem. Furthermore, just as the Korbanos were to be cancelled once the Bais Hamikdash was no longer extant, so was the Menorah's function to be ended. The Ramban posits that Chazal's allusion to the Hadlokas HaMenorah is a reference to the lighting of the Chanukah Menorah which continues to this very day.

In other words, Aharon was promised something everlasting. His service would continue far beyond that of the Korbanos. The Chashmonean dynasty had descended from Aharon, since the Chashmoniim were Kohanim. They led the revolt against the Greco - Syrians during the period of the Second Bais Hamikdash. When they came to relight the Menorah, the drop of oil that had been sufficient only for one day miraculously burned for eight days. In the merit of these righteous zealots for the glory of Hashem and His people, Jews throughout the world continue to light the Menorah on Chanukah, the festival that commemorates this miracle.

To recap the above: Aharon was depressed for this Shevet, since, as the Prince of Shevet Levi, he observed that his entire tribe had been excluded from the Inauguration of the Mizbayach. He was granted consolation with the specific avodos, services, rendered by the Kohanim. This, however, does not ameliorate the Levi aspect of the Sanctuary service. Aharon wore two hats: Kohen and Levi. Concerning the Kohen hat, there does not seem to be a satisfactory response to Shevet Levi's exclusion from the Chanukas HaMizbayach.

The Shem M'Shmuel cites his father, the Avnei Nezer, who explains the essential difference between Kohanim and Leviim. The task of the Levi is to connect earth to Heaven, to sanctify the mundane and elevate it to a higher, more sublime sphere. The Levi's role in the Bais Hamikdash is primarily as a singer. His beautiful melodies infuse the people with a sense of deveikus, clinging, to Hashem, inspiring them to raise their hearts and minds Heavenward, thereby lifting them out of the muck of this temporary world. Thus, they transcend their physical limitations and rise above this world.

The Kohen's function is the opposite. He connects Heaven with earth by drawing the Shechinah into the Bais HaMikdash. He does this as the fires descend upon the Altar, infusing the world with the Divine. Interestingly, the Levi performs his service in public, for all to see and, thus, be inspired. The Kohen's service is covert, away from the public eye, reflecting its intensely sublime nature.

We now understand why Aharon took issue with his and his tribe's exclusion from the Chanukas HaMizbayach. Aharon was the Kohen Gadol; he was also the Nasi of Shevet Levi. As their leader, he wanted to take part in their Levitical service, as well as his Priestly service. If he was going to wear two hats, he wanted to play both roles. As a Kohen, he had already been promised exclusive rights to all of the special sacrificial

duties carried out in the Bais Hamikdash. The Heaven to earth connection was alive and well, with Aharon standing at its helm. As head of Shevet Levi, he asked that he play an equal role in the earth to Heaven modality. Aharon sought every opportunity to serve the Almighty. If there was more, he wanted to be included in it. Hashem responded by promising him that he would light the Menorah. The act of lighting the Menorah is a Levitical act, which is apparent upon examining the vernacular in which it is presented in the Torah.

Beha'alo-secha es ha'neiros, "When you light the lights." The word, Beha'alo-secha, translated literally means, "When you raise up." Rashi explains that, since the flame rises up, the word for lighting, which is the precursor for causing the flame to arise, is Beha'alo-secha. This teaches that one needs to madlik u'meitiv es ha'neiros ad she'ha'shalheves oleh mei elehah, hold the taper next to the wick until the flame rises up on its own.

We see now how the Torah goes out of its way to emphasize that not only must Aharon light the candles, he must also see to it that the flames rise Heavenward, in order for the lighting to be complete. This is symbolic of the Levitic form of service, in which the physical/mundane is elevated and sanctified toward Hashem. Igniting spiritual enthusiasm within the physical hearts of the Jew is Shevet Levi's style. Yet, this is performed by a Kohen. Hashem assigned Aharon to do a Levitical activity carried out by a Kohen.

Furthermore, the Menorah's unique connection to the Kohen is preserved by the place - deep within the confines of the Bais Hamikdash - where this service is performed. The Levi served in public, carrying out his service before the people to hear and be inspired. The Kohen's service is executed primarily away from the public view. The Shem MiShmuel observes that this may underscore Chazal's statement that the hadlokas ha'Menorah, lighting of the Menorah, was not actually an avodah, proper Priestly service. For, although it is executed by a Kohen, the nature of the lighting with its distinct earth-to-Heaven flavor, distinguishes it from other Kohanic obligations. We now appreciate why the lighting of the Menorah so assuaged Aharon, whereas any of the other privileges which he enjoyed did not. He was seeking that service which was Levitical in nature, but executed by a Kohen.

With the concepts gained thus far, the Shem MiShmuel offers a brilliant explanation of the Ramban's thesis that Hashem's promise to Aharon that the lighting of the Menorah would continue unabated is an allusion to neiros Chanukah, our annual celebration of lights, commemorating our victory over the Greeks, Hellenists, and the forces of darkness.

With the destruction of the Bais Hamikdash, the Divine service that was so much a part of that holy edifice came to an abrupt end. The only vestige of the Bais Hamikdash service that remains with us today is the lighting of the Chanukah Menorah. This intensely holy expression of our deepest and most spiritual of concepts was performed in the Bais Hamikdash in a discreet, secluded area, behind the walls of the Bais Hamikdash. With the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash and the ensuing galus, exile, the seder ha'davarim, order of things, became altered, since the profundity and confidential nature of the Divine service are under siege. This is reflected by the word, galus, exile, which is a derivative of the Hebrew word, galah, revealed, exposed.

Exile for the Jewish People is a time when, as we have seen throughout history, the forces of evil assail the most sacred components of Jewish life, threatening to profane and reveal that which has been rightfully concealed. The risk of forever losing what we once had is too great, and so the Divine worship is interrupted, a forced hiatus must be enacted. Obviously, the service of the Kohanim, which is their private and sacred charge, cannot be performed, since they are no longer within the confines of the Holy City and Bais Hamikdash. Their work "goes with the territory." Only when the spirituality - which the Kohanim cause to descend via the medium of their service - has the correct place to rest within the seclusion of the Bais Hamikdash can there be any relief of this sort for the Kohen within Klal Yisrael.

The Levi is not restricted by the confines and parameters that prevail over the service of the Kohen. The earth-to-Heaven approach need not be

played out in a spiritually-correct place. He can inspire people to turn to Hashem under any circumstances and in any place. Thus, we understand why the kindling of the Menorah was that vestige of the Bais Hamikdash service which could continue even in galus. The lighting of the Menorah was a Levitical service performed by a Kohen. Its intense and holy light can continue to inspire Jewish hearts and souls even in the darkness of the exile. Its illumination endures, as it causes the inner spark of every Jewish soul to ignite and flame upwards towards Heaven. Indeed, the entire concept of hadlokas ha'Menorah is one of pirsumei nissa, publicizing the great miracle which took place in the time of the Chashmonaim.

The Temple service came to an end with the advent of galus. The intimate service, which was carried out discreetly, could not withstand the public nature of galus. Chanukah candle-lighting, however, thrived on its exposure to the outside world. Indeed, the deeper the exile and the greater the grip of the forces that are antithetical to Torah and mitzvos, the greater efficacy of the message of the candles. The merit of Aharon HaKohen and the Chashmonaim extends far beyond their time, as the radiance of the Chanukah lights continues to illuminate our hearts and minds until this very day.

**Make for yourself two silver trumpets...and they shall be yours for the summoning of the Assembly and to cause the camps to journey. (10:2)**

The chatzotzros, trumpets, were for the exclusive use of Moshe Rabbeinu. The trumpets were hidden just prior to Moshe's demise. Indeed, even Yehoshua, Moshe's successor, did not have access to them. The Talmud Menachos 28a states that none of the Klei ha'Mishkan, vessels that were made by Moshe for use in the Mishkan, was designated only for that period in Jewish History. In fact, they were allowed to be used in either of the Batei Mikdash; and l'asid lavo, in the future, when the third Bais haMikdash will be in existence. The only exception to this rule was the two chatzotzros made by Moshe and used exclusively by him. Even if they were made accessible, they could not be used. New trumpets must be fashioned. The question is obvious: Why? What was there about these trumpets that were uniquely endemic to that period in time?

The Mishkoltzer Rebbe, Shlita, explains that the stated purpose of the chatzotzros was l'mikra ha'eidah, for the summoning of the assembly, to call the nation, to rally them to listen to the dvar Hashem, word of G-d. Every generation has its unique manner of hearkening; every generation has to be summoned differently. The approach that serves best for one generation does not necessarily serve the best interests of the next generation. One generation must be addressed with calm and respect, while another generation must be exhorted to listen. It all depends on the people, the lifestyle, and societal attitudes. It takes an astute leader who is aware of - and acutely attuned to - the issues confronting the people of his generation to determine the best and most successful way to reach them.

**The people would spread out and gather (the manna). (11:8)**

The Zohar HaKadosh says, Shatu ha'am v'laktu - shatya hu da. They were shotim, fools. Those who lay down on the ground to collect manna were fools, for whatever is prepared for a person he will receive without having to "bend down" for it. Indeed, Horav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld, zl, would chastise those close to him if he observed their endeavoring beyond what was necessary in order to earn a living. He exhorted them to do only what was necessary - and no more. Hashem will send His blessing, as He did with the manna. We see that the Jewish people all received exactly what they needed, regardless of how much effort they expended in seeking out the manna. Hashem supplied what everyone needed. They had only to go out and gather it in - no more.

Rav Yosef Chaim would often apply a mashal, parable, from the Chafetz Chaim to lend deeper meaning to this idea. A customer brought a "brilliant" suggestion to the owner of a wine shop. Rather than barely make a living, he could double his profits by adding another spigot to the wine barrel, thus enabling it to pour twice as much wine. Clearly, the customer was far from astute. A person must accept the idea that, regardless of how much one exerts himself in pursuit of his livelihood, the results will be the same.

The flipside is one that has become a way of life for some people: sitting back in deep relaxation as if to say, "Hashem will provide for me. Why should I kill myself to earn a living?" Rav Yosef Chaim would respond with the pasuk in Devarim 15:18, "So that Hashem will bless you in all that you do. Hashem's blessing occurs only after a person begins to act. Indeed, it is only when a man toils for a living that he develops a relationship with Hashem as Provider, for he realizes how integral Hashem is to his success.

Another aspect of striving endlessly to earn more and more money, which has negative consequences, is the feeling that consumes so many people, the delusion of Kochi u'maaseh yadi assah li es ha'chayil ha'zeh, "My strength and my might wrought for me this great wealth" (Devarim 15:18). This condemnation becomes increasingly detestable when, in the pursuit of a livelihood, one reneges on his spiritual obligations. Davening is no longer what it should be - not even what it used to be. We run it for a quick "visit" to the shul, because we do not want to be late for an opportunity to earn more money. Torah study becomes another victim of the pursuit of the almighty dollar. How could a person fantasize Hashem rewarding him for cutting back on his spiritual commitments? Imagine that we would skip a shiur to earn more money. Are we foolish enough to believe that Hashem will reward such abuse?

One wonders: "How am I going to make it? Jobs are difficult to come by. My family is growing and needs support. My qualifications for success in most fields of endeavor are limited. What should I do? There does not seem to be a way to succeed!" This question was presented to Horav Moshe Soloveitchik, zl, of Switzerland, by a man who was literally falling apart from the pressure. He had no way of solving the burning issues confronting him in supporting his family.

Rav Moshe quoted a powerful parable from the Chafetz Chaim. A man stood on a high mountain and gazed down on the city below. From his upraised perch, he saw nothing but the roofs of homes. He saw no streets. Thus, he wondered how the people of the city got around, unless they were walking across the roofs! He descended somewhat, allowing him to observe that there were large thoroughfares, but no side streets. As he kept descending, he was able to see that, actually, there were side streets, backyards and alleys. The lesson is quite simple: at first glance, everything appears overwhelming, with no way to traverse life's obstacles. There are just no roads. But as we mature and gain a deeper perspective on life, we see that, harbei shluchim la Makom, Hashem has many agents, many media for providing His people's sustenance. We must be patient a little bit longer.

**Moshe said to him, "Are you being zealous for my sake? Would that the entire people of Hashem could be prophets!" (11:29)**

The Akeidas Yitzchak expounds on the willingness of Moshe Rabbeinu to yield to others. He did not possess the slightest vestige of jealousy over the fact that his students had been inspired with the spirit of prophecy. Indeed, not only was Moshe not envious of his own students who became prophets, he indicated that if Hashem would enable the entire nation to achieve a level of prophecy, he would be pleased. It is one thing to defer to one's student; it is an entirely different form of deference when one acquiesces to a stranger. In the Sefer Chassidim, cited by Ish L'reieihu, Rabbi Yehudah HaChasid writes that one who is a vatan, who yields, gives in, who gladly relinquishes his money to another Jew, who is filled with joy when the opportunity to lend or help another Jew surfaces, his money is blessed. Whoever invests his money will do well. One who does not begrudge another Jew is not only himself personally blessed, but his money is blessed, as well.

One who possesses an ayin tovah, a good eye, who views everything from a positive perspective, indicates that, in fact, all of his other middos, character traits, are in order. This is in contradistinction to the one who views everything through a lens of jaundice and negativity. There are those who cannot tolerate any form of competition. As soon as they observe another person vying for the position or opportunity they seek, they immediately become negative about the individual, spewing forth cynicism and even venom simply because someone had the "gall" to want what they

wanted, to seek the position they have thought was theirs for the taking. Such a person stuffs his ears, so that the cries of the impoverished and the wretched do not penetrate his peaceful state of mind. After all, he worked - let them also work. He forgets that some people simply do not have it together, or they are embittered people and, thus, lack the personality to "make it" in the marketplace.

The story is told concerning one of the more distinguished students of Horav Chaim Brim, zl, who was offered a position at the helm of one of the esteemed Torah organizations in Yerushalayim. There was some concern, since his office would be in the Old City; riots by the Arabs were taking place at regular intervals, so that it was not very safe. A talmid, disciple, discusses his course of action with his rebbe prior to making any decision of his own. Rav Chaim was prepared to encourage him to take the position, when the student, as an aside for the purpose of giving his rebbe nachas, satisfaction, said, "There were others who applied for this position, but I prevailed." What he meant to intimate was, "Since I am Rav Chaim Brim's talmid, I prevailed." The reaction he received from his rebbe was startling.

Suddenly, Rav Chaim became ashen-faced and began to shake, "Someone else wanted this job, and you did not step aside to yield? Is this what I taught you? Everything that you have done is in direct contrast to the way I act. The most important lesson in life is to defer to others. You came to question me concerning the safety of the position, but the important question, whether you should take a position that others are vying for, you did not ask me!"

Interestingly, whenever Rav Chaim travelled by a taxi driven by a Jewish driver, he always added a shekel to the fare. He explained that it was his way of indicating to the driver that he was pleased with the trip and the price he was charged. Often, the passenger feels that he is being overcharged, so that he pays the fare begrudgingly. By giving an extra shekel above the stated price, he was intimating satisfaction, thereby making the driver feel good. Indeed, one taxi driver was so moved by Rav Chaim's actions, that he returned the fare and kept the tip! He felt the lesson that it imparted was worth far more than the money he would have earned.

Vatranus was a manifest quality intrinsically associated with the Rosh Yeshivah of Beth Medrash Govohah, Horav Shneur Kotler. In his book, "Visions of Greatness," Rabbi Yosef Weiss relates an episode in the Rosh Yeshivah's life which bespeaks this quality. A young yeshivah student studying in one of the Lithuanian yeshivos often dreamed of meeting the venerable Horav Aharon Kotler, zl, face to face. It would be an incredible z'chus, merit and privilege, to meet the fiery Torah giant. He once queried one of his friends who had met Rav Aharon, "Tell me, if I would, by chance, meet Rav Aharon on the train, how would I distinguish him from any other notable Torah scholar?"

The friend smiled, "Simple. If you see a man with blue fire burning in his eyes, you will know it is Rav Aharon."

Years later, the Nazis came to power, and the time for them to execute their Final Solution for the Jewish problem had come. Every Jew who was able to escape, did. It was not easy, and passports were hard to come by. The young yeshivah student was one of the many yeshivah bachurim, students, who rushed to the city of Kovno in the hope of obtaining a passport there.

The young man made his way to the passport office only to stand there staring in chagrin. There were literally hundreds of people standing in line, waiting for that elusive passport. He had no choice other than to wait in line in the hope that he would eventually get a passport before it was too late.

Hours passed, and the line had hardly moved. Perhaps he would not get a passport. There were just so many to go around. He might not be one of the lucky ones. His hopes were dimming by the hour. His prospects did not look positive. Every time the line moved a few inches, he moved forward, hoarding his new space. No one was taking it from him.

A young man who happened to be standing in front of the yeshivah student noticed his agitation and concern. He turned around and gave what

appeared to be a questioning glance. Embarrassed by his impetuous behavior, the yeshivah bachur put his head down and looked for a hole in which to hide himself. Suddenly, without as much as saying a word, the young man who had turned around stepped aside and offered his place to the yeshivah student.

The bachur was awestruck by the young man's behavior, but was not going to look a gift horse in the mouth. He immediately grabbed the spot made available to him by this kind young man. "He must be someone special," he thought to himself. "Surely, if he was waiting in line, he also wanted a passport. Yet, he moved over, yielding his place in line to me. What an incredible person! What kind of nobility of character he must possess to act so selflessly."

Finally, the yeshivah student reached the end of the line. With trembling hands, he took the passport in his hands, stared at it and almost broke down in tears. He was beyond happy. When he saw that the young man who had given him his place in line also had a passport, his joy was complete.

It was only later that he discovered the identity of the young man who had so kindly given up his place to him. He was none other than Rav Shneuer Kotler - Rav Aharon's son! The bachur marveled over Rav Schneuer's ability to be mevater. Clearly, if such was the nobility of his son, can one imagine what the father was like!"

#### **Va'ani Tefillah**

#### **Ha'mechadeish b'tuvo b'chol yom tamid maasei Bereishis.**

#### **In His goodness He renews daily, the work of Creation.**

In Horav S.R. Hirsch's commentary to Bereishis (1:4), he explains the concept of tov, good, with regard to Creation. The Torah (Bereishis 1:31) writes, Va'yar Elokim es kol asher asah, v'hinei tov meod, "And G-d saw all that He had made and behold it was very good." Tov, good, in this sense means that Hashem maintains His Creation in a constant state of existence only because He finds it "good" that it should exist. It, thus, exists only as long as He continues to find it "good" to exist. Contrary to what some non-believers posit, that Hashem created the world and then left it to "itself," we believe that if at any second Hashem's will would run contrary to the world's continued existence, the world would all fade away as if it had never existed. Any and all creations exist only by the will of Hashem. The G-d of Creation is also the G-d of History - something these secularists refuse to acknowledge, because it would make them accountable to Hashem. Indeed, as the Shlah HaKodesh explains: Ein shum metzius ba'olam zulus metziuso Yisborach, "There is no real entity in the world other than Hashem;" Ki b'hesteiro yovad ha'kol, "For with His concealment, it all disappears." Reality is not real. The only reality is Hashem.

In memory of Barbara Pinkis - Esther Chana bas R' Avigdor - niftar 15 Sivan by Michele and Marcelo Weiss and family And Eric and Lisa Pinkis and family

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#### **Orthodox Union / www.ou.org**

#### **Rabbi Weinreb's Parsha Column, Parshat Beha'alotcha**

*Sponsored in memory of Nathan and Louise Schwartz a"h*

#### **"Earning Self-Esteem"**

It was a lesson I learned long ago, when I was a high school classroom teacher. I was new at this line of work, and found that my greatest challenge was to find ways to motivate the students. I tried various approaches, which all were basically attempts to motivate by giving. I tried giving special prizes and awards, granting extra privileges, and even resorting to outright bribery in order to get the students to pay attention, do their homework, and learn the subject matter.

It was a wise mentor who taught me that you can't motivate students by giving to them. Rather, you must find ways to encourage them to give to others. The student who gives to others feels important, and it is the consequent sense of self-esteem which is the most powerful motivator of all.

I'll never forget the first time I tried that strategy. I approached the most recalcitrant student in the entire class. He happened to be a very bright young man, who was, in today's terminology, "totally turned off" to his studies.

I asked him to assist two weaker students with their daily assignment. I caught him completely off guard, so that his reaction was one of utter surprise.

"Who, me?" he exclaimed. "Why should I help those two dunces? If they can't figure it out for themselves, let them flunk."

Although I was convinced that any appeal to his sense of altruism would be futile, I nevertheless gave it a try. I told him that for a society to function successfully the haves must help the have-nots, the strong must aid the weak, and those who are blessed with talent must share their gifts with those who were less fortunate.

It was the phrase "blessed with talent" that did the trick, for he responded, "Do you really think I'm blessed with talent? I guess you're right. I am a talented dude, and I'm going to try to teach those blockheads a thing or two. But if I don't succeed, it won't be my fault!"

He did succeed, and very dramatically. And he recognized that if he was to succeed again at this tutorial task, he would have to be even better prepared next time. He went home that night and studied hard, and was indeed even more successful with his two "blockheads" the next day.

I won't go on to provide the details of my strategy of applying this technique to the rest of the class. Instead I want to demonstrate that this secret of human motivation is implicit in a brief passage in this week's Torah portion, Beha'alotcha. In this parsha, the Torah devotes all of the tenth chapter of Numbers to a detailed description of the sequence in which the tribes marched through the desert. About two thirds of the way into this chapter, we unexpectedly encounter the following conversational interlude:

And Moses said to Chovav, son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place of which the Lord has said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will be generous with you; for the Lord has promised to be generous to Israel."

"I will not go," he replied to him, "but will return to my native land." "

"He said, 'Please do not leave us, inasmuch as you know where we should camp in the wilderness and can be our guide [literally read as "eyes"]. So if you come with us, we will extend to you the same bounty that the Lord grants us.'" (Numbers 10:29-32)

That ends the dialogue, and we are never explicitly told whether or not Moses' second attempt at persuasion convinced Chovav to accompany the children of Israel. His first attempt, promising to be generous to him, was rejected emphatically by Chovav with a resounding, "I will not go!"

What did Moses change in his second attempt? Quite simply, he told Chovav that he would not be merely the passive recipient of another's generosity. Rather, Moses assured Chovav that he had expertise which was indispensable to the Jewish people. He could give them the guidance through the wilderness that they desperately required. He would not just be a taker, but a giver as well.

In short, Moses was appealing to Chovav's sense of self-esteem. He was saying to him, "You are an important person. Your talents are needed. You are an actor with a part to play in this drama."

What I was doing, as a fledgling teacher so many years ago, to that turned-off student, was essentially precisely what Moses was trying to do with Chovav in his second attempt to convince him to accompany the children of Israel upon their journey through the desert.

When reading the text, one can easily assume that Moses learned a great lesson which caused him to abandon the strategy of promising to be generous. Instead, he adopted an entirely different strategy, one which conveyed the message to Chovav that he would not merely be a consumer of favors. Rather, he would earn the Lord's generosity because of the valuable contribution that he would make, and that only he could make.

There is a lesson here not just for teachers and students, or leaders and followers. There is a lesson here for all of us in dealing with other human beings. We must be sensitive to their needs for self-esteem. We must

recognize their talents and what they can bring to bear upon whatever task lies at hand. When a person is convinced of his or her own importance and value, he or she will be motivated and will act accordingly. Understanding the dialogue between Moses and Chovav in this manner allows us to readily accept the conclusion of our Sages. They filled in the "rest of the story" and assured us that Chovav was finally convinced by Moses' second argument and did indeed join his fate and those of his descendants to the destiny of the Jewish people.

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**Orthodox Union / [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org)  
Britain's Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks**

### **Is a Leader a Nursing Father?**

It was the emotional low of Moses' life. After the drama at Sinai, the revelation, the golden calf, the forgiveness, the building of the Tabernacle and the book-length codes of purity and holiness, all the people can think about is food. "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!" (Num. 11: 5-6). It was enough to make anyone despair, even a Moses. But the words he speaks are shattering. He says to God:

"Why have you brought this trouble on Your servant? What have I done to displease You that You put the burden of all these people on me? Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land You promised on oath to their ancestors? Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. If this is how You are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me —if I have found favor in Your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin." (Num. 11: 11-15)

These words deserve the closest attention. Inevitably our attention focuses on the last remark, Moses' wish to die. But actually this is not the most interesting part of his speech. Moses was not the only Jewish leader to pray to die. So did Elijah. So did Jeremiah. So did Jonah. Leadership is difficult; leadership of the Jewish people almost impossible. That is an old story and not an uplifting one.

The real interest lies elsewhere, when Moses says: "Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant?" But God never used those words. He never remotely implied such a thing. God asked Moses to lead but He did not tell him how to lead. He told Moses what to do, but He did not discuss his leadership style.

The man who gave Moses his first tutorial in leadership was his father-in-law Jethro, who warned him of the risk of the very burn-out he is now experiencing. "What you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone" (Ex. 18: 17-18). He then told him to delegate and share his burden with a team of leaders, much as God is about to do in our parsha.

Interestingly, Moses' burn-out occurs immediately after we read, at the end of the previous chapter, of Jethro's departure. Something very similar happens later in parshat Chukkat (Num. 20). First we read of the death of Miriam. Then immediately there follows the scene at Merivah when the people ask for water and Moses loses his temper and strikes the rock, the act that costs him the chance to lead the people across the Jordan into the promised land. It seems that in their different ways, Jethro and Miriam were essential emotional supports for Moses. When they were there, he coped. When they were not, he lost his poise. Leaders need soul-mates, people who lift their spirits and give them the strength to carry on. No one can lead alone.

But to return to Moses' speech to God, the Torah may be hinting here that the way Moses conceived the role of leader was itself part of the problem.

"Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do You tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant?" This is the language of the leader-as-parent, the "great man" theory of leadership. Building on, and going beyond, the theories of Gustave le Bon and the "group mind," Sigmund Freud argued that crowds become dangerous when a certain kind of leader comes to power.[1] Such a leader, often highly charismatic, resolves the tensions within the group by seeming to promise solutions to all their problems. He is strong. He is persuasive. He is clear. He offers a simple analysis of why the people are suffering. He identifies enemies, focuses energies, and makes the people feel whole, complete, part of something great. "Leave it to me," he seems to say. "All you have to do is follow and obey."

Moses never was that kind of leader. He said of himself, "I am not a man of words." He was not particularly close to the people. Aaron was. Perhaps Miriam was also. Caleb had the power to calm the people, at least temporarily. Moses had neither the gift nor the desire to sway crowds, resolve complexity, attract a mass following or win popularity. That was not the kind of leader the Israelites needed, which is why God chose Moses, not a man seeking power but one with a burning sense of justice and a passion for liberty.

Moses, though, seems to have felt that the leader must do it all: he must be the people's father, mother and nurse-maid. He must be the doer, the problem-solver, omniscient and omniscient. If something needs to be done it is for the leader – turning to God and asking for His help – to do it. The trouble is that if the leader is a parent, then the followers remain children. They are totally dependent on him. They do not develop skills of their own. They do not acquire a sense of responsibility or the self-confidence that comes from exercising it. So when Moses is not there – he has been up the mountain for a long time and we do not know what has happened to him – the people panic and make a golden calf. Which is why God tells Moses to gather a team of seventy leaders to share the burden with him. Don't even try to do it all yourself.

The "great man" theory of leadership haunts Jewish history like a recurring nightmare. In the days of Samuel the people believe all their problems will be solved if they appoint a king "like all the other nations." In vain, Samuel warns them that this will only make their problems worse. Saul looks the part, handsome, upright, "a head taller than anyone else" (1 Sam. 9), but he lacks strength of character. David commits adultery. Solomon, blessed with wisdom, is seduced by his wives into folly. The kingdom splits. Only a few subsequent kings are equal to the moral and spiritual challenge of combining faith in God with a politics of realism and civic virtue.

During the Second Temple period, the success of the Maccabees was dramatic but short-lived. The Hasmonean kings themselves became Hellenised. The office of High Priest became politicised. No one could contain the growing rifts within the nation. Having defeated the Greeks, the nation fell to the Romans. Sixty years later Rabbi Akiva identified Bar Kochba as another "great man" in the mould of Judah the Maccabee, and the result was the worst tragedy in Jewish history until the Holocaust. Judaism is about diffused responsibility, making each individual count, building cohesive teams on the basis of a shared vision, educating people to their full potential, and valuing honest argument and the dignity of dissent. That is the kind of culture the rabbis inculcated during the centuries of dispersion. It is how the pioneers built the land and state of Israel in modern times. It is the vision Moses articulated in the last month of his life in the book of Devarim.

This calls for leaders who inspire others with their vision, delegating, empowering, guiding, encouraging and making space. That is what God was hinting to Moses when he told him to take seventy elders and let them stand with him in the tent of meeting, and "I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the spirit that is on you and put it on them" (Num. 11: 16-17). God was telling Moses that great leaders do not create followers; they create leaders. They share their inspiration. They give of their spirit to others. They do not see the people they lead as children who need a father-mother-nursemaid, but as adults who need to be

educated to take individual and collective responsibility for their own future.

People become what their leader gives them the space to become. When that space is large, they grow into greatness.

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## **Rabbi Yissocher Frand - Parshas Beha'aloscha**

### **We Don't Even Understand Our Own Motives Without Wise Counsel From Others**

Parshas Beha'aloscha contains the Misonenim [the complainers] [Chapter 11]. The Jews wanted to eat meat. They remembered all the good delicacies they ate in Egypt and bemoaned the fact that they were lacking those same foods in the Wilderness. "All we have is this manna". This is another example of "The more things change, the more they stay the same." Jews are always complaining about the food! They longed for the onions and the garlic they ate in Egypt. The pasuk teaches [Bamidbar 11:10] that Moshe heard the people crying to each other (bochim l'mishpachosem) at the opening of his tent. Rashi explains that the expression "bochim l'mishpachosem" means that the people would gather in family groups out in the open to publicize their complaints to one another. It was like a family picnic, but instead it was a family "cry-in". Everyone sat on their stoop or sat on their doorstep and publicly complained about the food situation in the wilderness. Rashi further cites the teaching of the Rabbis that the crying was "concerning the families" – namely they complained about the forbidden sexual relationships that the Torah legislated for the Jewish nation.

According to this Rabbinic tradition, the main complaint was not about onions. This event happened not long after the receipt of the Torah. The Torah prohibited many women from marriage -- the relationships known as the "Arayos" prohibitions. This is what they were crying about. They said "onions" but they meant "Arayos". Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky asks a simple question: How can we put words into their mouths? The pasuk says they complained about the onions and the cucumbers. Why do the Rabbis interpret this to be something totally different than the simple reading of Scripture (p'shuto shel Mikra)?

In his Sefer, Emes L'Yaakov, Rabbi Kamenetsky points out similar phenomenon many times in Chumash where Chazal put a far more sinister interpretation on what would otherwise seem to be innocent comments. Another example is in next week's parsha where Moshe charges the Spies to gather intelligence about the nations of Canaan? When the Spies come back and report that the people are "stronger than we are" the Zohar (which is quoted by many of the commentaries as well) claims that the Spies had an agenda. They were afraid that when they go into the Land of Israel they would lose their positions of leadership and honor in the nation. Therefore, they subconsciously sabotaged the plans to take the nation into Eretz Yisrael so that they would not lose their grip on power. Here too, Rav Yaakov asks: How do Chazal know this?

Again, in describing Lot's decision to settle in Sodom following his breakup with Avram, a simple reading of the pasukim would indicate that the decision was made on the very practical grounds that Lot was a shepherd and that the land surrounding Sodom was fertile and bountiful. Here too Chazal attribute sinister motives to Lot: He specifically picked the area because of its reputation for lewdness and immorality. Sodom was "Sin City" of its time and according to the Rabbis (without any apparent support from the Biblical text), that is why Lot went to Sodom. The same question can be asked here. Why can't we take Lot's statement at its face value? Simply say that he wanted to go to Sodom because the land was fertile?

Rav Yaakov answers: Chazal do this because they descend to the depths of man's psyche. They are telling us something very profound about human nature. Everyone has subconscious feelings and forces and desires that perhaps even the person himself is not completely aware of. Something goes on inside a person that is more than meets the eye. Chazal, either through ruach haKodesh or through their sensitive intuition of how human

beings function, know that something deeper is going on. When people gather on their front doorsteps and cry out loud so that everyone will hear, they are not just crying about onions! People do not cry about onions. They are crying about something else.

Likewise, there were other lush places in Eretz Yisrael. When Lot specifically picked Sodom – why did he do it? It is because whether he realized it or not there were subconscious motivations occurring within him. This happens in each and every person. A person must always introspect and check his motives.

When people go to psychologists or psychiatrists and tell them their problems, if the professional is keen and he understands human nature, he recognizes that what the person is saying is NOT what he really means. These are the words he is saying, but there is something else that is really going on in his mind. A wise individual or a highly trained professional will be able to detect what is really happening deep within a person's mind.

That is why Chazal repeat this approach over and over in their explanation of the Chumash narrative. How do they know that? They know it because they know and understand people. They are trying to tell us that this happens to each and every one of us. We each have hidden agendas and subconscious motives. We have what is called 'negius' [personal bias]. We do not really know or understand ourselves fully because we are so subjective about decisions that affect us.

How can we protect ourselves from these blind spots? As we have said at other times, the counsel we must follow is that of the Mishna in Avos [1:6]: Make for yourself a Rav [mentor] and acquire for yourself a Chaver [close friend]. We need to have our actions and our motives reviewed by our peers or by our teachers who can "tell it to us like it is!" Without such advice and guidance, we cannot function.

A person who says "I know I am 'nogeah' [biased], but..." will conclude that sentence by making a statement that he should totally ignore. If one is 'nogeah' he is disqualified from ruling about the matter – period! So who will pasken for him? That is why it is so crucial that everyone have a Rav or a Rebbe or an older advisor and counselor to give him guidance in those matters about himself for which he is disqualified from ruling. That is why Pirkei Avos advises to be "koneh" [literally purchase] a chaver). One needs to make that investment, whatever it takes, to ensure the ability to have honest peer-review of his actions.

Today, relationships are superficial. A 'chaver' is not just someone you say hello to or occasionally schmooze with. A 'chaver' is someone you can open up to and trust. It is someone you can tell things 'as they are' about yourself and he can return the favor for you. Everybody needs that. The reason Chazal spend so much time pointing this out throughout the Chumash is because they are trying to bang this idea into our heads: You cannot trust yourself."

Having a Rebbe and having a Chaver is one of the most precious commodities in life. This is why the Mishna which advises "Make yourself a Rav and acquire for yourself a Chaver" concludes with the words "and judge every man with the benefit of the doubt (l'kaf zechus). Invariably in life, one's Rav or his Chaver will disappoint him. We will be upset with him for not coming to a Simcha or not devoting as much time to us as we expected of him. It is easy to be dismissive under such circumstances: "That is not a Rav; that is not a friend." The Mishna exhorts us "Hevey dan es kal ha'Adam l'kaf zechus" – cut the person some slack; give him the benefit of the doubt! Do not walk away from relationships like that for such petty reasons. Such relations are just too important to abandon so lightly! Even if it means bending over backwards and coming up with crazy explanations for him – do it. It is worth preserving the relationship of a Rav or a Chaver.

### **The True Test of a Jewish Leader**

Moshe complains to the Almighty: "Did I conceive this entire people or did I give birth to it, that You say to me, 'Carry them in your bosom, as a nurse carries a suckling, to the Land that You swore to its forefathers?'" [Bamidbar 11:12]. Rashi says: This is the job of a leader. "Lead them with

the understanding that they may even stone you and insult you." The Gemara says [Sanhedrin 8a] "A judge must bear the (aggravation from) the community" and quotes as a proof the text of our pasuk in Behaloscha "...as the nursemaid bears the suckling baby." A community leader must sometimes look at his flock like little babies. Babies can be so bad one minute and the next minute they can be fine. How can one lose his temper with a one year old? The infant does not know what he is doing. One cannot spank a one year old child! This, the Torah tells the leaders, is how they have to look at the Jewish people. They are like babies who cannot control themselves.

Yirmiyah u is probably the most tragic prophet who ever lived. For years, he told the people that the end was near, that the Beis HaMikdash was going to be destroyed, that they should do Teshuvah. They did not listen to him. They abused him. They threw him in jail, in a pit of mud. He starved. After all they did to him, it turned out that he was right -- the destruction came. After the destruction, the people came to him and asked him to inquire on their behalf of the Almighty whether they should stay in Eretz Yisrael or go to Egypt. They told him they would listen to whatever the L-rd told them. Yirmiyahu asked their question and the answer he was given was that they should stay in the Land of Israel and the Almighty would protect them there. Upon hearing this answer (which was not the answer they wanted to hear), the people accused the prophet of lying once again.

Despite this chutzpah of the people, despite the years of frustration with their abuse, when the people ignored his message and left Eretz Yisrael for Egypt and invited him to follow them – Yirmiyahu followed them to Egypt! As the Medrash states – "If there is no vineyard, why do you need a fence?; If there are no flocks, why do you need a shepherd?"

Yirmiyahu said, "How can I not go with them? They are a flock and I am their shepherd." How would you and I react to such treatment? "You want me to go to Egypt with you? – I'll tell you where you can go! Enough is enough!" But Yirmiyahu goes, because Yirmiyahu was a leader and a leader understands the secret of "like a nursemaid bears the child". He understands that they are a bunch of babies and they have to be dealt with by utilizing the same infinite patience one has when dealing with babies. This is the true test of a Manhig Yisrael.

Transcribed by David Twersky Seattle, WA; Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman, Baltimore, MD  
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## Rav Kook List

### Rav Kook on the Torah Portion

#### Beha'alotecha: Aaron's Punishment

##### Speaking Against Moses

It seems unfair. Both Aaron and Miriam spoke disparagingly of their brother. Both failed to grasp the unique level of Moses' prophecy. They considered Moses their spiritual and prophetic equal. "Is it only to Moses that God speaks? Does He not also speak to us?"

God was angry with them, and punished Miriam with leprosy.

"God displayed anger with them and departed. When the cloud left the Tent, Miriam was leprous, white like snow. Aaron turned to Miriam, and saw she was leprous." (Num. 12:9-10)

Why was only Miriam punished with leprosy? Why was only Miriam publicly embarrassed with a visible affliction associated with the improper use of language? Why was only Miriam forced to stay outside the encampment for a whole week?

According to the Sages, Aaron did not get off scot-free. They understood the words "God displayed anger against them" to indicate that Aaron was also disciplined. His punishment, though, was less severe than Miriam's, since it was his older sister who instigated the verbal attack on Moses. Miriam's leading role is highlighted by the fact that she is mentioned first: "Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses..."

What was Aaron's Punishment?

The exact nature of Aaron's punishment, however, is a matter of dispute. Rabbi Akiva said that Aaron was also punished with leprosy. But, unlike Miriam who suffered for a full week, Aaron's affliction was transient.

Rabbi Yehudah Ben-Betaira disagreed. Aaron was not physically disciplined. His punishment was being reprimanded by God.

According to Rabbi Akiva, Aaron was physically punished like Miriam. There must have been some minor defect in Aaron's character that led to his lack of awareness of Moses' unique prophetic stature. This personality defect required the physical affliction of leprosy - albeit briefly - in order to cleanse and rectify it.

Rabbi Yehudah, on the hand, rejected the idea that Aaron was subject to such a defect. Unlike Miriam, Aaron's sin was a matter of misjudgment - an error of the intellect. Therefore, the appropriate punishment was a Divine rebuke. Actual physical correction was unnecessary.

#### Revealing What the Torah Wished to Conceal

Rabbi Yehudah rejected his colleague's opinion for a second reason:

"Akiva! In either case you will be called to task [for your words]. If you are right, the Torah shielded him, while you disclose him. And if not, you have cast a stigma upon a righteous man."

Even if Rabbi Akiva was right and Aaron was in fact afflicted with leprosy, the Torah does not say so explicitly. If the Torah purposely chose to conceal Aaron's punishment, what right did Rabbi Akiva have to publicize it?

How could Rabbi Akiva not be attentive of this point?

Rav Kook explained that for Rabbi Akiva, there was no difference between a hidden detail inferred from a verse, and a punishment explicitly stated. Rabbi Akiva was famous for expounding each marking of the 'crowns' embellishing the letters of the Torah. In his extraordinary love for the Torah and his penetrating sensitivity to each hint and nuance, the implicit and the explicit were equal.

(Adapted from Ein Eyah vol. IV, pp. 239-241, on Shabbat 97a)

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## Weekly Halacha

### by Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

#### A Seven-Branched Candelabrum

Question: In view of the Biblical prohibition against replicating vessels that were used in the Mishkan, would one be allowed to make a seven-branched candelabrum? If one owns such a candelabrum, is he allowed to keep it?

Discussion: The Talmud<sup>1</sup> forbids fashioning [or owning<sup>2</sup>] a seven-branched menorah, in keeping with the Biblical<sup>3</sup> prohibition<sup>4</sup> of "imitating" any of the vessels (keilim) that were used in the Mishkan. There are three views in the early authorities as to the extent of the prohibition:

1. Only an exact replica is prohibited—any deviation from the original in the Mishkan is permitted.<sup>5</sup>
2. Any Menorah which would have been considered kosher b'diavad in the Mishkan is prohibited.<sup>6</sup>
3. Any seven-branched menorah, made out of any metal, regardless of its shape or form, is prohibited.<sup>7</sup>

Shulchan Aruch<sup>8</sup> (as explained by the Shach) rules in accordance with the middle view, i.e., that a candelabrum that is not made exactly like the one in the Mishkan but would be kosher b'diavad is prohibited. He rules, therefore, that even if the candelabrum is not made from gold but from other types of metals; if the replica is made without the decorative cups, knobs, or flowers that were part of the original Menorah; if the candelabrum is shorter than the eighteen tefachim (approx. six feet) that the original Menorah measured—it is still prohibited. But a seven-branched candelabrum made out of wood or porcelain, for instance, is permitted since even b'diavad such a Menorah is invalid for use in the Mishkan. Similarly, a menorah which is made to hold candles and not oil

would be permitted since such a Menorah could not be used in the Mishkan either.<sup>9</sup> Several latter-day poskim rule in accordance with this view.<sup>10</sup>

There is, however, a minority view that recommends following the third—more stringent—approach, and forbids making or owning a menorah which would not have been considered kosher even b'diavad. In their opinion, it is forbidden to make any candelabrum, no matter what its shape or form, if it has seven branches. Even a menorah which is made to hold candles and not oil would be prohibited. A menorah which is round or square would also be prohibited.<sup>11</sup>

Although the basic halachah follows the more lenient opinion, some poskim suggest that since this prohibition is of Biblical origin, we should be stringent.<sup>12</sup> L'chatchilah, therefore, one should not make [or own] any seven-branched<sup>13</sup> candelabrum, either oil- or candle-based, made in any shape or out of any metal.<sup>14</sup> Some poskim forbid even a seven-branched electric candelabrum,<sup>15</sup> while others permit it.<sup>16</sup> While it is best to refrain from making one, if one happens to have such a menorah, it is permitted to retain it.<sup>17</sup>

The poskim agree that one who owns a seven-branched candelabrum could “fix” it by either adding or removing a branch,<sup>18</sup> or by merely capping one of the branches.<sup>19</sup> But it is questionable if one may retain an eight-branched candelabrum from which one branch accidentally broke off.<sup>20</sup>

- 1 Rosh ha-Shanah 24a.
- 2 Beur ha-Gra, Y.D. 141:21; Birkei Yosef, Y.D. 141:8. See Darchei Teshuvah 141:52 for a more lenient opinion.
- 3 Tosafos, Avodah Zarah 43b.
- 4 Yisro 20:20.
- 5 Teshuvos Chacham Tzvi 60. See also Meiri (Rosh ha-Shanah 24a) who opines that any deviation from the Menorah of the Mishkan is permitted.
- 6 Teshuvos Maharik 75, in explanation of the view of Tosafos.
- 7 Bechor Shor (Rosh ha-Shanah, 24a.)
- 8 Y.D. 141:8.
- 9 Mishnas Chachamim, quoted by Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 141:14.
- 10 Darchei Teshuvah 141:56, quoting several poskim; Igros Moshe, Y.D. 3:33; Yabia Omer 1:12 and Yechaveh Da'as 3:61. [Rav Yosef (ibid.) questions whether or not it is permitted according to this view to make an oil menorah which cannot hold the required minimum of half a lug.]
- 11 Pischei Teshuvah, Y.D. 141:14-15; Sho'el u'Meishiv Kama 3:71, quoted in Darchei Teshuvah 141:56; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 168:5. Note that Bechor Shor writes that even according to the view of the Shulchan Aruch (the middle view), a round menorah would be prohibited, since a round Menorah may be kosher b'diavad for use in the Mishkan.
- 12 Halichos Shelomo, vol. 2, 15 note 13.
- 13 But any candelabrum with six, eight, or nine branches may be made and kept in one's possession.
- 14 See Toras Chayim, pg. 120, that Rav Y.C. Sonenfeld recommends that l'chatchilah, even a wood or porcelain menorah should be avoided.
- 15 Shearim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 168:4 quoting Chavalim ba-Ne'imim 3:54; Yaskil Avdi 7:16.
- 16 Ma'archei Lev, pg. 484; Mishpatei Uziel (tanina, Y.D. 18).
- 17 See Yabia Omer 1:12 Yechaveh Da'as 3:61.
- 18 Birkei Yosef, Y.D. 141:8, quoted by Darchei Teshuvah 141:52.
- 19 Rav C. Kanievsky (Halichos Chayim, vol. 2, pg. 118).
- 20 See Darchei Teshuvah 141:53.

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## Can We Offer the Korban Pesach Without the Beis HaMikdash? By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

*This week's parsha, BeHaaloshcha, includes discussion about the offering of Pesach Shenii. In this context, I bring you:*

In the year 5017 (1257), several hundred Baalei Tosafos, led by Rav Yechiel of Paris, traveled from France to Eretz Yisroel. An almost-

contemporary gadol, the Kaftor VaFarech, records a fascinating story (Vol. 1, page 101 in the 5757 edition). Rav Ashtori HaParchi, the author of Kaftor VaFarech, had gone to Yerushalayim to have his sefer reviewed by a talmid chacham named Rav Baruch. Rav Baruch told the Kaftor VaFarech that Rav Yechiel had planned to offer korbanos upon arriving in Yerushalayim. Kaftor VaFarech records that, at the time, he was preoccupied completing his sefer and did not think about the halachic issues involved, but afterwards realized that there were practical halachic problems (that we will discuss shortly) with Rav Yechiel's plan.

I think we can assume that Rav Yechiel's plan to offer korbanos failed. His community of Baalei Tosafos settled in Acco, as we know from a report of the Ramban about ten years later. (The Ramban reports that he spent Rosh HaShanah with the community of the Baalei Tosafos in Acco and delivered to them a drasha that was recorded for posterity. This drasha is printed in Kisvei HaRamban, Vol. 1 pg. 211. Rav Chavel, who added notes to this essay, concludes that this drasha was delivered either in 1268 or in 1269, based on the fact that the Ramban was in Eretz Yisroel for three years from his arrival until his passing, and that he spent the first Rosh Hashanah in Yerushalayim, which had no Jewish community at the time.)

Let us fast forward to the nineteenth century. Rav Tzvi Hersh Kalisher, the rav of Thorn, Germany, who had studied as a youth in the yeshivos of Rabbi Akiva Eiger and the Nesivos HaMishpat (Rav Yaakov of Lisa), published a sefer advocating bringing korbanos in the location where the Beis HaMikdash once stood in Yerushalayim. Rav Kalisher considered it not only permissible to offer korbanos before the Beis HaMikdash is rebuilt, but even obligatory.

As one can well imagine, his sefer created a huge furor. Rav Kalisher corresponded extensively with his own former roshei yeshiva, Rabbi Akiva Eiger and the Nesivos, and other well-known luminaries of his era, including the Chasam Sofer and the Aruch LaNer. All of them opposed Rav Kalisher's opinion, although not necessarily for the same reasons.

We can categorize the opposition to Rav Kalisher's proposal under three headings:

1. There was almost universal disagreement with his opinion that we have a requirement to try to offer korbanos before the reconstruction of the Beis HaMikdash (see also Sefer Hachinuch, Mitzvah 440).

2. Some rabbonim, notably Rav Yaakov Ettlinger, the author of the Aruch LaNer, prohibited offering korbanos before the reconstruction of the Beis HaMikdash, even if we could resolve all the other halachic issues involved (Shu"t Binyan Tzion #1). However, we should note that this did not seem to be a concern to either Rav Yechiel of Paris or Rav Ashtori HaParchi. Furthermore, Rabbi Akiva Eiger asked his son-in-law, the Chasam Sofer, to request permission from the ruler of Yerushalayim to allow the offering of korbanos. Presumably, Rabbi Akiva Eiger felt that his son-in-law, who had a close connection to the Austro-Hungarian royal family, might be able to use the influence of the royal family to make contact with the rulers of the Ottoman Empire, who ruled over Yerushalayim at the time. The Chasam Sofer responded with great respect to his father-in-law, but pointed out that the Beis HaMikdash area is unfortunately covered by a mosque that is sacred to its Moslem rulers who will not permit any non-Moslem to enter (Shu"t Chasam Sofer, Yoreh Deah #236). Thus, we see that both Rabbi Akiva Eiger and the Chasam Sofer agreed with Rav Kalisher that we are permitted to bring korbanos before the reconstruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

3. Numerous halachic hurdles need to be overcome in order to offer korbanos. The discussion of these issues forms the lion's share of the debate.

Rav Kalisher corresponded extensively on this issue, eventually producing a sefer “Derishas Tzion” (published many years after the demise of Rabbi Akiva Eiger, the Chasam Sofer, and the Nesivos) and subsequent essays where he presented and clarified his position. I know of three full-length books and numerous essays and responsa that were published opposing Rav Kalisher's thesis.

Before quoting this discussion, we need to clarify several points. First, can we indeed offer korbanos without the existence of the Beis HaMikdash?

**MAY ONE BRING KORBANOS WITHOUT THE BEIS HAMIKDASH?**  
The Mishnah (Eduyos 8:6) quotes Rabbi Yehoshua as saying, "I heard that we can offer korbanos even though there is no Beis HaMikdash." The Gemara (Zevachim 62a) tells us a story that provides us with some background to this statement. "Three prophets returned with the Jews from Bavel (prior to the building of the second Beis HaMikdash), Chaggai, Zechariah and Malachi, each bringing with him a halachic tradition that would be necessary for the implementation of korbanos. One of them testified about the maximum size of the mizbeiach, one testified about the location of the mizbeiach, and the third testified that we may offer korbanos even when there is no Beis HaMikdash." Based on these testimonies, the Jews returning to Eretz Yisroel began offering korbanos before the Beis HaMikdash was rebuilt.

Obviously, Rav Kalisher and Rav Ettlinger interpret this Gemara differently. According to Rav Kalisher and those who agreed with him, the prophet testified that we may offer korbanos at any time, even if there is no Beis HaMikdash. Rav Ettlinger, however, understands the Gemara to mean that one may offer korbanos once the construction of the Beis HaMikdash has begun, even though it is still incomplete. But in the view of Rav Ettlinger, after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash we may not offer korbanos until Eliyahu announces the building of the Third Beis HaMikdash.

An earlier posek, Rav Yaakov Emden, clearly agreed with Rav Kalisher in this dispute. Rav Emden, often referred to as "The Yaavetz," contends that Jews offered korbanos, at least occasionally, even after the second Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, which would be forbidden according to Rav Ettlinger's position (She'aylas Yaavetz #89). This is based on an anecdote cited by a mishnah (Pesachim 74a) that Rabban Gamliel instructed his slave, Tevi, to roast the Korban Pesach for him. There were two Tanna'im named Rabban Gamliel, a grandfather and a grandson. The earlier Rabban Gamliel, referred to as "Rabban Gamliel the Elder" lived at the time of the second Beis HaMikdash, whereas his grandson, "Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh," was the head of the Yeshiva in Yavneh and was publicly prominent after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. Thus, if we can determine which Rabban Gamliel is the protagonist of the mishnah's story, we may be able to determine whether Jews offered korbanos after the Churban. This would verify Rav Kalisher's opinion.

Rav Emden assumes that the Rabban Gamliel who owned a slave named Tevi was the later one. He thus concludes that Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh offered korbanos after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash. Although the Yaavetz brings no proof that the Rabban Gamliel in the above-quoted mishnah is Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh, he may have based his assumption on a different Gemara (Bava Kama 74b), which records a conversation between Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabban Gamliel concerning Tevi. Since Rabbi Yehoshua was a contemporary of Rabban Gamliel of Yavneh, this would imply that the later Rabban Gamliel indeed offered the Korban Pesach after the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash.

However, this source does not address the numerous halachic issues that need to be resolved in order to allow the offering of korbanos. Although Rav Kalisher responded to these issues, the other gedolim considered his replies insufficient.

#### KORBANOS ON THE MOUNTAIN

The Brisker Rav, Rav Velvel Soloveichik, raised a different objection to Rav Kalisher's proposal. Basing his opinion on several pesukim and halachic sources, he contended that the Beis HaMikdash site has kedusha only when it is a high mountain. Since the Romans razed the top of the original mountain and it is no longer the prominent height it once was, it is not kosher for offering korbanos, until the mountain is raised again to its former glory (quoted in Moadim U'Zemanim, Volume 5, pg. 222). Thus, according to this approach, one of Moshiach's jobs will be to raise the mountain to its former height. Presumably, Rav Kalisher felt that although

the mountain should and will be raised, korbanos may be offered before that time.

I will now present some of the other questions involved in ascertaining whether we may bring korbanos before the coming of Eliyahu and Moshiach.

#### MAY A TAMEI PERSON ENTER THE BEIS HAMIKDASH?

Virtually all opinions agree that it is a Torah prohibition to offer korbanos anywhere in the world except for the designated place in the Beis HaMikdash called the mizbeiach. This creates a halachic problem, because it is a severe Torah prohibition to enter the Beis HaMikdash grounds while tamei, and virtually everyone today has become tamei meis through contact with a corpse. (Someone who was in the same room or under the same roof as a corpse also becomes tamei meis.) Although other forms of tumah can be removed by immersion in a mikvah at the appropriate time, tumas meis can be removed only by sprinkling ashes of the parah adumah (the red heifer) on the person in question. Since the ashes of the previously prepared paros adumos are lost, we cannot purify ourselves from tumas meis. Thus, we would be prohibited from bringing most korbanos because every kohen is presumed to be tamei meis.

Gedolim have discussed whether a new parah adumah can be prepared before the arrival of the Moshiach, but I am refraining from citing this discussion because of space considerations.

However, although we have no available kohanim tehorim, this would not preclude our offering Korban Pesach or certain other public korbanos (korbanos tzibur).

#### IN WHAT WAYS IS KORBAN PESACH DIFFERENT FROM MOST OTHER KORBANOS?

Most korbanos cannot be brought when either the owner of the korban or the kohen offering the korban is tamei. However, the Torah decrees that korbanos that are offered on a specific day must be brought, even when every kohen is tamei. Thus, the Korban Pesach, the daily korban tamid, and the special mussaf korbanos that are brought on Shabbos, Yom Tov and Rosh Chodesh may, if necessary, be offered by a kohen who is tamei meis.

Other korbanos, however, may not be offered by a kohen who is tamei even if this results in them not being brought at all. Thus, since there is no tahor kohen available today, we would assume that Rav Yechiel planned to offer only one of the above korbanos (Shu"t Chasam Sofer, Yoreh Deah #236).

#### LOCATION OF THE MIZBEIACH

As mentioned above, the debate over Rav Kalisher's proposal concerned other halachic issues that must be resolved before we may offer korbanos. The Kaftor VaFarech raised two of these issues more than five hundred years before Rav Kalisher. How could Rav Yechiel offer korbanos when we do not know the exact location of the mizbeiach? As the Rambam writes, "The location of the mizbeiach is extremely exact and it may never be moved from its location.... We have an established tradition that the place where David and Shlomoh built the mizbeiach is the same place where Avraham built the mizbeiach and bound Yitzchak. This is the same place where Noah built a mizbeiach when he left the Ark and where Kayin and Hevel built their mizbeiach. It is the same place where Adam offered the first korban, and it is the place where he (Adam) was created.

"The dimensions and shape of the mizbeiach are very exact. The mizbeiach constructed when the Jews returned from the first exile was built according to the dimensions of the mizbeiach that will be built in the future. One may not add or detract from its size" (Hilchos Beis HaBechirah, 2:1-3).

As noted above, prior to building the second Beis HaMikdash, the prophets Chaggai, Zechariah and Malachi testified regarding three halachos about the mizbeiach that were necessary to locate the mizbeiach and reinstitute the korbanos. If so, how can we offer korbanos without knowing the location of the mizbeiach?

Rav Kalisher offered an answer to this question, contending that the prophets' testimonies were necessary only after the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash because the Babylonians razed it to its very foundations. However, Rav Kalisher contended that sufficient remnants exist of the second Beis HaMikdash to determine the mizbeiach's precise location, thus eliminating the need for prophecy or testimony to establish its location.

Rav Kalisher's correspondents were dissatisfied with this response, maintaining that the calculations based on the Beis HaMikdash remnants could not be sufficiently precise to determine the mizbeiach's exact location. Thus, they felt that we must await the arrival of Eliyahu HaNavi to ascertain the mizbeiach's correct place.

#### YICHUS OF KOHANIM

Do we have "real" kohanim today? Only a kohen who can prove the purity of his lineage may serve in the Beis HaMikdash (see Rambam, Hilchos Issurei Biyah, 20:2). The Gemara calls such kohanim "kohanim meyuchasim." Kohanim who cannot prove their lineage, but who have such a family tradition, are called "kohanei chazakah," kohanim because of traditional practice. Although they observe other mitzvos of kohanim, they may not serve in the Beis HaMikdash.

An early source for the distinction between kohanim who can prove their lineage and those who cannot is the story found in Tanach about the sons of Barzilai the Kohen. When these kohanim came to bring korbanos in the second Beis HaMikdash, Nechemiah refused them because of concerns about their ancestry (Ezra 2:61-63; Nechemiah 7:63-65). The Gemara states that, although Nechemiah permitted them to eat terumah and to duchen, he prohibited them from eating korbanos or serving in the Beis HaMikdash (Kesubos 24b). Similarly, today's kohanim who cannot prove their kehunah status should be unable to serve in the Beis HaMikdash. This would eliminate the possibility of offering korbanos today.

However, Rav Kalisher permits kohanei chazakah to offer korbanos. He contends that only in the generation of Ezra and Nechemiah, when there was a serious problem of intermarriage (see Ezra, Chapter 9), was service in the Beis HaMikdash restricted to kohanim meyuchasim. However, in subsequent generations, any kohen with a mesorah may serve in the Beis HaMikdash.

Chasam Sofer (Shu"t Yoreh Deah #236) also permits kohanei chazakah to offer korbanos, but for a different reason, contending that although using a kohen meyuchas is preferred, a kohen who is not meyuchas may serve in the Beis HaMikdash when no kohen meyuchas is available.

Other poskim dispute this, maintaining that a kohen who is not meyuchas may not serve in the Beis HaMikdash (Kaftor VaFarech).

The question then becomes: If only a kohen who can prove his kehunah may offer korbanos, and there are no surviving kohanim who can prove their kehunah, how will we ever again be able to bring korbanos?

The answer is that Moshiach will use his Ruach HaKodesh to determine who is indeed a kosher kohen that may serve in the Beis HaMikdash (Rambam, Hilchos Melachim 12:3). Of course, this last approach preempts Rav Kalisher's proposal completely.

#### VESTMENTS OF THE KOHEN

Before korbanos are reintroduced, gedolei haposkim will have to decide several other matters, including the definitive determination of several materials necessary for the kohen's vestments.

The Torah describes the garments worn to serve in the Beis HaMikdash as follows: "Aharon and his sons shall put on their belt and their hat, and they (the garments) shall be for them as kehunah as a statute forever," (Shemos 29:9). The Gemara deduces, "When their clothes are on them, their kehunah is on them. When their clothes are not on them, their kehunah is not on them," (Zevachim 17b). This means that korbanos are valid only if the kohen offering them wears the appropriate garments.

One of the vestments worn by the kohanim is the avneit, the belt. Although the Torah never describes the avneit worn by the regular kohen, the halachic conclusion is that his avneit includes threads made of techeiles,

argaman, and tola'as shani (Yoma 6a). There is uncertainty about the identification of each of these items. For example, the Rambam and the Ravad dispute the identity of argaman (Hilchos Klei HaMikdash, 8:13). The identity of techeiles is also unknown. Most poskim conclude that Hashem hid the source of techeiles, a fish known as chilazon, and that it will be revealed only at the time of Moshiach. Thus, even if we rule that our kohanim are kosher for performing the service, they cannot serve without valid garments! (It should be noted that several great poskim, including the Radziner Rebbe, the Maharsham, Rav Herzog and Rav Yechiel Michel Tukochinski contended that we could research the correct identity of the techeiles. I have written other articles on the subject of identifying all of these sources of dyes.)

Rav Kalisher himself contended that the garments of the kohen do not require chilazon as the dye source, only the color of techeiles. In his opinion, chilazon dye is necessary only for tzitzis. (He based this approach on the wording of the Rambam in Hilchos Tzitzis 2:1-2.) Therefore, in Rabbi Kalisher's opinion, one may dye the threads of the avneit the correct color and perform the service. However, other poskim did not accept this interpretation, but required the specific dye source of chilazon blood to dye the vestments (Likutei Halachos, Zevachim Chapter 13 pg. 67a).

Rav Kalisher did not discuss the dispute between the Rambam and the Ravad about the color of the argaman. Apparently, he felt that we could determine the answer and dye the avneit threads appropriately.

The other poskim raised several other issues concerning Rav Kalisher's proposal. One question raised is that Klal Yisroel must purchase all public korbanos from the funds of the machatzis hashekel, which would require arranging the collection of these funds. However, this question would not preclude offering Korban Pesach, which is a privately owned korban.

Rav Kalisher's disputants raised several other questions, more than can be presented here. The gedolei haposkim of that generation rejected Rav Kalisher's plan to reintroduce korbanos before the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash.

However, we have much to learn from his intense desire to offer korbanos. Do we live with a burning desire to see the Beis HaMikdash rebuilt speedily in our days? May we soon merit seeing the kohanim offering all the korbanos in the Beis HaMikdash in purity and sanctity, Amen.

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#### Beha'alotecha - Eating Fish On Shabbat

#### Rabbi Asher Meir

The Kitzur Shulchan Arukh writes that "it is a mitza to eat fish at each Shabbat meal" (KSA 72:7, as found in Magen Avraham OC 242:1 citing Tikunei Shabbat).

There is no actual requirement to eat fish on Shabbat. Rather, fish is repeatedly cited by our rabbis as a food which makes the Shabbat a delight. Even so, many original and profound ideas have been propounded which draw a more profound connection between fish and Shabbat. Here is an approach which incorporates some of these ideas:

In another column, we gave one explanation why fish do not require ritual slaughter. The basic reason is that the slaughter of the animal, cutting it off suddenly from the air of this world, is symbolic of the need for the Jew to be willing to completely slaughter his bestial nature, to "choke off" his subordination to material desires. This is a prerequisite for the next stage, the elevation of the material world to holiness, a process which is effected by consuming kosher meat.

Fish, conversely, are likened by the Zohar to the completely righteous, the Roshei Yeshiva. These individuals don't need to separate themselves from their material environment because they are in a completely different world, the sea of Torah. Just as fish occupy themselves with material pursuits in the same way as beasts, but in a completely altered environment, so the Roshei Yeshiva occupy themselves with these in the way of other people, but their eating and drinking are soaked in the concepts and the holiness of the Torah (See TT Shemini 5762).

However, on Shabbat all Jews obtain a neshama yeteira, an "extra soul", which enables them to enjoy material pursuits in holiness, without being drawn into coarse bestiality. This is why bodily delights are a special mitzva on Shabbat. In other words, on Shabbat all Jews are able to attain the special level of the "Roshei Yeshiva" who are not spiritually compromised by their material endeavors. This special level is symbolized by fish, which do not require slaughter to separate them from the world; it is enough to gather them up from the water.

This idea is closely bound up with another common motif of fish. Fish are considered to be free of the "evil eye". (See Rashi on Bereshit 48:16.) The concept of the "evil eye" in brief is that we should try not to flaunt our good fortune because this will attract negative elements. This concept is basic and intuitive on the material level; a person who shows off his

wealth, and particularly one who shows off his generosity, is likely to attract many unscrupulous people who will try to benefit from his largesse. This consideration is very important in our environment, in which good and bad, light and darkness, are intermixed. Our efforts to do and display good are always in danger of nourishing the forces of evil; the remedy for this problem is modesty.

But the sea represents a world where this admixture is not present, an environment of pure loving kindness. In such an environment there is no evil eye, and there is no reason to hide or limit good fortune.

Rabbi Asher Meir is the author of the book *Meaning in Mitzvot*, distributed by Feldheim. The book provides insights into the inner meaning of our daily practices, following the order of the 221 chapters of the *Kitzur Shulchan Arukh*.

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