

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET
ON SHMINI - PARSHAS HACHODESH - 5757

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ohr@jer1.co.il (Ohr Somayach) parasha-qa@jer1.co.il (In-depth questions on Parashat HaShavua w/ Rashi) Parshas Shmini - Parshas HaChodesh

Parsha Questions 1. What date was "Yom Hashmini"? 2. Which of Aaron's korbanos atoned for the golden calf? 3. What two korbanos did Aaron offer for himself? 4. What korbanos did Aaron offer for the Jewish People? 5. What was unique about the Chatas offered during the induction of the Mishkan? 6. When did Aaron bless the people with the Birkas Kohanim? 7. Why did Moshe go into the Ohel Mo'ed with Aaron? 8. Why did Nadav and Avihu die? 9. Aaron quietly accepted his sons' death. What reward did he receive for this? 10. What specific prohibitions apply to a person who is intoxicated? 11. Name the three Chatas goat offerings that were sacrificed on the day of the inauguration of the Mishkan. 12. Which he-goat Chatas did Aaron burn completely and why? 13. Why did Hashem choose Moshe, Aaron, Elazar, and Isamar as His messengers to tell the Jewish People the laws of Kashrus? 14. How did the Jewish People know which animals were permissible to eat? 15. What are the signs of a kosher land animal? 16. How many non-kosher animals display only one sign of Kashrus? What are they? 17. What are the signs of kosher fish? 18. If a fish sheds its fins and scales when out of the water is it kosher? 19. Why is a stork called chasida in Hebrew? 20. The chagav is a kosher insect. Why don't we eat it?

Bonus QUESTION: "These, however, you shall not eat. the camel, because it chews its cud and lacks split hooves; it is not kosher..(11:4)" The camel is not kosher because it lacks split hooves. The Torah, however, states the reason for its being not kosher "because it chews its cud and lacks split hooves." How is chewing its cud relevant to being not kosher? Isn't cud-chewing a kosher characteristic?

I Did Not Know That! The characteristic traits of kosher birds are not specified in the Torah. Rather, the Torah lists all categories of birds that are not kosher. All birds not listed in the Torah are kosher. (In actual practice, we don't eat any type of bird unless it is traditionally established as kosher.) Aruch Hashulchan 82:2,31

Recommended Reading List Ramban 9:17 Relation of Miluim and Shmini Korbanos to Tamid 10:15 Heaving and Waving Sefer Hachinuch 149 Dignity in the House of Hashem 150 Respect for the Service

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated 1. 9:1 - 1st of Nissan. 2. 9:2 - The calf offered as a Korban Chatas. 3. 9:2 - A calf as a Chatas and a ram for an Olah. 4. 9:3,4 - A he-goat as a Chatas, a calf and a lamb for an Olah, an ox and a ram for Shlamim, and a Minchah. 5. 9:11 - It's the only example of a Chatas offered on the courtyard Mizbe'ach that was burned. 6. 9:22 - When he finished offering the korbanos, before descending from the Mizbe'ach. 7. 9:23 - For one of two reasons: Either to teach Aaron about the service of the incense, or to pray for the Shechina to dwell with Israel. 8. 10:2 - Rashi offers two reasons: Either because they gave a halachic ruling in Moshe's presence, or because they entered the Mishkan after drinking intoxicating wine. 9. 10:3 - A portion of the Torah was given solely through Aaron. 10. 10:9-11 - He may not give a halachic ruling. Also, a kohen is forbidden to enter the Ohel Mo'ed, approach the Mizbe'ach, or perform the avoda. 11. 10:16 - The goat offerings of the inauguration ceremony, of Rosh Chodesh, and of Nachshon ben Aminadav. 12. 10:16 - The Rosh Chodesh Chatas: Either because it became tamei, or because the kohanim were forbidden to eat from it while in the state of aninus (mourning). 13. 11:2 - Because they

B'S'D' accepted the deaths of Nadav and Avihu in silence. 14. 11:2 - Moshe showed them the various animals and pointed out which were permissible to eat and which were not. 15. 11:3 - An animal whose hoofs are completely split and who chews its cud. 16. 11:4,5,6,7 - Four: Camel, shafan, hare, and pig. 17. 11:9 - Fins and scales. 18. 11:12 - Yes. 19. 11:19 - Because it acts with chesed (kindness) toward other storks regarding food. 20. 11:21 - We have lost the tradition and are not able to identify the kosher chagav.

Bonus ANSWER: Symbolically, having one of the two kosher characteristics makes the animal 'more' non-kosher. It symbolizes hypocrisy, as if the animal is saying, "Look, I chew my cud -- I'm kosher!" Kli Yakar

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ohr@jer1.co.il (Ohr Somayach weekly@jer1.co.il (Highlights of the Torah weekly portion) Parshas Shmini ...

Please Read Before Using! "...And they brought before Hashem a strange fire that He had not commanded them..." (10:1) The Torah is the instruction manual of the world written by the Maker of world. No one knows better how to operate a machine than its maker. Imagine someone buying a new car. The salesman says to the proud new owner "Oh, yes sir. One more thing -- your instruction manual." The driver says "Oh, I don't need that. I instinctively feel what the tire pressures should be, and I have a sixth sense when the car needs a major service. I know intuitively what octane fuel the car needs." Few people when faced with operating something as precise and unforgiving as a car would leave these sorts of decisions to instinct and feeling. Life is no less demanding nor complex than a car. Rather more so! And yet many people are happy to coast along, assuming that they are not putting water in their spiritual gas tank. The purpose of life is to become close to the Creator of the world, and only the Creator of the world knows how the world can be utilized to become close to Him. We live in an era where people are more interested in feeling spiritual than being spiritual. We are a TV generation taught to expect endless effortless instant gratification, where this-week's-guru, or mail-order instant-kabbala try to replace the hard work of real spiritual growth. That is what the Torah is warning us against in the story of Nadav and Avihu. The "strange fire" may feel spiritual, but it cannot connect with the source. And the reason it cannot connect is the seemingly redundant phrase "which He had not commanded them." If it was a strange fire, then by definition it was not commanded by Hashem. Rather, the reason it was strange is because it was not commanded. Our connection with Hashem is through doing His will. Because the will of a person and himself are indivisible -- the self expresses itself as the will. Only when we do Hashem's will, do we bring ourselves close to Him. The mitzvos are the will of Hashem expressed in concrete form. Any other form of worship is merely feeling spiritual -- it's not being spiritual. And for people on the level of Nadav and Avihu, that was a failing of a very fundamental kind.

Kosher Style "Every (animal) that has a split hoof, which is completely separated into double hooves, and that brings up its cud - that one you may eat." (11:3) These two aspects of a kosher land animal are not a means of identifying them as being kosher, rather they are the cause of them being kosher. In other words, having split hooves and regurgitating its cud are what makes the animal kosher. The Torah specifically tells us that one of these aspects without the other renders the animal as non-kosher as if it had neither. The split hoof represents the outward behavior of man towards his fellow, and the chewing of the cud represents the inward relationship between Man and G-d. If a person behaves in a kosher way only with his fellow or only with Hashem, he is, nevertheless, treif. Source: Rabbi Avraham Pam

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mj-ravtorah@shamash.org Shiur HaRav Soloveichik ZTL on Parshas Shemini (shiur date: 4/4/78)

And Aharon raised his hands and blessed the people. Rashi interprets this blessing as Birkas Kohanim (Nesias Kapayim) since it says that Aharon raised his hands, which indicates the blessing of Nesias Kapayim. The next verse tells us that Moshe and Aharon entered Ohel Moed and upon their exit they jointly blessed the people. Rashi interprets their blessing as "May the Shechina reside in what you have built for Hashem" and that they said Vehi Noam. Nesias Kapayim and Birkas Kohanim were not included in this blessing. As we have previously mentioned, Moshe had the status of a Kohen Gadol. Why didn't Moshe and Aharon, the 2 Kohanim Gedolim, jointly recite Birkas Kohanim upon exiting from the Ohel Moed?

The Rav explained: we find that the children of Aharon are sometimes referred to as Bnay Aharon Hakohanim and other times as Bnay Aharon Hakohen. Some of the Avodos Hamishkan were given specifically to Aharon. All those who followed him acted as his representative, a virtual Aharon. For example, the Avodas Yom Kippur was given specifically to Aharon. Aharon was permitted to enter the Kodosh Hakodoshim any time he wanted to. It is only his successors that were restricted to entering once a year, on Yom Kippur, and only then as the representative and personification of Aharon. (This concept is portrayed in the Attah Konanta description of the Avodas Yom Kippur, included in Nussach Sefard.) In such cases the children of Aharon are called Bnay Aharon Hakohen. Aharon permits a Kohen Gadol as well as Kohen Hedyot to perform their respective Avodos Hamishkan. The Ramban comments that the Mitzvah of lighting the Menorah was given specifically to Aharon. Even though Kohanim Hedyotim could also light the Menorah, they were permitted to do so only because Aharon did it before them.

Nesias Kapayim was another Mitzvah where Aharon himself was indispensable. Why do Kohanim recite the blessing Asher Kidshanu B'kdushaso Shel Aharon, why not say that they were blessed with Kedushas Kehuna? Because the Mitzva of Nesias Kapayim for all subsequent generations was given specifically to Aharon, and through him, to his descendants who represent him in the performance of the Mitzvah. Since Aharon was given the Mitzvah of Nesias Kapayim (and his children through him) while Moshe was not given this Mitzvah, Moshe could not join Aharon in Birkas Nesias Kapayim. Therefore they offered a different blessing.

Rashi notes that the second blessing, given jointly by Moshe and Aharon, was the Vehi Noam. The Rav asked if this second blessing was given voluntarily or were they somehow required to bless the people at that point?

The Rav explained that it would appear that this was an obligatory blessing on the part of Moshe and Aharon. We find a similar obligatory blessing even today based on Korban Tamid Shel Shachar. In the times of the Mikdash, the Kohanim gathered early and the appointed leader would tell them to recite one of the Birchos Krias Shema (it is a Machlokes as to whether it was Yotzer Or or Ahava Rabbah), Krias Shema and an abbreviated Shemoneh Esray of Retzay and Sim Shalom. A Jew who brings a Korban is required to pray that Hashem accept the sacrifice. For sometimes Hashem might choose to reject a Korban. For example we find that Hashem rejected the Korban of Kayin. We find in the Tochacha (sections of rebuke) that Hashem promised that he would not accept the Korbanos of the people if they sin and do not follow His laws. There is no guarantee that the Korban just brought will be accepted by Hashem. Therefore a Jew must pray and ask that Hashem should accept his Korban. Moshe and Aharon blessed the people with Vehi Noam, and prayed that Hashem should accept their Korbanos, just as the Kohanim prayed in the Mikdash that the Tamid Shel Shachar should be accepted.

The Rav asked: why don't the Kohanim pray that the Korban should be accepted before they actually do the Avoda, instead of reciting their prayer after it? The Rav explained that we learn from Parshas Shemini that there is a requirement to pray after the offering of the Korban. The prayer of Moshe and Aharon was more than a personal prayer. It was the prayer of all Klal

Yisrael that the Korbanos that were just brought by Aharon should be accepted. Moshe and Aharon offered the prayer as the representatives of Klal Yisrael.

We find a similar concept with the Anshei Maamad. While one group of Kohanim were present at the daily sacrifice in the Mikdash, there were other groups that were located in the cities of Israel that would fast and pray on Monday and Thursday and prayed that the Korbanos Hatzibbur should be accepted. We learn in Parshas Shemini that Moshe and Aharon were the first of the Anshei Maamad in praying for the acceptance of the Korbanos Hatzibbur.

We find this concept of prayer for the acceptance of our sacrifices in our Shemoneh Esray. The last Beracha of the section where one details his needs (Bakasha) is Shema Koleinu, which is followed by Retzay. On the surface, these two Berachos, Shema Koleinu and Retzay, appear redundant. However, on closer inspection we find that they serve very different purposes. Shema Koleinu is recited after one concludes his requests that Hashem answer his prayers for personal as well as communal needs (concluding with Es Tzemach). Though Hashem is the ultimate hearer of our prayers, He may not always accept them. Hence we pray Shema Koleinu, that the ultimate acceptor of prayer should answer ours favorably.

Tefila is also Avoda Shebelev, it is equated to Korban. We use the term Retzay (which is used in conjunction with the acceptance of Korbanos) and ask that not only should Hashem accept our Tefilos as prayer and supplication, but as a Korban and ultimate Avoda Shebelev. Similarly, we find that as part of the Avodas Yom Kippur the Kohen Gadol would read from the Torah and recite Berachos whose themes were that Hashem should accept the Korbanos of the day that were already brought. At the conclusion of the Pesach Seder we have Nirtzah where we pray that Hashem should accept our Korban Pesach which we have just concluded. The concept of Nirtzah applies where there is a Korban. For example, there is no concept of Nirtzah with Lulav. The concept of asking for Ritzuy Hakorban, that the Korban should be accepted, is based on these verses in Parshas Shemini.

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ravrand@torah.org Rabbi Frand on Parshas Sh'mini These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion: Tape # 93, Melacha Before Havdala. Good Shabbos!

Guarding Against Feeling Too Good About Oneself In this week's Parsha we have the culmination of the Seven Days of Consecration, used to dedicate the Mishkan. On the eighth day, Moshe called Aharon and told him which offerings to bring to finish off the process of consecration. After they did everything, Moshe said "This is the matter you shall do so that the Glory of G-d will appear upon you." [Vayikra 9:6] The Yalkut on this pasuk [verse] interprets these words to mean "That Evil Inclination you should remove from your hearts." What specific Evil Inclination (Yetzer Hara) is Moshe referring to over here? (Several years ago we offered an interpretation from the Netziv on this question. This year we will be giving different insight, found in the Drash V'Iyun, by the Reisher Rav.) The pasuk in Koheles says, "There is no righteous person in the world who does (only) good, and does no evil" [Koheles 7:20]. The Reisher Rav says that perhaps the pasuk means that even when a person does a mitzvah, there is always the chance that in the mitzvah itself, he will come to do some kind of a sin. A person can give Tzedakah and feel good about himself, but the Evil Inclination can creep in and he'll feel too good about himself and become haughty. So, the pasuk means that even when a person does a great act, it can be tainted by the wrong emotions or by feelings of gayvah or the like. It was at this time, says the Drash V'Iyun, that Klal Yisroel were susceptible to such an Evil Inclination. Imagine the feeling. Here they were, a people who

just came out of slavery, and now they built this beautiful edifice, with beautiful vessels. There was a very real worry that they would feel too good about themselves. There was the chance that they would succumb to the emotions of "my strength and the power of my hand made all this might" [Devorim 8:17] -- it was our power, it was our money, it was our dedication, etc., etc. It was at this juncture that Moshe tells them "That famous Yetzer Hara" -- the Evil Inclination of feeling too good about doing a Mitzvah, too smug and too satisfied about oneself -- is what you have to watch out for at this moment of erecting the Mishkan.

The Requirement of Jewish Leadership: A Feeling of Unworthiness
The pasuk continues "And Moshe said to Aharon, Draw near to the Altar and offer your Sin Offering and your Burnt Offering and Atone for yourself and for the nation..." [9:7] Rash"i cites an interesting Toras Kohanim. Aharon was embarrassed at this point about going over and doing the Temple Service. Moshe asked, "Why are you hesitant? This is what you were chosen for!" Another Toras Kohanim says that Aharon saw the Altar appear to him in the form of an Ox and was afraid to approach. Moshe told him to get up the courage and approach the Altar. What do Chaza"l mean when they say that the Altar appeared like an Ox? One does not have to be a great Darshan, to suggest that the purpose was to remind Aharon of the Sin of the (Golden) Calf. If that was the case, however, shouldn't the Medrash have said that the Altar appeared to him like a Calf, rather than like an Ox? I saw a beautiful pshat from Rav Shlomo Breuer. The pasuk in Tehillim [106:19-20] says, "They made a calf in Chorev... and they switched their Allegiance to the form of an Ox." We see that the sin started out as a calf, and somehow developed into an Ox. Rav Shlomo Breuer says in the name of his father-in-law, Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch, that Klal Yisroel never wanted a real Avodah Zarah. They did not want to switch G-ds. What they wanted was an intermediary. They were afraid that Moshe had died and they wanted someone in his stead. Aharon went ahead and made something that, in retrospect, we have to say was a mistake. Aharon made a concession and said, "They want an intermediary? I will pick something for them that there is no way they will ever be able to transform it and give it any power. I will pick a weak little calf. How can anybody think that a little calf can become a G-d?" What happened? The concession snow-balled and grew from being merely a calf and turned into the form of an ox -- something having its own power. This was Aharon's role in the Sin of the Calf -- making the concession of the calf that grew into an ox. That is why the Altar appeared to him now in the form of an ox. Now we can understand what Chaza"l mean.

Aharon was afraid to assume the High Priesthood. He said, "I once had my try at leadership. I once tried to be a leader and I failed. I gave into the people. I made a concession when I should have said a firm 'No.'" As a result of that concession, the calf became an ox. That is why Aharon was hesitant. He felt he wasn't cut out for the job. Moshe told him, "Why are you hesitant? This is the very reason you were chosen!" One of the requirements of a Jewish Leader is to have this sense of hesitancy, to feel unworthy. A leader who campaigns for the position and says "I am the best man for the job" is not a Jewish leader! There was once a Jew who had such feelings. He thought that he was the right man for the job. That man's name was Korach.

We all know what happened to Korach. Such a person is not worthy to be the leader. Hesitancy, embarrassment, intimidation, and humility are the very essence of what is needed to be worthy of assuming Jewish leadership

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weekly-halacha@torah.org Parshas Shemini-Bircas Ha'ilanos
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HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS SHEMINI
By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt A discussion of Halachic topics related to the
Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.
It was on the eighth day... Rosh Chodesh Nissan (Rashi Lev. 9:1)

BIRCAS HA'ILANOS - THE BLESSING OVER TREES IN BLOOM
Rosh Chodesh Nissan marks the beginning of the season for saying a blessing upon seeing fruit trees in bloom - Bircas Ha'ilanos. Since this brachah, which extols Hashem's ongoing renewal of creation(1), is recited once a year(2), its halachos are difficult to remember. Women, too, may recite this brachah, since it is not considered a "time related mitzvah" from which women are exempt(3).

THE TEXT OF THE BRACHAH: In many siddurim(4) the following text is cited: Boruch Ata HaShem Alokaynu Melech Haolam Shelo Cheesar Baw'olawmo "Davar", U'vara Vo Breeos Tovos, V'ilanos Tovim,(5) L'hanos Bahem Bnei Adam A search through all the of the early sources(6) reveals that the original text had the word "klum", not the word "davar" which appears in our text. The reason for the change is unsubstantiated, and it is, therefore, proper to follow the early sources and recite the word "klum" and not the word "davar"(7).

WHEN IS BIRCAS HA'ILANOS RECITED? The l'chatchilah, preferred time to recite this brachah is immediately upon seeing a tree in bloom during the month of Nissan. Most poskim agree that the halachah mentions 'Nissan' since generally, that is the month in which trees begin to bloom(8). Accordingly, in an area where trees start blooming in Adar(9), or where they do not bloom until Iyar or Sivan(10), the brachah should be recited in those months(11). In the countries where trees blossom in Tishrei or Cheshvan, the brachah should be said at that time(12). If a tree bloomed in Nissan, but one did not see it until later, he may recite the brachah the first time he sees the tree in bloom as long as the fruit of the tree has not yet ripened. Once the fruit has ripened, the brachah may no longer be said(13). One who saw the trees in bloom during Nissan, but forgot or neglected to recite the brachah, may recite the brachah at a later date but only until the time that the fruit of the tree has begun to grow(14). The brachah is said upon seeing the actual blooming (flowering) of the tree. The growth of leaves alone is not sufficient to allow one say the brachah(15).

Some poskim(16) hold that this brachah should not be said on Shabbos and Yom Tov, since we are concerned that it may lead to shaking or breaking a branch off the tree. All other poskim who do not mention this concern,(17) apparently do not forbid reciting this brachah on Shabbos and Yom Tov(18). It is customary, though, to recite the brachah only during the week(19), unless the last day of Nissan falls on Shabbos(20). The brachah may be said at night(21).

WHICH TREES REQUIRE A BIRCAS HA'ILANOS? Bircas Ha'ilanos is said only on fruit-bearing trees(22). If one mistakenly said the brachah on a barren tree, he need not repeat the brachah on a fruit bearing tree(23). The poskim debate whether one is allowed to say the brachah on a tree which has been grafted from two species, since the halachah does not permit such grafting(24). It is preferable not to make the brachah on such a tree(25). Some achronim prohibit the recitation of the brachah on an orlah tree(26). A tree is considered orlah during the first three years of its life. Many other poskim, however, permit reciting the brachah on an orlah tree(27). During the year of shmittah in Eretz Yisroel, it is permitted to recite the brachah even on a tree which - in violation of the halachah - has been cultivated(28).

BIRCAS HA'ILANNOS- HIDDUR MITZVAH There are several hiddurim mentioned in the poskim concerning this once-a-year brachah. According to the kabbalah, especially, this brachah has special significance. Among the hiddurim are: The brachah should be recited only on two or more trees. No brachah is said on a single tree(29). Although the two trees do not have to be from two different species(30), several poskim mention that the more trees the better(31). Indeed, l'chatchilah the brachah should be said on trees in an orchard that is planted outside the city limits(32). The brachah should be said in the presence of a minyan followed by kaddish. It should be preceded by V'yehi Noam and followed by with Hallelukah hallelu Keil min hashamayim(33). The brachah should be recited at the earliest possible time, which is on Rosh Chodesh Nissan, unless it falls on Shabbos or it is raining(34).

FOOTNOTES: 1 Shita Mekubetzes Brachos 43b. 2 OC 226:1. 3 Har Tzvi OC 118. 4 Siddur Hagrah; Minchas Yerushalyim; ArtScroll. Their source may be Sefer Ha'eshkol pg. 68. 5 The text in many of the early sources [including Rambam and Shulchan Aruch] is 'tovos'. [According to proper dikduk, tovim is the proper form, since ilan is lashon zachar, as in the Mishnah (Avos 3:7): ilan zeh.] 6 See Brachos 43b, Rambam (Brachos 10:13); Rokeiach pg. 235; Ohr Zarua 1:179; Avudrham (Brachos); Tur and Shulchan Aruch OC 226; Siddur Rav Yaakov Emedin; Chayei Adam 63:2; Siddur Baal Hatanyah; Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 60:1; Aruch Hashulchan 226:1 7 Minchas Yitzchok 10:16; Mibais Levi (Nissan 5756). 8 Mishnah Berurah 226:1 quoting achronim. 9 Be'er Heitev OC 226:1. 10 Aruch Hashulchan 226:1. 11 Note that there are several poskim who hold that according to kabbalah, this bracha should be said only during Nissan - See Sdei Chemed (Brachos 2:1) and Kaf Hachayim 126:1 who rule that one should not recite this brachah before or after Nissan. 12 Har Tzvi OC 118; Minchas Yitzchok 10:16. 13 Mishnah Berurah 226:4. 14 Mishnah Berurah 226:5. L'chatchilah, however, one should be particular to recite the brachah the first time he sees the blossoming, since several poskim hold that the brachah may not be said if one failed to say it the first time - see Machatzis Hashekel 226, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 60:1 Shaar Hatzion 226:3 and Ktzos Hashulchan (Badei Hashulchan 46:18). For this reason it is important to know the text of the brachah by heart so that the brachah can be said the as soon as the blooming is seen. 15 Mishnah Berurah 226:2. 16 Kaf Hachayim 226:4 quoting Moed Kol Chai. Kaf Hachayim also holds that according to kabbalah this brachah may not be said on Shabbos and Yom Tov. 17 Indeed, it is clearly permissible to smell a hadas which is attached to a tree on Shabbos since we are not concerned that the branch will be broken off- OC 336:10. 18 Shu"t Lev Chaim 2:44. See 19 Mibais Levi Nissan 5756. 20 Yechave Daas 1:2. 21 Tzitz Eliezer 12:20-6. 22 Mishnah Berurah 226:2. 23 Shevet Halevi 6:53. 24 Both views are brought in Kaf Hachayim 225:26 and 226:11. 25 Ben Ish Chai (Re'eh 11); Sdei Chemed (Brachos 2:7); Minchas Yitzchak 3:25-3; Yabia Omer 5:20. 26 R' Akiva Eiger (Gilyon OC 226); Divrei Malkiel 3:2. If one is in doubt whether the tree in question is orlah, a brachah may be said according to all views. 27 Dovev Meishorim 3:5; Chelkas Yaakov 2:27. 28 Harav S. Vozner (Mibais Levi, Nissan 5756). 29 Chida (More B'atzba 198). Although there are poskim who hold that halachically two trees are required and no brachah is said when only one tree is seen, see Chazon Ovadia pg. 9-10, most poskim do not quote this requirement. See also Ktzos Hashulchan (Badei Hashulchan 46:18) that lchatchillah, two trees are required for the brachah. 30 Kaf Hachayim 226:2. 31 Shu"t Halachos Ketanos 2:28. 32 Shu"t Lev Chaim 45 quoted in Kaf Hachayim 226:3 and in Chazon Ovadia pg. 8. 33 See entire procedure in Kaf Hachayim 226:7-8. 34 Mibais Levi (Nissan 5756).

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This week's issue has been dedicated by Yury Rosenblit for the Yahrzeit of his father (Alav Hashalom), Leib ben Yona, on 17 Adar.

HOOVES AND CLAWS

It is my unique privilege to present to you a sampling of the works of Harav Aharon Feldman. Rav Feldman is a Rosh Hayeshiva of Yeshivat Be'er Hatorah in Jerusalem, the author of a number of scholarly and popular works on Jewish subjects and a renowned Torah authority. The source from which this essay was culled is "The Juggler and the King" (Feldheim Publications, 1990), an extraordinary translation/commentary to the Vilna Gaon's brilliant analyses of a selected number of Aggadot from the Talmud. Rav Feldman also reprinted the Hebrew edition of the Vilna Gaon's "Peirush Al Kama Agadot" (Jerusalem 1997). (With regards to the essay presented here, see also Vilna Gaon as quoted in Kol Eliyahu #201.)

I Said Rav Yochanan, "Better the fingernails of earlier generations than the bowels of our own generation. [And if you would say that we are better than they, consider that] the Temple was rebuilt for them, and has not been rebuilt for us." (Gemara Yoma 9b)

The intention of Rav Yochanan's reference to fingernails and bowels, is to point out our insignificance, spiritually, in relation to those who lived before the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash. Even the least important part of our ancestor's bodies carries more spiritual value than the most important part of our own bodies. However, Rav Yochanan's choice of metaphor demands our attention. Why did he choose to compare "fingernails" to "bowels", rather than, say, heels to heads? There is a deeper meaning to Rav Yochanan's words than first meets the eye.

II Any animal with fully split hooves that ruminates, you may eat. These you shall not eat from the animals that have split hooves or that ruminate: the camel... the rabbit... and the hare ruminate but don't have split hooves. They aren't kosher. The pig has split hooves, but doesn't ruminate. It [too] is not kosher. (Vayikra 11:3-7)

A kosher animal shows two signs of Kashrut: it chews its cud and its hooves are cloven. These two signs have a common element: they are a clear indication that it is not a beast of prey and that it is content with its lot:

A hunting animal does not chew its cud since it eats no vegetable matter, and meat is digestible without rumination. Once the prey is digested, the predator seeks new food, ever discontent and ravenous. A ruminant is content with whatever is already in its stomach, and makes it do double service. Secondly, a hunting animal possesses claws with which to tear its victims apart. A kosher animal is satisfied with the food its Creator brings forth for it from the ground. It has no need for claws. The commentaries explain that non-kosher animals are forbidden as food because eating them influences man towards the undesired characteristics of a beast of prey: discontent with one's lot and the resultant exploitation of other creatures. Nothing is more antithetical to spiritual health than these character traits. "You shall not covet" is the last of the Ten Commandments, and the foundation for them all. Dissatisfaction with one's lot stems from a lack of true faith in G-d's providence.

Nearly all non-kosher animals lack both of these signs. The Torah details just four animals that have one sign but lack the other: the camel, the rabbit, the hare and the pig. The first three chew their cud but do not have cloven hooves. The last, the pig, has cloven hooves but does not chew its cud. These four are singled out by the Torah not only because they are unfit for the Jewish table, but also because they represent four forms of *spiritual* impurity. The first three animals have the internal sign of Kashrut (chewing the cud) but not the external one. They represent the various manifestations of a frustrated spiritual nature, when one's inner essence is amenable to holiness, but is prevented from realizing itself by one's inappropriate external behavior. If one's behavior is exploitative of others (like that of a predator), then one's "hooves" -- his outer, visible nature -- have become "claws," even though one's inner nature remains potentially "ruminant," i.e., satisfied with its lot. The fourth animal, the pig, has the external sign of Kashrut but not the internal one. It represents a worse form of impurity: a person whose outer behavior is expressive of holiness but who inwardly denies the dominion of G-d. This person has "cloven hooves" instead of claws, but his inner nature is that of a beast of prey. Claws would suit him better.

III The four non-kosher animals thus represent four forms of spiritual impurity (three with external impurity and one with internal impurity). Similarly, say the Sages, these four forms of impurity are represented by the four great kingdoms that in the course of history subjugated the Jewish people: Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. The first three, respectively, are represented by the camel, the rabbit and the hare; the fourth, Rome, by the pig (Vayikra Rabba 13:5). Like the non-kosher animals mentioned in the Torah, the first three kingdoms demonstrated the behavior of a beast of prey, seeking wealth and self-aggrandizement at the expense of others. But within their hearts they believed in G-d and His providence. The Roman Empire, however, displayed all the external signs of commitment to spirituality. On the surface it was civilized, looked after human welfare, and preached justice and human rights. Inwardly, though, it believed in nothing but self-worship. After the destruction of the first Temple, the Bnai Yisroel were exiled among the first three of the four nations mentioned above. First they were exiled to Babylon, then they were placed under the dominion of the Persians, and yet later, under the Greeks, who maintained sovereignty over the Jews while the second Beit Hamikdash was still standing (see Gemara Megilah 11b, Avodah Zarah 9a). When the second Beit Hamikdash was destroyed, we became fully subjugated to the Roman Empire. In light of the above Midrash, it is clear that Hashem chose our oppressors in a most befitting manner. The Gemara tells us (immediately before the quote from Rav Yochanan with which we started),

For what was the First Temple destroyed? For [the] three [cardinal] sins that were rampant then: idolatry, sexual immorality, and murder....

But in the times of the Second Temple [the Jews] were busily studying Torah and performing Mitzvot and acts of kindness -- for what then was *it* destroyed? Because they hated each other without cause. From this one may learn that unwarranted hatred is as great a sin as idolatry, immorality, and murder all together. (Gemara Yoma 9b)

The earlier generations suffered from serious evil in their external behavior, but in their hearts they acknowledged G-d's kingship. They simply could not control their lusts. Following the symbolism of the kosher and non-kosher animals, the earlier generations were like animals that have claws but chew their cud. The later generations, however, were like the pig: they showed their cloven hooves, but inwardly were unclean. Their society was filled with clandestine hatred and jealousy. Their hearts were rotten with selfishness and the resultant denial of G-d's dominion. How fitting, then, that our oppressors after the destruction of the first Temple were the first three of the four nations, who demonstrated the behavior of the animals that have claws but chew their cud. They were granted power over the Jews, when the Jews sank to that level themselves. When the *inner* corruption of the Jews became so great that G-d was obliged to drive them from their land, the nation to which they were enslaved was none other than the nation whose symbol the Torah gives as the pig. Rome demonstrated all the external signs of Kashrut, all the time inwardly worshipping nothing but itself and its own glory. It was a nation that was the mirror of the values that the Jewish nation had lamentably taken for its own. While living a life of suffering, dispersion, and enslavement, they would have to reject the Roman value system from within its very midst. By succeeding in this awesome task, they will have undone the evil for which they were expelled from their land.

IV This explains Rav Yochanan's comment about fingernails and bowels. The "fingernails" he mentioned hint at the *claws* (as opposed to cloven hooves) of the hunting animal. These, in turn, represent the external sins of the earlier generations. The "bowels" he mentioned refer to the organs which prevents the non-ruminating animals from being kosher, or the internal sins of the later generations. Rav Yochanan's comment says, "Better one who behaves like a beast of prey, but whose heart longs for G-d, than the most pietistic of men, who in his heart worships only himself!"

The test of the Roman dominion is the most difficult the Jewish people have ever faced -- and face to this very day. It comprises the most difficult struggle of them all: man's rejection of his self-worship. The struggle has gone on steadily for the last nineteen hundred years, as the

Roman heritage of the Western world continues to dominate Jewish life in one form or another. It is carried out under the most difficult conditions which have ever challenged the Jewish people. Indeed, it is appropriate for the struggle to be a difficult one, for on this struggle hangs the fate of the world. When this last evil has been eradicated, humanity will finally realize the goals for which it was created.

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This shiur is dedicated to Chaya, Joshua and Yakir Yamin - on the occasion of Yakir Yamin's brit and in loving memory of Kerwin, from Max and Anne. Mazal tov to Rav Doniel and Aviva Schreiber on the birth of a daughter!

PARASHAT SHEMINI The "Yom Ha-Shemini" (Eighth Day) and Yom Ha-Kippurim by Rav Yoel Bin-Nun

A

An examination of the Torah's descriptions of the seven days of the consecration of the Mishkan, the following eighth day, and the avoda performed in the Kodesh Ha-Kodashim (Vayikra 16) reveals that all three events are joined by a common thread. The eighth day (as described in Vayikra 9), the day of the revelation of the Shekhina, is unquestionably a continuation of the events of the seven days of "milu'im" (consecration) which preceded it. However, in contrast to the seven-day commemoration which was commanded prior to the erection of the Mishkan, it is clear that the parasha concerning the eighth day only took place afterwards. The eighth day is not mentioned in Sefer Shemot, and it is not repeated like most other matters concerning the construction of the Mishkan and its consecration (Shemot 25-31 covers the command to build the Mishkan, 35-40 describes its fulfillment. Shemot 29: command concerning the milu'im; Vayikra 8: fulfillment.) [The Ramban explains that the yemei milu'im were an inauguration of the Mishkan, while "on the eighth day, the kohanim were to offer the sacrifices. And so these sacrifices represented their own inauguration...". The Ramban adds that the sacrifices on the eighth day were instituted as an atonement for the sin of the golden calf, based on the fact that that this is the first command which God issues following that sin. The Mekhilta's commentary on the milu'im in the Sifra states explicitly, "Let the calf (of the sacrifice) come and atone for the sin of the calf."]

The account of the eighth day ends with the death of Nadav and Avihu, with the prohibition of inebriated kohanim serving in the Mishkan and the goat as sin-offering (se'ir chatat) which is burnt (Vayikra 10). However we can trace its continuation in the parasha of the avoda in the Kodesh Kodashim (Vayikra 16), which is also the Yom Kippur service for the future: "And God spoke to Moshe AFTER THE DEATH OF AHARON'S TWO SONS, WHEN THEY SACRIFICED before God AND DIED. And God said to Moshe, Speak to Aharon your brother, and LET HIM NOT COME at any time into the Kodesh, inside the veil before the covering which is upon the Aron SO THAT HE WILL NOT DIE, for I shall appear in the cloud upon the covering. WITH THIS shall Aharon come into the Kodesh..." (Vayikra 16:1-3).

In other words, the parasha describing the manner of entry into the inner Kodesh is the result and continuation of - and perhaps an atonement for - the entry of Nadav and Avihu, which was contrary to this manner. Here we are told HOW one is to properly enter the abode of the Shekhina in order to atone and to purify the Kodesh and Bnei Yisrael who enter it.

Parashat Acharei-Mot is clearly a continuation and correction/atonement for the parasha of the eighth day, because it deals with the permitted procedure for entering the inner Kodesh, and the avoda of the Kodesh Kodashim - in the desert, as a one-time mitzva to be performed by

Aharon, and for all generations as a mitzva for Yom Kippur. Hence this parasha represents the conclusion of the mitzvot concerning the Mishkan and the presence of the Shekhina in the camp. Let us now explore the fundamental significance of this connection between the parashot.

The connection between the eighth day and the avoda in the Kodesh Kodashim is also clearly apparent in the content of the avoda itself: Aharon's sacrifice is identical in both cases - a bull as a sin offering (except that on the eighth day it is an "egel" - a year-old calf rather than "par" - a three-year-old bull. The sin offering brought by the nation is also termed "egel" and this is the only time in the Torah when "egel" is specified for a sacrifice, unquestionably hinting at its function as atonement for the golden calf) and a ram as an olah (9:2 and 16:3). Furthermore, in both cases the nation brought a goat which was sacrificed as a sin offering. (On Yom Kippur a second goat was brought but not sacrificed. Rather, it was sent to Azazel - 9:3; 16:5.) In both cases the nation brought an olah: on the eighth day it was "a calf and a sheep, both one year old" (9:3) while on Yom Kippur the calf is omitted and there is only a ram as an olah (16:5). The shelamim and mincha which were offered on the eighth day are exceptions to the comparison, and do not appear in the Yom Kippur avoda, but this is because the nature of Yom Kippur is one of atonement, self-infliction and fasting; therefore none of the korbanot which are eaten are brought on this day.

It is also fascinating to note the comparison to the korbanot of the previous seven days of milu'im. There, too, there is a bull as a sin-offering and a ram as an olah (exactly like Aharon's korban on the eighth day and on Yom Kippur). Furthermore, there is a second ram as a shelamim, which was eaten together with the matzot at the entrance to the ohel mo'ed on each of the seven days. (These korbanot are similar on one hand to those brought by the Nazir at the conclusion of his period of nezirut [Vayikra 8:26-29, Bemidbar 6:13-20], and on the other hand to those brought by the metzora at the conclusion of his eight-day period of tahara [Vayikra 14:10-20]. Hence the milu'im hints at both purification from tum'a and the self-imposed measures of the Nazir who strives to emulate the kedusha of the kohen gadol.) It appears, therefore, that during the days of milu'im, the function of which was to "fill" (train), the kohanim, they brought a chatat, an olah, and a shelamim - but the nation brought no korban. On the eighth day Aharon brought a chatat and an olah, and the nation did likewise. The shelamim, the korban of joyous celebration, was brought on the eighth day by the nation, since this day was characterized principally by the revelation of the Shekhina to the nation (outdoors, at the entrance to the ohel mo'ed) rather than just to Moshe (in the ohel mo'ed itself), while the kohanim - who had already completed their milu'im - no longer needed to eat the shelamim. On Yom Kippur, too, Aharon's korban atones for himself and for his household and prepares him to sacrifice as on the eighth day, and the korban of the nation parallels this - this time, though, without the shelamim, since on Yom Kippur there is no joyous eating of korbanot.

The crux of the comparison of the korbanot, however, resides in the fact that Aharon's chatat in all three cases is burnt and not eaten, like the bull always brought as chatat by the kohen mashiach (Vayikra 4).

But herein, too, lies the fundamental difference between the days of milu'im and the eighth day, on one hand, and Yom Kippur on the other. The procedure for the sacrificing of the bull as chatat during the days of milu'im and on the eighth day (Shemot 29:10-14, Vayikra 8:14-17, Vayikra 9:8-11), includes only avoda on the outer altar. Despite this, the sacrifice is burnt outside the camp: "And the flesh and the skin he burned with fire outside of the camp" (9:11). This is the only time that a chatat is burned although it is sacrificed on the external mizbe'ach, and its blood is not brought into the kodesh. Rashi comments, "There is no external chatat which is burned other than this one."

All other chatat offerings which are burned are sacrificed on the inner altar. Their blood is brought into the Kodesh, and the kohen mashiach sprinkles their blood inside. Such is the case regarding the chatat bull of the kohen mashiach, or the chatat of the people (Vayikra 4:5-7, 10:16-18). In both cases the kohen sprinkles in the Kodesh on the parokhet and on the inner altar. Such is the case once again concerning the bull brought on Yom Kippur - the blood of which is sprinkled in the Kodesh Kodashim - on the

kaporet and in front of the kaporet, and afterwards on the inner altar.

The uniqueness of Yom Kippur lies in the fact that only on this day is there avoda in the Kodesh Kodashim, including offering of incense and sprinkling of blood (Vayikra 16:12-19, Mishna Zevachim 5:1-2). On the eighth day, on the other hand the situation is reversed: on this day Aharon sacrifices for the first time and commences his kehuna, but nevertheless his special avoda excludes any activity inside the Kodesh, and even those activities which would seemingly be worthy of being performed inside - such as the offering of the bull as chatat - are not. The bull is burned, by God's command, as though it had been sacrificed inside. In summary, there was no avoda in the Kodesh, and certainly not in the Kodesh Kodashim, on the eighth day - in the same way that there had not been during the seven days of milu'im. In contrast, on Yom Kippur the blood of both the bull and the goat are brought inside: "And he shall slaughter the goat for the chatat of the nation... and he shall do with its blood as he did to the blood of the bull, and he shall sprinkle it on the kaporet and before the kaporet" (16:15) - and both are burned together (16:27). In other words, the chatat-bull on the eighth day is external, but nevertheless it is burned (as an exception, by Divine command). On Yom Kippur, though, its blood is brought before God (also exceptional, but IN THE OPPOSITE WAY), as opposed to the bull always brought by the kohen mashiach, the blood of which is brought into the Kodesh, but ONLY UP TO THE PAROKHET.

We may summarize what we have said above as follows: The bull of the days of milu'im and the eighth day is sacrificed externally, but burned. The bull of the kohen mashiach has its blood sprinkled on the parokhet and on the gold mizbe'ach.

The bull of Yom Kippur has its blood sprinkled between the badim, on the parokhet and upon the gold mizbe'ach. But the contrast is demonstrated most clearly with regard to the ketoret: Throughout the year it is a mitzva to offer the ketoret before God in the Kodesh, and to bring fire "min ha-hedyot" - regular, "earthly" fire, from the outer altar. On the eighth day, in contrast, ketoret is not brought inside the Kodesh, and the earthly fire is the "esh zara"

("strange fire") (10:1) for which Nadav and Avihu are punished. On Yom Kippur, the ketoret is brought not only into the Kodesh, but into the Kodesh Kodashim. Hence it is clear that the parallel between the eighth day and Yom Kippur is in fact inverse. The seeming similarity serves only as a basis for the sharp contrast. The eighth day and Yom Kippur are the two extremes of a single continuum of Divine revelation to Israel. The usual daily situation in this continuum is one of sanctified avoda with its peak in the Kodesh, i.e., in the heikhal, but it does not reach the Kodesh Kodashim. In contrast to this usual situation are the two extremes: The eighth day on one hand, where the sanctified avoda is performed only on the outer altar at the entrance to the ohel mo'ed, outside of the Kodesh, while on Yom Kippur the situation is reversed: the most holy avoda takes place beyond the Kodesh, "inside the parokhet", in the Kodesh Kodashim.

B The significance of the contrast between the parashot will become clearer if we first thoroughly explore the meaning of the 'Kodesh' as opposed to the 'Kodesh Kodashim', and the meaning of the parokhet which divides them (Shemot 26:33). We are accustomed to thinking of the difference between them as varying degrees of kedusha, increasing in one direction - from the outside inwards, from the "bottom upwards". There is the chatzer and the heikhal, and inside the heikhal itself there is the Kodesh and an internal, even more holy Kodesh (as explained in Mishna Kelim, 1:6-9).

It is easy to prove that such an understanding is not quite accurate. Such a grading puts all levels of kedusha together on one continuum, on one scale common to all. Closer inspection reveals that we cannot do this. What we have before us is not one single scale or continuum but rather two fundamentally and qualitatively different spheres which in fact stand in mutual contrast.

The first sphere is that of the chatzer and the Kodesh, the ohel mo'ed OUTSIDE of the parokhet. In the Kodesh it is the kohanim - man - who arrange the lechem ha-panim before God (Shemot 25:30, 40:22-23, Vayikra 24:1-9), who are responsible for the eternal light of the menorah (Shemot 27:20, 40:26-27, Bemidbar 8:1-3), and who offer the continuous ketoret on the inner altar

(Shemot 30:6-7, 40:26-27). The fire there is regular fire - from the outer altar (see Sifra, beginning of parashat Tzav, no. 6 and in Massekhet Yoma 45b) - all of this reflecting a situation of 'from the bottom upwards', from earth heavenwards. In contrast, in the Kodesh Kodashim the situation is reversed: the place of the Shekhina, the place where God's kingship is revealed to Israel and the world, the place where God speaks to Moshe, is "above the kaporet, from between the two keruvim". (Shemot 25:22, Bemidbar 7:89).

Since God has no physical manifestation, the Kodesh Kodashim contains nothing but the base of His royal "throne" - the "ark of God's testimony, a footstool for the feet of our Lord" (Divrei Ha-yamim I, 28:2), which is flanked by the keruvim, and which houses the tablets of testimony (Shemot 25:21, 40:20, 31:18, Devarim 10:1-5) and the sefer Torah "at the side of the ark of God's testimony" (Devarim 31:26). From this perspective the innermost chamber serves as the King's dwelling place on earth, as it were - the footstool of the royal throne, and all the rest is simply corridors and entrances.

The cloud and God's glory which dwell on the ohel mo'ed and within it represent the revelation of God's word to man, and their essence and root is to be found in the Kodesh Kodashim. Therefore no-one is allowed to set foot inside (except the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur). For this reason, too, man does not offer korban or prayer there, and no earthly fire can be brought in. Everything in the Kodesh Kodashim is from the "top down", from "heaven earthwards", like creation itself, where no man was present - "for in the cloud I shall appear upon the kaporet" (Vayikra 16:2, and see Rashi).

From the Kodesh Kodashim God speaks to man, while in the Kodesh man stands before God. "And the parokhet will separate for you between the Kodesh and the Kodesh Kodashim" (Shemot 26:33). This is a sharp distinction between two separate spheres, between two concepts, between two worlds, which together constitute a whole Mikdash, a whole world. Together - but with a clear boundary between them. This distinction is the key to understanding the significance of the difference between the eighth day and Yom Kippur. The eighth day is the day on which the Shekhina appeared upon the entire ohel mo'ed - on the Kodesh as well as the Kodesh Kodashim. In a special and unique way the entire ohel served as the dwelling place of God, Lord and King of Israel on the day He chose to appear to the nation, thereby expressing in the entire Mishkan the special content that was usually reserved for the Kodesh Kodashim. On this day entrance not only to the Kodesh Kodashim but also to the Kodesh is sealed. Therefore no internal avoda exists, and even that which usually would be sacrificed in the Kodesh - the calf for a chatat - is sacrificed instead outside (but is nevertheless burnt like an internal chatat).

Moreover, even the fire on the outer altar comes originally from Above: "And a fire came out from before God (i.e. from the Kodesh) and consumed upon the altar the olah and the fats" (Vayikra 9:24). On this day ketoret cannot come upon coals of a common fire, which is considered "esh zara" even in the Kodesh. For even on the outer altar, the fire was one which had come from God, and there was no possibility of a regular fire - how much more so inside the Kodesh.

In light of this, the sin of Nadav and Avihu - according to the peshat and Chazal's explanation - is really their very entry into the HEAVENLY fire with the pan of ketoret and the FOREIGN EARTHLY fire. This was an attempt to merge the two spheres, to blur the full significance of God's revelation - to which no man can be partner. (By introducing regular fire they obscured the full impact of the kiddush Hashem that would have resulted from the spectacle of the pure heavenly fire descending.) All the other reasons which the various commentators list as leading to the death of Nadav and Avihu and which are hinted at in the text (such as the prohibition against inebriation, which was conveyed to Aharon immediately afterwards - Vayikra 8:11) should be understood as causes or consequences of the blurring of the spheres and the mingling of the two worlds - the human and the Divine - which should remain separate. (See Rav Kook at the end of Orot Ha-Kodesh part 3, p. 360.) Therefore the fire came out from before God, and devoured the bearers of the strange fire who had come into the Kodesh, and they were consumed "in their approaching before God" - in order to make it known that any human-worldly phenomenon is nullified before God's revelation. This

emphasized that all earthly powers receive their strength and existence exclusively from the power of Divine revelation in creation, in the world, in man and in Israel. "I shall be sanctified among My close ones, and I shall be honored by all the nation" (Vayikra 10:3).

The terrible tragedy of the eighth day, and the cry which emanates from the entire nation at God's destructive fire, give rise to a difficult question: Is it at all possible to approach God without instant death? It is specifically at this point, after the sin and after the demonstration of God's attribute of justice towards Aharon's sons, that there is a deepened sense that there must be some possibility of appearing before the King and asking for forgiveness and mercy.

This question is formulated not in Sefer Vayikra but rather in similar and parallel circumstances in sefer Bemidbar: Two hundred and fifty princes of the nation, respected leaders but not kohanim, who brought ketoret before God, are all consumed in a fire which comes out from before God in a revelation of glory before the eyes of the nation, in front of the entrance to the ohel mo'ed - exactly like on the eighth day (Bemidbar 16:16-19,35; 17:1-5). The nation, which complained the next day about the death of these princes, is also stricken with a plague with God's appearance in the ohel mo'ed, and the plague stops only when Aharon takes the ketoret out.

At this point the question arises in its most powerful form: "And Bnei Yisrael said to Moshe saying, Behold - we perish, we die, we all die. Anyone who approaches, who approaches God's Mishkan, will die. Shall we die off altogether?" (Bemidbar 17:27-28). To this question - how shall we come to the Kodesh and not die? - comes the response in the parasha of Yom Kippur: "Thus shall Aharon come to the Kodesh...". There is a possibility of atonement and purification. There is a way of coming - not only to the Kodesh, but even to the Kodesh Kodashim.

The eighth day, however, is fundamentally different from Yom Kippur. On the eighth day the Shekhina is revealed to the nation outside, while on Yom Kippur the Shekhina is hidden and allows man to enter even the Kodesh Kodashim and appear before God. Indeed, in the parasha of Yom Kippur (Vayikra 16) there is no revelation and no expression of revelation, but only atonement. "And he shall atone for the Kodesh from the impurities of Bnei Yisrael and from their transgressions for all their sins, and so shall he do to the ohel mo'ed which dwells with them, within their impurity." (16:16). The implication here is clear - if they are not atoned for, perhaps the Shekhina will no longer be able to remain with them.

Therefore on Yom Kippur, the day of self-affliction, ketoret and coals are brought from the outer altar with its regular, earthly fire, into the parokhet, and there inside man stands before God, offers incense and sprinkles the blood. It should be noted that the dividing parokhet is not mentioned here even once by name, even when the Torah speaks of sprinkling blood in front of it.

During the course of Yom Kippur, the sphere of man's entry into the Kodesh changes and progresses one step inwards: the mizbe'ach ha-ketoret is 'brought into' the Kodesh Kodashim. The chatat-bull of the kohen mashiach, too, the blood of which is usually sprinkled "seven times before God towards the holy parokhet" (Vayikra 4:6), has its blood sprinkled inwards on Yom Kippur. The inner altar, upon which it is forbidden to sacrifice olah and mincha the whole year round, also has its horns atoned for by Aharon once a year using the blood of the chatat of Yom Kippur (Shemot 30:9-10). In other words, that which is performed the whole year round on the outer altar (the placing of blood of the chatat on the horns of the mizbe'ach [Vayikra 4:30, Mishna Zevachim 5:3]) takes place on Yom Kippur on the inner altar. At the same time, the substance of the inner altar throughout the year - the offering of ketoret - takes place on Yom Kippur in the Kodesh Kodashim.

When the Kohen Gadol emerged safely from this "encounter" with the Shekhina, it was clear to the entire nation that they had merited atonement, forgiveness and purification, and that the Shekhina would continue to dwell among them as it usually did, with the usual division, represented by the parokhet. The avoda of Yom Kippur is therefore a completion and rectification of the eighth day. This process is realized in the contrast between the revelation of the Shekhina on the eighth day upon the entire ohel mo'ed before the whole nation which is gathered in the chatzer at the entrance to it, and Aharon's entry on Yom Kippur into the hidden and

invisible, to his private encounter with God. This is the answer to the question of how it is possible to live when the Shekhina is among us and anyone who approaches, dies; how to live with the open demonstration of God's attribute of justice; how to exist in close proximity to the palace of the King when any slight deviation causes a fire. The purifying kaporet of Yom Kippur is the answer, and it is the tikkun which allows us to live.

Further study:

1. On the eighth day, there was no avoda inside the ohel. But Moshe and Aharon did enter the ohel (9:23). How does this entrance not contradict the explanation of the shiur; in fact, how does it support it? In other words, what is the purpose of this entrance, in terms of the "bottom up"-"top down" dichotomy?

2. Moshe's argument with Aharon concerning the burning of the goat (10:16-20) should be understood in light of the nature of "burnt chata'ot" on the eighth day. Try and understand Moshe and Aharon's position.

The annual dinner of Yeshivat Har Etzion, the parent and sponsor of the Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash, will take place on Wednesday, April 9, 1997, at the New York Hilton. For reservations, call 212-732-4874, or email gush@panix.com . Copyright (c) 1997 Yeshivat Har Etzion. All rights reserved.

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INTRODUCTION TO PARASHAT HASHAVUA by Zvi Shimon PARASHAT SHEMINI Playing with Fire

In this week's sedra, parashat Shemini, we read about the culmination of the consecration of the Mishkan, the Tabernacle. It is the apex of a very lengthy section in the Torah which commences in parashat Teruma (Exodus, chapter 25) and spans over twenty chapters. The people of Israel have given their generous contributions for the construction of the Mishkan. The craftsmen have labored arduously applying their skills and with utter devotion. The kohanim (priests) have studied all the laws relating to the sacrifices and have completed their ordination period remaining at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting day and night for seven days. Our parasha opens on the eighth day, the day which has been so eagerly anticipated, the day that God will appear before the people and dwell in the Mishkan:

Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he stepped down after offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the offering of well being. Moses and Aaron then went inside the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the Presence of the Lord appeared to all the people. Fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar. And all the people saw, and shouted, and fell on their faces. (Leviticus 9:22-24)

God accepts the sacrifices of the people and an awesome fire descends from the heavens consuming the offerings on the altar. The people are ecstatic and shout with joy. However, the joy and exhilaration are short-lived. Bliss turns to sorrow as the event is marred by a horrible tragedy:

Now Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu each took his censer, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before the Lord alien fire, which He had not enjoined upon them. And fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them; thus they died before the Lord. (10:1,2)

According to the Rashbam (Rabbi Shmuel ben Meir, France, 1080-1160), the same divine fire which consumes the offerings on the altar, expressing God's satisfaction with his people and arousing their delight, also consumes Aaron's sons, Nadav and Avihu. What was the sin of Nadav and Avihu that brought upon them such a horrible punishment? Why was God so angry at them?

The Sin

The verse states that Nadav and Avihu offered before the Lord an 'Eish Zara asher lo tziva otam,' an alien fire which God had not instructed them to offer. The commentators disagree as to the interpretation of this verse. The Bekhor Shor (Rabbi Yoseph Ben Yitzchak Bekhor Shor, France, twelfth-century) and the Chizkuni (Rabbi Chizkiya ben Manoach, France, mid-thirteenth century) interpret the clause 'asher lo tziva otam' as a prohibition. God explicitly forbade them to offer this offering. The clause 'asher lo tziva otam' should not be understood as stating that God had not instructed them to offer but rather should be understood as 'asher tziva otam lo,' stating that God explicitly forbade them from offering their sacrifice. What is your opinion of this interpretation? (take a few moments to reflect).

There are two advantages to this interpretation. The first advantage is textual since the Torah describes the offering as "alien fire," God obviously didn't command them to offer it. This is the reason why it is referred to as an alien fire. Rather, the Torah informs us that God also prohibited the offering. The second advantage of this interpretation relates to the content of the narrative. It is much easier to understand the harsh punishment as retribution for the disobeying of God than for the offering of a sacrifice which was not commanded. However, there are certain obvious difficulties with this interpretation. First, if this interpretation is correct, then the phrasing of the clause is odd. A clearer formulation would have been 'asher tziva otam LO,' Which God commanded not [to offer]. A second difficulty with the interpretation is that it portrays Nadav and Avihu as people who are rebellious to the extent of disobeying an explicit command of God. This is difficult especially in light of their background and function as

priests.

The majority of the commentators interpret the clause as in our translation, "an alien fire which God had not instructed them to offer." Their sin was not of disobeying God but rather offering an "alien fire" which was not commanded of them. What was this alien fire which ignited God's wrath?

Rabbi Hirsch (Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, Germany, 1808-1888) offers the following explanation:

"The offering itself appears in every way illegal. The censers as well as the fire and the incense were all against the law. All the utensils must belong to the congregation and be holy. By giving his offering over into a national vessel of the Sanctuary, the bringer, together with his offering, enters within the framework of the national sanctuary of the Torah, and thereby gives himself up to all its demands, to the exclusion of any decisions made according to his own ideas. But the censers of Nadav and Avihu were each his own; they approach God, not with the vessels of the Sanctuary, but with their own, without self-renunciation. They put a fire in the censer, more precisely an alien fire, from their own hearths, as Rabbi Akiva explains - not fire from the altar. And finally, the incense itself. Incense was the one sacrificial substance, which neither from the community nor from the individual was allowed to be brought. The bringing of incense was to remain restricted exclusively to that which was prescribed for the community daily and for the high priest on Yom Kippur.

Nadav and Avihu desecrated the Mishkan by using their own private utensils and by bringing an alien fire, not fire from the altar but from a normal fireplace. Their sin was in performing tasks of a holy nature with the improper tools. The Rashbam takes a different approach:

"Even before the heavenly fire had descended they [Nadav and Avihu] had already taken their censers to burn incense on the altar of gold since the incense offered in the morning precedes the offering of animal sacrifices (see Exodus 30:7); and they put in [the censers] an alien fire which Moses had not commanded on THIS DAY. Though on other days it is written "And the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire upon the altar" (1:7), on this day Moses did not desire that they bring a man-made fire since they were anticipating the descent of a heavenly fire; therefore the bringing of a different fire was not desired in order that God's name should be sanctified and that all would know that the fire came from the heavens"

In contrast to Rabbi Hirsch who interprets an alien fire as an unholy fire originating not from the altar but from an unholy source, the Rashbam posits that the fire was indeed taken from the altar. It was foreign not because of its source but rather because of its timing. On the day that God was to appear through a heavenly fire before the whole congregation, man-made fire was undesirable. It would only limit the extent of the miracle. Nadav and Avihu's sin was not the desecration of the Mishkan but rather the detrimental interference in the miraculous events of the day.

[The assumption of the Rashbam is that Nadav and Avihu acted before the descent of the heavenly fire and were burned by it. The Rashbam does not explain why the Torah recounts the narrative of Nadav and Avihu only after the heavenly fire. The apparent reason is to separate the awesome and glorious appearance of God in the Mishkan and the tragic death of Nadav and Avihu. Although they occurred simultaneously, the Torah separates them so as not to detract from God's momentous appearance.]

Our sages in Vayikra Rabba (A compilation of homiletical interpretations of our sages) offer several explanations of the sin of Nadav and Avihu. We will cite two of them:

Bar Kappara in the name of Rabbi Jeremiah ben Eleazar said: Aaron's sons died... for drawing near [to the holy place] since they entered into the innermost precincts of the sanctuary, [and] for offering since they offered a sacrifice which they had not been commanded to offer.

It is not only as intimated by our verse that Nadav and Avihu sinned in offering an "alien fire." They also sinned by trespassing into sections of the Mishkan which they should have not entered. What is the textual source for this explanation? In the continuation of the book of Leviticus the deaths of Nadav and Avihu are mentioned: "The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they drew

too close to the presence of the Lord" (16:1). Here there is no mention of the sinful offering, only of a prohibited "closeness" to God's presence, to the holy of holies in the Mishkan. Even without the forbidden offering, Nadav and Avihu would still have received the punishment of death simply for entering sections of the Mishkan which were forbidden.

The Cause

So far we have dealt with the essence of the sin of Nadav and Avihu. We will now turn our attention to their motive, the cause which led them to perpetrate the sin. Where did they go wrong? What caused men of such stature to fall to their doom?

The Sifra (Tannaitic halakhic midrash on Leviticus) offers the following explanation:

"And Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu each took his censer" - "They, in their joy, since they saw a new fire [the heavenly fire], they came to add love to love"

Nadav and Avihu were so overjoyed by God's acceptance of the sacrifices that they decided to add another offering. Their enthusiasm and excitement led them to instinctively perform deeds without contemplating their desirability and taking the proper precautions. The awesome love of God that Nadav and Avihu possessed overshadowed their fear of God. This imbalance, the overflowing of love unchecked by the restraining influence of the fear of God, led to the sin of Nadav and Avihu. In contrast to the ecstatic frenzied states characteristic of modes of worship in Eastern religions, the worship of God, as prescribed by the Torah, warns against a loss of control. Love must always be accompanied by the fear of God. It is the combination of the two which creates the desirable state of mind necessary for a close relationship with God.

Rabbi Hirsch offers an alternative explanation:

More than anything else the Word of God stresses that God had not commanded them. Even if the various phases of the offering had not themselves been wrong, as we have seen that they were, the fact that it was not a "bidden" one would have sufficed to make it a forbidden one. No place is allowed in the whole service of the offerings of the Sanctuary of the Torah for subjectively doing just what you think right. Even the free-will offerings have to be kept meticulously within the limits of the forms and kinds prescribed for them. For the proximity of and getting near to God, which is the purpose of every offering, is only to be found by the way of obedience, by compliance with God's Will and subordination to it. This is one of the points in which Judaism and Paganism go in diametrically opposite directions. The Pagan brings his offering in an attempt to make the god subservient to his wishes. The Jew, with his offering, wishes to place himself in the service of God; by his offering he wishes to make himself subservient to the wishes of his God. So that all offerings are formulae of the demands of God, which the bringer, by his offering, undertakes to make the normal routine for his future life. So that self-devised offerings would be a killing of just those very truths which our offerings are meant to impress upon the bringers, would be placing a pedestal on which to glorify one's own ideas, where a throne was meant to be built for obedience, and obedience only. We can understand that the death of the priestly youths, and their death in the first moment of the consecration of the Sanctuary of God, is the most solemn warning for all future priests of this Sanctuary; it excludes from the precincts of the Sanctuary of God - which was to be nothing else but the Sanctuary of His Torah - every expression of caprice, and every subjective idea of what is right and becoming! Not by fresh inventions even of God-serving novices, but by carrying out that which is ordained by God has the Jewish priest to establish the authenticity of his activities.

Nadav and Avihu had misunderstood their task as kohanim. They were searching for self-expression and an outlet for their creativity. As a result Nadav and Avihu became absorbed in their own ideas, as they attempted to create novel forms of worship. They did not understand that the Mishkan was not a place for individual creative expression. It is God, and only God, who determines the framework for His worship. The Torah describes in great detail all the laws of the sacrificial worship. Any straying

from these laws is a desecration of the Mishkan, and an undesirable and alien form of worship.

Our sages offer another explanation for Nadav and Avihu's downfall:

"And Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu each took his censer"(10:1)- "Aaron's sons"-[teaches us that] they did not seek advice from Aaron, "Nadav and Avihu"- [teaches us that] they did not seek advice from Moses, "each took his censer" [teaches us that] they did not seek advice from one another" (Sifra, Acharei Mot 1)

Our sages infer from scripture that Nadav and Avihu acted independently without asking anyone with regard to the desirability of their actions. The last two textual inferences are clear. Moses' name does not appear in the verse since he was not approached by Nadav and Avihu. Likewise, scripture emphasizes that Nadav and Avihu each acted independent of the other, each taking his own censer. However the first inference is obscure. How do our sages infer from the clause "And Aaron's sons" that Aaron was not consulted? The fact that Aaron's name appears in the verse would seem to imply the opposite, that he was involved in their deed! The Netziv (Rabbi Naphtali Zvi Yehuda Berlin, Lithuania, 1817-1893) explains that the source for the inference is the order of the verse. When the Torah states people's parentage it usually does so after giving the name of the individual. Here the order is the opposite. The Torah does not state 'Nadav and Avihu, Aaron's sons' but rather "And Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu." The change in order teaches us that although Aaron was their father he did not influence them and was not involved in their misdeed. The appearance of Aaron at the beginning of the verse teaches that his influence was only in the past but not in the present behavior of his sons.

According to this explanation of our sages, Nadav and Avihu downfall stemmed from over-confidence. They did not deem it necessary to seek advice from their elders and teachers. Furthermore, they acted without hearing a second opinion, and they did not even discuss their plan amongst themselves! This hyper-individualism and rashness brought about their tragic end.

Shadal's (Rabbi Shmuel David Luzzatto, Italy, 1800-1865) understanding of the cause of Nadav and Avihu's sin is even more critical:

"They sinned due to haughtiness. They were not satisfied with being helpers of their father as is written: "Aaron's sons passed the blood to him" (9:12). They wanted to show that they too were the priests of God like their father, and since Moses had not assigned them any independent function, they chose a lucrative one and presented an alien offering." (compare to the explanation in the Midrash Hagadol.)

It was their hunger for prominence and prestige which led them to sin. They held very important positions but were unhappy so long as they didn't enjoy a dominant role. Therefore, they independently tried to take on more central functions and they used the Mishkan as a locus for their growth in power and political advancement. This desecration of their spiritual position and its usage for self-aggrandizement was what led to their ultimate failure and consequently a harsh punishment was incurred.

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzchak, France, 1040-1105), citing our sages, offers a completely different explanation of the cause of Nadav and Avihu's sin:

"Rabbi Yishmael said: They died because they entered the Sanctuary intoxicated by wine. You may know that this is so, because after their death he admonished those who survived that they should not enter when intoxicated by wine"

Nadav and Avihu sinned because they were drunk and consequently, they were not careful in the performance of their duties. Entrance into the sanctuary demands utmost seriousness and reverence. It is no place for flippancy and frivolity. Nadav and Avihu entered the sanctuary in an improper state of mind which led to an improper form of worship. Rabbi Yishmael learns this from the fact that immediately after the death of Nadav and Avihu God speaks to Aaron saying:

"And the Lord spoke to Aaron, saying: Drink no wine or other intoxicant, you or your sons, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, that you

may not die. This is a law for all time throughout the ages, for you must distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean." (Leviticus 10:8-10)

Whichever explanation of the cause of Nadav and Avihu's sinning we adopt, the punishment appears extremely harsh. The severity of God's reaction is undoubtedly a consequence of the location of the sin and the identity of the sinners. The Netziv comments on the clause: "and they died BEFORE GOD" (10:2), that it comes to explain why Nadav and Avihu were punished so severely. Since they were before God, in his sanctuary, he dealt with them in the most stringent manner and without mercy. Proximity to holiness demands utmost care. Sin in the sanctuary is magnified and becomes all the more severe. However it is not only the location but also the identity of the sinners which incurred such a harsh reaction. This is perhaps the meaning behind Moses' words to Aaron following his sons' death: "This is what the Lord meant when He said, Through THOSE NEAR TO ME I show myself holy..." (10:3). Rabbi Hirsch comments on this verse:

The more anybody stands in front of the people as a leader and teacher in their relation to God, the less does God overlook his mistakes.... Had Aaron's sons not been so close to God, pardon might have perhaps been granted to them, and the tragic fate which God so immediately dealt them would not have been such a weighty warning to the people. In sharpest contrast to the modern point of view which regards spiritual and intellectual greatness as a free pass for moral laxness, and grants men of intellect a greater consideration in lapses against God's laws of morality, the Jewish point of view raises the strictness of the demands for morality with each higher degree of intellectuality.

God is most exacting with those who are closest to him. The assumption of leadership positions, especially in the religious domain, demands exemplary moral behavior. The potential and the responsibility for sanctifying God's name when in a position of leadership is all the greater. Likewise the punishment incurred for, God forbid, desecrating His name is much more severe. No Biblical narrative illustrates this idea more powerfully than the tragic deaths of Nadav and Avihu.