

BS"D



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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON VAYIKRA - 5764

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From: National Council of Young Israel [YI_Torah@lb.central.com] Vayikra Guest Author: RABBI HERSCHEL KURZROCK Young Israel of Kensington, NY CHUMASH VAYIKRA In contrast to the first two Chumashim- Bereishis and Shemot- the Sefer Vayikra, except for two brief narratives concerning the death of Aaron's sons and the

episode of the blasphemer, deals only with commandments. The first half of this Sefer is mainly concerned with the rules and regulations pertaining to the various Korbanos and the laws of impurity and purification.

It is interesting to note that the Medrash (Vayikra Raba Parsha 7-3) states, "Rebbe Ahsi said, why do we begin the teaching of the Chumash with Toras Kohanim (Sefer Vayikra is known by this title) and not with Bereishis; because the children are "pure" and the Korbanos are "pure": therefore, let the "pure" children (spiritually clean) come and occupy themselves with the "pure" Korbanos.

Based on this Medrash, the custom has remained over many generations, in many Torah institutions, to have children begin their study of Chumash with Sefer Vayikra. The Klay Yokor (1-1) adds a very novel thought to this Medrash by saying "the reason for the 'small Aleph' in the first word, Vayikra, of this Chumash, can be seen as an allusion to the young children mentioned in this Medrash; meaning that the young children should begin learning with Vayikra." Also, children should begin learning with Vayikra as is implied by the "Aleph" which is the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It seems to me that we might also infer a possible hint to the teachings of Rabbi Ahsi in the Medrash from a Gomorrah (Berachot 31B). Rebbe Elazer states there that Shmuel Hanavi, who was a child of just two years at the time, was guilty of insubordination of his rebbe, Eli the Kohen G-dol. Briefly, Eli had sent for a Kohen to perform the ritual slaughter of a sacrifice . . . and the young Shmuel stated to the messenger seeking a Kohen that the law is that for ritual slaughter a Kohen is not necessary. He was right; but if not for the heartfelt supplication of his mother, Chana, he would have been punished. Let us note that Shmuel was only two years old at the time and was just brought to Eli, where he would remain to study, yet he already knew this Halacha which pertains to the study of Vayikra regarding the sacrifices. We can infer from here that they started with the laws of the Korbanos when teaching the children.

One can interpret the above Medrash by understanding the essence of the Korbanos. Basically, Korban, as the meaning of the word implies, signifies 'drawing near' to the Almighty (from the root word of Korov-near) through the medium of the sacrifices that a person offers to Him. This is effectuated by the understanding and realization on the part of the person that he is obligated to bring a Korban. This understanding is

followed by the actual performance of Smicha- laying of hands upon the offering and confessing his iniquities (Yoma 36A).

The elements of the repentance and appreciation of one's faults and inadequacies, thus "humbling oneself before the Almighty", are basic to the proper offering of a Korban. The juxtaposition of the words introducing the bringing of a Korban; "Adam Ki Yakriv Mekem Korban"- a person who will offer from you (himself) a sacrifice- implies this interpretation (see Seforno 1-2). In this regard, the Gomorrah in Sotah 5: states ". . . . at the time of the Bais Hamikdash, when a person brought a Korban, he had the reward for that Korban However, a person who is truly 'humble' is considered as deserving the reward for one who has brought all the possible Korbanos and when the meek person beseeches the Almighty in prayer, he will not be turned away emptyhanded."

True modesty and humbleness lead to, and are rewarded by, perfection in feeling the fear and reverence of the Almighty (Yerushalmi Shabbos 1-3). It is interesting that by symbolically using the small Aleph, the Torah points out the great humility of Moshe specifically at the beginning of the Sefer dealing with Korbanos (Baal Haturim 1-1). Moshe's meekness is in consonance with the idea of Korbanos. Humbleness is basic to Hashem's acceptance of the Korban and greater than all sacrifices; therefore, here is the proper place for the symbolic inference to the humility of Moshe. Thus a humble person is ready and willing for "sacrifice" in all its implied meanings; whether bringing an external Korban or an internal Korban- a willingness to sacrifice for his religious principles and convictions. By his sincerity of purpose while sacrificing, he draws nearer to the Almighty.

The Medrash quoted above stresses the importance of inculcating, from a very early age, the concept of humbleness before the Almighty and readiness to sacrifice for one's religious convictions. Let the "pure"- children not yet exposed to and affected by the various negative influences of the outside world- occupy themselves with the "pure"- Korbanos that will teach humbleness, leading to proper fear and reverence for the Almighty and, thus, develop a strength of character, ethics and morals. Equipped with these attributes, the eventual adult can withstand the spiritually unhealthy way of life permeating the atmosphere of modern society even to the point of Sacrifice; in order to live as a truly Torah observant Jew.

Our children are our real treasures and they must be guided from early age to a life of "purity".

Based on the above interpretation, it is very appropriate that the National Council of Young Israel has seen fit to initiate a wonderful Torah project beginning with Chumash Vayikra.

May we all learn from participating in this valuable Torah venture to "purify" our lives to live in accordance with the principles of our holy Torah.

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From: RABBI YISSOCHER FRAND [ryfrand@torah.org] To: ravfrand@torah.org Subject: Rabbi Frand on Parshas Vayikra

Moshe Did Not Intend To Drop A Letter From The Torah

The last letter of the opening word in the book of Vayikra is a small-sized Aleph. Rashi cites the Medrash that Moshe Rabbeinu really desired to write the word "VaYikar" rather than the word "VaYikra." The two words have vastly different connotations. G-d's conversations with Bilaam are described using the verb "VaYikar," indicating a nonchalant, "by the way," type of approach. "Vayikra" introduces a conversation based on endearment, calling a person directly by their name.

In his modesty, Moshe did not want to make himself look better than Bilaam and wanted the pasuk [verse] to give the impression of "VaYikar." Consequently, the word "Vayikra" appears with a small Aleph.

The Chasam Sofer is troubled by this Medrash. Moshe Rabbeinu was not the General Editor of the Torah, with literary license to change words or change spellings of the text dictated to him by G-d. G-d alone was the Author and Editor of the Chumash. The Chasam Sofer interprets the Medrash based on the Ramban's introduction to his commentary on Chumash. The Ramban writes that the pristine Torah in its original form had no spaces between the words -- it was just a string of letters which could be broken up and interpreted in an infinite variety of ways.

Therefore, Moshe did not wish to remove the letter Aleph. He just wanted to separate it from the rest of the word (so that the opening pasuk would read "Vayikar 'Aleph." There is in fact a precedent in the Torah for a one letter word. In Parshas Ha'Azinu, the prefix "Hay" is separated from the rest of the word in the question "Ha - L'Hashem Tigmilu Zos?" (Is this the way you treat G-d?) [Devorim 32:6]. Therefore, find such a construction already occurs in the Torah. Heaven forbid that Moshe intended to drop a letter from the Torah. He merely had wanted the word Vayikra to be broken up, such that a space appears before the Aleph.

Mincha Offering: Leavening Agents and Honey: No. Salt: Yes

"All meal offerings brought near before Hashem should not be prepared leavened for you shall not cause to go up in smoke from any leavening or any honey as a fire-offering to Hashem" [Vayikra 2:11]. The lesson of this pasuk is that the Mincha offering must be pure flour -- no foreign ingredients can be added to enhance the basic requirement of the meal offering.

Nevertheless, two pasukim later, the pasuk says that there needs to be an additive that accompanies the offering: "You shall salt your every meal offering with salt..." [2:13]. Not only CAN salt be added, it MUST be added.

Rav Mordechai Gifter explains the difference between the leavening agent and the sweetening agent on the one hand -- that are forbidden -- and salt, that is required. Rav Gifter explains that extraneous elements are forbidden from offerings. The recipe for a Korban can not be improved upon -- neither by the use of a leavening agent to make it rise nor by the use of a sweetening agent to improve its taste. Salt is different, however, because salt brings out the taste which pre-exists in the flour offering. Salt enhances the natural taste that already exists in the food.

Some people salt watermelon. They claim that it "brings out the sweetness." When we salt our food, we are not adding an extraneous taste; we are enhancing the pre-existing taste.

Rav Gifter says that this is the nature of spirituality. In seeking spirituality, a person should not introduce extraneous additives. A person should not try to be someone that he is not or act in a way that does not really represent his real self. In developing one's spirituality, a person needs to work on bringing the essence of his own real spiritual personality to the fore.

When a person brings sacrifices as a form of Service of G-d, he is trying to develop his spiritual personality by becoming a Servant of G-d (an 'oved'). When engaged in a quest for spirituality, a person should not try to take on foreign practices that do not represent his real soul. The goal should always be to try and bring out the best of your own self within the context of who you really are.

Rav Naftali Amsterdam was a disciple of Rav Yisrael Salanter. He once came to his teacher and said, "Rebbi, if I had the head of the Shagas Aryeh and if I had the soul of the author of the Yesod v'Shoresh haAvodah and if I had your personality traits (midos) -- then I could truly be a Servant of G-d." Rav Yisrael responded to him, "Naftali -- with your head and with your heart and with your personality traits you

can be Naftali Amsterdam. That is all you have to be. You do not need to be the Shagas Aryeh or Reb Yisroel Salanter or anybody else."

This is the idea of "Salt it with salt": One must be who he is. Adding sweeteners or leavening agents changes the nature of a substance. "That's not you!" But salt, brings out the true flavor. This is what we are supposed to strive for in our Service of G-d.

Nothing To Pray For?

The Book of Vayikra is the book of Korbonos [Sacrifices]. Nowadays, due to our sins, we no longer have the Bais HaMikdash [Temple] and we are no longer able to offer sacrifices. But in lieu of sacrifices we have an alternate form of Service to G-d -- namely, our prayers. This is unfortunately a pale facsimile. But, we are fortunate that G-d granted us the medium of prayer to reach out to Him and serve Him in lieu of sacrifices.

A student told me the following story. There was a Shabbaton sponsored by Camp Simcha Chai Lifeline (a camp for children with cancer). The Shabbaton was for the campers as well as their siblings, parents, and family members. There were sessions with Rabbis and psychologists to help the attendees deal with their, often desperate, situations.

My student was sitting with a man who unfortunately has a daughter with cancer. She was undergoing chemotherapy and had lost all her hair. My student happened to mention that he was looking for a position in Jewish education and the gentleman tried to convince him to move to his community.

He began reciting the praises of his community. "The people are friendly, the rents are reasonable." He went on and on describing a wonderful community. Finally he said, "There is only one problem with our community. It is a one shul town and people talk during davening [prayers]."

My student told him, "Well, unfortunately that's the way it is in many places. In that sense, your community is not unique."

The father looked down at his daughter and then complained to my student, "I guess some people have nothing to daven [pray] for. That is why they can talk during davening."

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PENINIM ON THE TORAH
BY RABBI A. LEIB SCHEINBAUM
Parshas Vayikra

Hashem called to Moshe and said to him. (1:1) Rashi explains that whenever Hashem commanded, instructed or spoke to Moshe, he always preceded his communication with a kria, calling out, to him. Kria is an expression of tenderness and affection. It is an expression used by the Malachei Hashareis, Ministering Angels, as it is written in Yeshaya 6:3, "V'kara

zeh El zeh v'amar Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh... "One angel calls to another, saying Holy, Holy, Holy..." Rashi's comment does not seem to be unique to this pasuk. His explanation that kriah is an expression of tenderness and affection could likewise have been written earlier when Hashem called to Moshe from the s'neh, Burning Bush, or prior to Matan Torah, the Giving of the Torah, when Hashem called to Moshe from Har Sinai. Why is the emphasis regarding tenderness and affection and the relationship to angels emphasized here, as we begin the laws of korbanos, ritual sacrifices?

The Piaczesner Rebbe, zl, explains that as it is written in regard to Akeidas Yitzchak, the Binding of Yitzchak, "He went, took the ram, and sacrificed it as a burnt-offering in his son's place," (Bereishis 22:14) this is true of every animal sacrifice: it takes the place of a human. In this parshah, it is written, Adam ki yakriv mikem korban, "When a man of you brings a korban." The emphasis is placed on the words "of you," because the animal is actually being sacrificed in place of the person. On Fast days, we entreat Hashem that "the fat and blood that we lose as a result of the fast should be accepted as a sacrifice upon the Mizbayach, Altar, to You, Hashem." Indeed, suffering per se cleanses away our sins, because it decreases our strength via loss of our fat and blood. Klal Yisrael's sufferings are a form of ritual sacrifice.

Consequently, Rashi chooses the text which addresses animal sacrifices to emphasize this point: any sacrifice that we make - whether it is of the nature of animal sacrifices delineated in the following text, in which an animal takes the place of a person, or it is a human being's own sufferings - constitutes Hashem "calling" to us. They are expressions of tenderness, of love from Hashem to us.

Despite the Piaczesner Rebbe's best efforts to provide hope, consolation and a degree of inner joy to his followers, in the end he was able to do little to alleviate their suffering. It had become critical for him to address the concept of suffering from a point of theological justification. Basically, what the Rebbe is saying here is that one can offer up his suffering as a form of korban, sacrifice, to Hashem. The call to sacrifice is a call to love. Hence, the suffering that a Jew endures for Hashem is an expression of profound love - which is reciprocated by the Almighty.

The Rebbe concludes his homily focusing on the concept of dibuk chaverim, the bond between Jew and his fellow Jew in fellowship and friendship - especially in times of hardship and distress. Suffering is an occasion for the sufferer to give to others, an opportunity for compassion and empathy. In return, the empathizer reciprocates with prayers and expressions of concern. This mutual interaction has cosmic significance in that it inspires the Ministering Angels to exchange greetings with each other, to call to one another, as evidenced by the pasuk in Yeshaya 6:3.

The Rebbe exhorts his followers to share with and help one another. "Even when one has no material resources, it is still possible to share. Mutual sharing and helping is not limited to giving charity or a loan. When one hears of the troubles sustained by other Jews and does all that he can to help them; if his heart is broken and his blood is frozen; if through his heart's motivation, he is inspired to pour out his broken heart to Hashem on behalf of other Jews, then this, too, is a wonderful gift which he gives to others. We receive the broken heartedness and the repentance, and they, the subject of our prayers, receive the compassion and the good effects which we perform for them, as well as the prayer with which we supplicate Hashem on their behalf."

The Rebbe concludes with a powerful statement, "Although the angels call to one another just as humans do, the angels' words do not emerge from their own suffering. After all, an angel has never experienced a Jew's pain when he is being beaten; or his humiliation when he is being harassed and disparaged; or his terror, and his torment when he has no food." Even if we can do nothing physical for our fellow Jew in need, we can still pray for him from the heart. Caring, expressed in sincere, meaningful prayer - coupled with heartfelt concern - is a genuine contribution which goes a long way. It gives the benefactor a sense of

worthiness. He no longer feels helpless. Regrettably, it is much easier to give up than to pray with sincerity and hope until the very last moment. This constitutes tzedakah at its zenith.

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

We translate the word korban as sacrifice. This translation does not capture the full meaning of the word. Horav S.R. Hirsch, zl, explains that the word korban is derived from karov, coming near. One who offers a sacrifice is bringing himself closer to Hashem, elevating himself spiritually by his actions. Horav Yitzchak Zilberstein, Shlita, cites a homiletical rendering of this pasuk by the Ohr HaChaim Hakadosh, which is compelling and provides food for thought.

"When a man among you" chooses to bring closer the hearts of his estranged brethren to Hashem, such an individual is worthy of being called an adam, man. He does not have to offer any korbanos. He will never need to bring a sin-offering, since Hashem will protect him and ascertain that no sin will result from his activities. Hashem wants His children to be near to Him, and He will repay anyone who brings His children home.

Rav Zilberstein elaborates that there are many ways and circumstances in which we can effectively reach out to the alienated, the unacquainted and unaware. They are just waiting for an "invitation" to come closer. One of the most productive forms of outreach is for us to act in the manner in which a frum, observant, Jew is to act. Our code of honor, integrity, decency and menchlichkeit, humanness, will win them over. Once they get to know us for what we are - not what they have been misled to believe - their hearts and minds will open up to us, and, consequently, to Hashem.

In his inimitable manner, Rav Zilberstein cites a fascinating story to support this idea. It was springtime, and a young rebbe was taking his third-grade class for a trip. As they were walking near an orange grove, a car came to a screeching stop near them. The driver, clearly non-observant, jumped out and addressed the rebbe, "Could I ask you and your students for a favor? My brother is laying critically wounded in the hospital. The doctors do not know if he will make it. In fact, they are giving him very little chance for recovery. Could you daven with your students for my brother's recovery?"

As soon as the students heard his request, they all answered affirmatively. The man, tears welling up in his eyes, took out a wad of large bills from his wallet and gave it to the rebbe, "Here, take this for your time. Buy something for your nice students."

"Chas v'shalom, Heaven forbid! We do not take money for helping a fellow Jew. We will be happy to do whatever we can for him. May Hashem listen to our prayers on his behalf and grant him a speedy recovery."

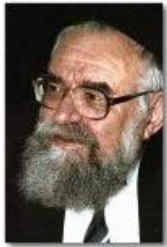
The man took out a card from his pocket and wrote down his brother's name and his mother's name, so they could pray for his recovery. He also added their family name. When the rebbe noticed their last name, he realized that the brother was the head of a major crime family. In fact, he was in the hospital because one of his "competitors" had placed a bomb under his car. Nonetheless, the children prayed for him. He was a Jew. His name was written on the blackboard, and the children dedicated their learning in his merit.

A number of weeks went by and, once again, the rebbe took his young charges for a short trip. Lo and behold, once again the driver of the same car that had approached them last time pulled up, and the driver jumped out. He ran over and kissed the rebbe. "Do not ask what happened!" he exclaimed excitedly. "It was a miracle. My brother survived. It was surely because of the tefillos, prayers, of the young children. Thank you! Furthermore, when I told my brother that you refused to take money for your time, saying it was your responsibility to pray for another Jew in need, my brother said that he wants to take a chavrusa, study partner, to

learn more about the religion he has neglected to observe." Today, he is on the road to become a full-fledged baal teshuvah.

The lesson is simple. A man whose life revolved around money came to the realization that there are people who value something more than money, people who were happy to help another Jew. This message transformed a hardened criminal into a ben Torah. This is the meaning of a korban that brings others closer to Hashem.

In loving memory of Mrs. Fanny Brunner Feldman by her family



From: Yeshivat Har Etzion Office [office@etzion.org.il] Subject: SICHOT64 -23: Parashat Vayikra

Yeshivat Har Etzion Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash (Vbm) Student Summaries Of Sichot Of The Roshei Yeshiva Parashat Vayikra SICHOT OF HARAV YEHUDA AMITAL SHLIT" A

"The Voice of G-d is Powerful; The Voice of G-d is Glorious"

Adapted by Dov Karoll

And He called to Moshe, and G-d spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting... (Vayikra 1:1) The Midrash (Torat Kohanim, Dibbura di-nedava 1:2:9-11, paraphrased in Rashi 1:1 s.v. Me-ohel) analyzes this verse: "From the Tent of Meeting:" this teaches that the Voice broke off and did not leave the Tent. Could this be because the Voice was low? The verse states, "And he heard THE Voice" (Bemidbar 7:89). What is THE Voice? This is the same Voice that is described elsewhere, "The Voice of G-d is powerful, the Voice of G-d is glorious, the Voice of G-d breaks the cedars" (29:4-5)! If so, why does it state, "From the Tent of Meeting?" This teaches us that the Voice broke off and could not be heard outside the Tent.

The Maharal (Gur Aryeh, Vayikra 1:1, s.v. melammed) asks why we need a special verse to teach that the people of Israel could not hear the Voice; after all, they were not allowed to enter the Tent of Meeting when G-d was speaking to Moshe! He answers that the prohibition was only to put one's whole body in, but to lean one's head inside would be acceptable. The Maharal explains that this verse comes to teach us that even if one would lean one's head in to the Tent, he would still not hear the Voice, for only Moshe could hear the word of G-d.

What we see from here is that were it not for the fact that the Torah explicitly taught us otherwise, we would have thought that the Voice of G-d could not be contained, that it would extend beyond the Tent of Meeting. In other words, in the realm of Torah study, the sound, the voice of the Torah must not stop with the walls of the beit midrash, of the study hall, but rather it must continue beyond them. The verse states, "Train the child according to his way" (Mishlei 22:6), and we must recognize that not everyone will remain in the beit midrash his entire life.

There is a dispute between Rabbeinu Tam and Rabbeinu Elchanan, quoted in Tosafot Yeshanim (Yoma 85b, s.v. teshuva) and in the Hagahot Maymuniyot (Hilkhot Talmud Torah 3:2), regarding how to understand the statement, "Yafeh talmud Torah im derekh erez," "Torah study is good together with an occupation" (Avot 2:2). Rabbeinu Tam says that derekh erez, having an occupation, is to be understood as the primary factor in this sentence; whenever we encounter the sentence structure, "A with B," B is primary. Of course, he does not mean that having an occupation is primary in objective value, but rather he is stating that the Torah understands that most people will not spend most of their time involved in talmud Torah. Rabbeinu Elchanan disagrees, and asserts that the assumption that one can emphasize talmud Torah to a lesser degree is not ideal, even at the practical level. What is Rabbeinu

Tam telling us? The Torah recognizes that most people will leave the beit midrash at some point, that they will need to maintain the value of talmud Torah even while they have made their dominant time commitment to their occupation. In Yeshivot, there has generally been some disconnection between the beit midrash and the outside world. This Yeshiva, from its founding, has aimed to transmit the sound of Torah beyond the walls of the beit midrash. That voice ought not be limited to the Yeshiva itself.

This is manifest not only in the idea of Hesder, of combining military service with Yeshiva study, but also in the study of Tanakh, Bible, and Machshava, Jewish thought, which had not been widespread in Yeshivot. It is also manifest in the Yeshiva's Teacher's Institute, which eventually became the Teacher's College with its accreditation. This, too, helps spread the word of the beit midrash beyond its own walls. And of course, the Virtual Beit Midrash is another sterling example of this effort. This approach is based heavily on the teachings of Harav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook zt"l, which have guided me throughout.

The Gemara in Berakhot (27b-28a) tells of an incident when Rabban Gamliel was temporarily replaced as the Nasi, the head of the Sanhedrin. The Gemara states that on that day, either four hundred or seven hundred additional benches, according to the two versions cited in the Gemara, were brought in to the beit midrash to accommodate the influx of students. This change was due to the fact that Rabban Gamliel had a rule: "Any student whose inside is not as his outside [meaning that his motivation is not pure] may not enter the beit midrash." Rabban Gamliel was troubled when he saw this, for he was concerned, "Perhaps, G-d forbid, I have withheld Torah study from Israel!" He was reassured in a dream that those whom he had prevented were not really sincere. However, the Gemara immediately clarifies that Rabban Gamliel's approach was indeed problematic, and that this message was sent to him in a dream merely to put his mind at ease. Apparently, the beit midrash is meant to have an expansive role and not a limited one. But even Rabban Gamliel was not limiting the spread of Torah beyond the beit midrash; rather, he was concerned with the environment within the beit midrash itself. While the Gemara (Mo'ed Katan 16a-b and Sukka 49b) derives that Torah should be taught in private settings and that one ought not teach his students out in public places, this refers to the instruction itself and not to the overall approach.

Our approach is better characterized by the following Midrash: "[Wisdom] raises her voice in the streets (rechovot) - this refers to the place where they expand (marchiv) it, namely, the beit midrash" (Tanchuma Bechukotai 3, based on Mishlei 1:20). The Torah should spring forth to the streets, to the people outside the beit midrash, after it has been developed within the beit midrash. One needs to develop and expand the Torah inside, and then he can, and should, go out and spread the Torah, "Raise her voice in the streets." One needs to be responsive to the needs of the Jewish People, as to the sound of a crying baby, wherever the call originates from. Some people today think that the way to succeed in contemporary society is to close oneself off from any outside influence, to seclude oneself in the beit midrash. They think this is safe and that it will prevent failure. I saw pre-war Eastern Europe, and the religious world there operated on that assumption, and it failed.

Because of the Shoah, we tend to idealize pre-war Europe, but there were serious problems, and major rebellions, against the closed system that existed there. The Jewish council of Vilna had fewer religious Jews on it than the Knesset does today. An acquaintance of mine from Ger said that everyone he knew had wayward ideas despite the outward appearance of religiosity.

The problem is that many people advocating this approach are young, and they do not have the experience and the perspective that I do. They do not realize that this system also has its problems.

Rather, the way to proceed is to develop the "Voice" inside the beit midrash, and then to send it forth

into the world. If one does this, the voice that emerges is a much more powerful one, for it is the "The Voice of G-d [that] is powerful, the Voice of G-d is glorious, the Voice of G-d breaks the cedars." [This sicha was delivered on leil Shabbat, Parashat Vayikra-Zachor, 5763 (2003).]

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From: torahweb@torahweb.org Sent: March 18, 2004
Subject: Rabbi Hershel Schacheter - Happiness and Humility

<http://www.torahweb.org> TorahWeb.org [from last week]

RABBI HERSCHEL SCHACHTER
HAPPINESS AND HUMILITY

Everyone desires happiness but only few know how to find it. Dovid Hamelech says (Tehillim 27:4) that there's really only one thing that he's searching for, i.e. that will lead to happiness: to spend the rest of his life in the presence of Hashem. The Talmud (Chagiga 5b) records a tradition that there is no sadness when one is in the presence of Hashem. The Torah often expresses the mitzvah of simcha as "and you should rejoice in the presence of Hashem". The implication is that being in the presence of Hashem leads one to be happy (see Nefesh Horav pg. 314). On the occasion of Maamad Har Sinai, when the entire Jewish people was in the presence of the Shechinah, our tradition tells us that they were in a state of utmost simcha.

Throughout all the generations when one would have authentic divrei Torah the Talmudic expression would be that the occasion "would be cheerful just like when the Torah was given at Sinai" (see Medrash Rabba to Shir Hashirim 1:10). We assume that whenever we learn Torah, we are in the presence of the Shechinah. Hashem learns together with us bechavrusa (see Tamid 32b), just as he learnt bechavrusa with Moshe Rabbeinu (see Rashi to Shemos 31:18). So in effect, a recommended method to attain happiness would surely be to learn Torah.

When one realizes that he is in the presence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu, he must become humbled (see Shemos 3:6). Whenever we learn, we must become humbled with the realization that we are lifnei Hashem. But more than that, we believe that the entire Torah, in addition to being a collection of mitzvos, is also a description of Elokus (see Maharsha to Berachos 21a). And when one gains some new insight into the Torah, in effect, that person is coming closer to Hashem, by virtue of the fact that he has gained some new insight into Elokus 1. Arrogance and great Torah knowledge are simply incompatible 2, for those who believe that the Torah is "a description of Elokus" (see Rashi to Shemos 21:13).

1. see HaAdam Vo'olomo, by Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, pg. 210 – 212
2. see Rambam Hil. Talmud Torah 3:9, and HaAdam Vo'olomo pg. 215

From: SHLOMO KATZ [skatz@torah.org] To: hamaayan@torah.org
Subject: HaMaayan / The Torah Spring - Parashat Vayikra
Hamaayan / The Torah Spring Edited by Shlomo Katz Vaykira: Making Sacrifices

Sponsored by Martin and Michelle Swartz on the 40th yearzeit of Martin's great-grandfather Alexander Kemeny a"h Abe and Shirley Sperling & William and Ruth Konick on the yearzeits of Tzvi Dov ben Avraham a"h (Harry Sperling) and Mindel bat Tzvi Dov a"h (Mildred Klessmer) The Katz Family in memory of Pinchas ben Laibish Deutscher a"h The Siragher family on the yearzeit of mother Shiena Rachel bat Yisroel a"h

The book of Vayikra is the primary source for the laws of the korbanot / sacrificial offerings, many of which were brought to atone for various sins. Today, however, there is no Bet Hamikdash, and we do not offer

sacrifices. How then can we achieve the same atonement that formerly was attained through bringing sacrifices?

R' Eliezer Papo z"l (1785-1827; author of Pele Yoetz) writes that our parashah and the next allude to four separate means of attaining atonement in the absence of the sacrificial service.

First, one must remember why a sacrifice brings atonement. It is because the person who offers the sacrifice pictures to himself that he deserves the fate that is now being meted out to his animal. Thus humbled, the sinner returns to Hashem. This is alluded to in the verse (1:2), "When a man brings an offering to Hashem from among you."

Second, the Gemara teaches that learning the laws of the sacrifices is equivalent to bring sacrifices. This is alluded to in the verse (7:37), "This is the Torah of the olah / elevation-offering, the minchah / meal-offering, the chatat / sin-offering, and the asham / guilt-offering . . ." (The Gemara learns from this and similar verses that learning the Torah of the offering is equivalent to bringing the offering itself.)

Third, we read (1:3), "He shall bring it to the entrance of the Ohel Mo'ed / Tent of Meeting, willingly, before Hashem." This alludes to the fact that when the only thing keeping a person from doing a particular mitzvah is an obstacle beyond his control, Hashem gives him credit for doing the mitzvah as if he actually performed it. This applies to bringing sacrifices as well.

Finally, "He shall support his hand upon the head of the olah." When a person supports the poor, he achieves a higher level than one who brings a korban olah. Thus we read in Mishlei (21:3), "Doing tzedakah and justice is preferable to Hashem than an offering." (Elef Ha'maggen)

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

Commenting on this verse, Midrash Rabbah states: "'Adam' is an expression of love, an expression of brotherhood, an expression of friendship." What is this midrash teaching?

R' Aharon Lewin z"l (the "Reisha Rav"; killed in the Holocaust in 1941) explains: There is a dispute among the Rishonim / early commentaries as to the purpose of animal sacrifices. Rambam z"l writes that when Hashem gave the Torah, He did not attempt to wean His people entirely from the idolatrous ways with which they were familiar. Rather, He instructed Bnei Yisrael to direct to Him the service that they otherwise would have performed to idols. Many other commentaries disagree vociferously and offer other interpretations.

In particular, R' Yitzchak Arama z"l (the "Ba'al Ha'akeidah") explains that Hashem recognized man's emotional need to repay his debts. Therefore, Hashem instructed us regarding an order of sacrifices, and He acts as if man is thereby giving Him a gift.

There is a wide gulf between the explanations of Rambam and the Ba'al Ha'akeidah. According to the former, the inclusion in the Torah of a sacrificial service indicates the lowliness of man; according to the latter, it indicates G-d's love for man.

R' Lewin continues: In light of this dispute, we can understand the above midrash. Do not think, says the midrash, that the inclusion in the Torah of a sacrificial service indicates the lowliness of man. No! "It is an expression of love, an expression of brotherhood, an expression of friendship."

(Ha'drash Ve'ha'iyun: Vaykira, No. 1)

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From: ohr@ohr.edu To: weekly@ohr.edu Subject: Torah Weekly - Parshat Vayikra TORAH WEEKLY - For the week ending 27 March 2004 / 5 Nisan 5764 - from Ohr Somayach | www.ohr.edu -- Parshat Vayikra <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1612>

OVERVIEW - The Book of Vayikra (Leviticus), also known as Torat Kohanim - the Laws of the Priests - deals largely with the korbanot (offerings) brought in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called korban olah, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the kohen sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the remaining part is eaten by the kohanim. Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part is eaten, can be either from cattle, sheep or goats. The Torah prohibits eating blood or chelev (certain fats in animals). The offerings that atone for inadvertent sins committed by the Kohen Gadol, by the entire community, by the prince and by the average citizen are detailed. Laws of the guilt-offering, which atones for certain verbal transgressions and for transgressing laws of ritual purity, are listed. The meal offering for those who cannot afford the normal guilt offering, the offering to atone for misusing sanctified property, laws of the "questionable guilt" offering, and offerings for dishonesty are detailed.

INSIGHTS - Starring In My Own Movie "When a man from among you brings an offering to G-d..."

I remember, as a child, walking home one night from the underground station. It was a long twenty-minute walk. The misty night and the yellowish-orange street lamps made those chill London streets a bit like something out of an old Ealing movie.

Over my shoulder, I could see my reflection shorten as I got nearer to each street lamp, and then begin to lengthen in front of me as I moved away from it. At some point in the middle, the competing light from both lamps would extinguish my shadow altogether for a second or two. The sound of my shoes clicking on the concrete echoed through the empty streets. I was quite alone.

I thought to myself the only person who can see me - is me. I began to imagine myself in a film. I was the cast, the crew, the writer and the director all rolled into one.

I suppose that most of us at some point have had a similar daydream, the feeling that our existence is perceived by no one but ourselves.

The nature of a child is that he sees himself as the center of existence. The minimum definition of adulthood is that I no longer see myself as the center of all things. I know that G-d is the center. (According to this definition, not too many of us escape puberty.)

At the center of our lives there is a battle, a battle between the ego on the one hand, that sees itself as the essential existence around which all else revolves, and the neshama, and the soul, that knows that it is a piece of G-dliness, of holiness from on High.

This is the essential battle of our lives: to wean ourselves away from ourselves and return ourselves to the One, to the true Center of all.

"When a man from among you brings an offering to G-d..."

The only true offering that we can bring to G-d is us ourselves, our egos. That is the offering that is truly "from among you".

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From: RABBI BEREL WEIN [rbwein@torah.org] Subject: Rabbi Wein - Vayikra Weekly Parsha VAYIKRA Mar 26 2004

The third book of the Chumash, Vayikra, is called "Torat Kohanim" - the law of the priests - in rabbinic literature. This is undoubtedly because most of the book is occupied with the laws of the specific sacrifices and the duties of the kohanim in the Temple. However, there is another, broader and more universal aspect to the name of the book of Vayikra/Torat Kohanim. For implicit in the title is the realization that Kohanim are to behave and live up to a certain standard set for

them by the Torah. It is not only the offering that is brought to the Temple that is important and vital. It is also the Kohain who is charged with treating that offering properly and respectfully that is important and vital for successful Temple worship. It is therefore no coincidence that this book of Vayikra/Torat Kohanim contains within its entire sections that deal with moral laws and disciplined human behavior. A dishonest Kohain is not allowed to be a representative of G-d's Temple, just as a physically deformed Kohain was also excluded from performing Temple service.

The Talmud explicitly teaches us that only if a Kohain somehow resembles an angel of G-d in his behavior and deportment, would people come to study Torah from his mouth and sense the true holiness of the Temple. The task that was placed on the Kohanim was not one of mere rote service in the Temple. It was rather the challenge to be exemplary in behavior, a role model for others, and a teacher of Torah to Israel by deed as well as by word, which would define the true Kohain. The Rabbis in Pirkei Avot described the father of all Kohanim, the great Aharon, as a lover of peace, a pursuer of peace, a lover of his fellow human beings and someone who was able to bring people closer to Torah values, study and observance.

I feel that this description was not merely meant to be an obituary of Aharon. Rather, it is meant as a blueprint as to what a true Kohain should be - what he should represent and what image he should reflect to those who come to him for counsel, aid, instruction and Temple service. We may not have a Temple in our midst as of yet today, but we are sorely in need of Kohanim - religious leaders cut from the cloth of Aharon and his value system and life style. The book of Vayikra is the guide for all those who aspire to religious leadership and influence in the Jewish world. It is truly the book of Torat Kohanim.

Shabat Shalom. Rabbi Berel Wein

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