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Sage Advice

By Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser - 1 Nisan 5783 – March 23, 2023 0

“When a person will sin unintentionally ... “ (Vayikra 4:2)
The Talmud (Shabbos 12b) tells of an incident where a sin was done unintentionally. Our sages taught that one may not read on Shabbos by the light of the candle lest he adjust it. R' Yishmael ben Elisha said: I will read and I will not adjust. However, once he read and did adjust the wick. He then said: How great are the words of the sages who said that one may not read by candlelight, as even a person like me adjusted the wick. Afterward he wrote in his notebook: I, Yishmael ben Elisha read and adjusted the candle on Shabbos. When the Temple will be rebuilt, I will bring a fat sin-offering as an atonement for my sin.

The question is asked: What did R' Yishmael ben Elisha mean when he said he would bring a “fat sin-offering”? Although one must bring a sin-offering for chillul Shabbos (desecrating the

Shabbos), the Torah does not stipulate that the sacrificial animal must be either fat or lean.

The Chasam Sofer cites his Rebbi, R' Nosson Adler, who says that R' Yishmael ben Elisha actually transgressed two aveiros. He adjusted the wick of the candle on Shabbos, which is a Torah prohibition and he violated a rabbinic injunction against reading by the light of a candle on Shabbos. Indeed, one must bring a sin-offering for the transgression of a Torah prohibition, but one does not bring a sacrifice for the violation of a rabbinic prohibition. Nevertheless, R' Yishmael ben Elisha wanted to atone for his secondary transgression. He therefore chose to bring a large animal to symbolically indicate his desire for atonement.

The Vilna Gaon highlights a correlation to R' Yishmael's statement, “How great are the words of the sages who said...” in Sanhedrin (21b), where R' Yitzchak asks why the rationales of the Torah commandments were not revealed. In response, the Talmud cites two examples where such a revelation was counterproductive. The Torah states (Devarim 17:16), “The king shall not accumulate many horses for himself so that he will not return the people to Egypt in order to increase horses.” Shlomo HaMelech said, “I will accumulate many horses, but I will not return.” We learn later (Melachim I, 10:29), “A chariot was brought out of Egypt for six hundred pieces of silver and horses for a hundred and fifty ...”

The Talmud tells us (ibid.) that Shlomo HaMelech had 40,000 large stables, and each one had in it 4,000 stalls for horses. It also says (Devarim 17:17), “The king shall not add many wives for himself so that his heart should not turn away.” Shlomo HaMelech said: I will add many but I will not turn away,” yet we learn later (Melachim I, 11:4), “... when Shlomo was old his wives turned away his heart ...” The Talmud tells us that one of Shlomo's wives was the daughter of Pharaoh. When he married her, says the Yad Rama, King Shlomo lost some of his wealth. The Talmud (Shabbos 56b) relates that Pharaoh's daughter brought him a thousand musical instruments which had been used for idolatry, and Shlomo did not protest. Also, the Angel Gavriel put a pole in the sea when Shlomo married the daughter of Pharaoh. A sandbar grew around it, growing larger each year and creating new, dry land, upon which the great city of Rome was built. It was the Romans who were instrumental in the destruction of the Temple.

The fact that Shlomo HaMelech was provided with a rationale for the Torah prohibitions actually contributed to his undoing.

It is brought down in the Shulchan Aruch that during the days before Pesach it is important to engage in the mitzvah of ma'os chitim. This is in order to ensure that everyone who is in need has the necessary provisions to celebrate the Yom Tov of Pesach properly with food, matzah and wine.

I was recently approached for Pesach funds on behalf of a widow with young children. She had never needed to be at the receiving end of assistance, but she was now in a position

where she needed money simply to feed her family for Pesach. Her dire circumstances were overwhelming for her, and I was asked to offer the young widow divrei chizuk. I readily agreed to the request and awaited the woman's call.

When the widow called, she was practically in tears. I explained to her that she was, in fact, doing more for us – by giving us the opportunity to dispense tzedakah and provide for Hashem's children – than we were doing for her. The Medrash Vayikra Rabbah tells us that more than the wealthy person does for the poor, the poor man does for the wealthy. Moreover, I said gently, the money one gives to tzedakah not only serves as an eternal merit in this world and the next, but it also has the power to atone for our sins and to be a source of increased parnassah. It would be my greatest simcha, I told her, to meet her children and give them a bracha. She expressed a strong desire and interest in this offer, but said she was just too embarrassed to come over with them in person. Nevertheless, I suggested that she keep my number in the event that she changed her mind.

To my surprise, she called a few days later and asked if she could take me up on my offer. The children were well-behaved and respectful and definitely excited to get a bracha. As I gave each one a candy with a small prize, the mother stood by with tears in her eyes, as the children jumped with delight.

I invite all our loyal readers of the Jewish Press and friends of Klal Yisroel to share in this great mitzvah and give chizuk to families, individuals, and children in need. In the zechus of your contribution, may you merit blessing and success, a year of good health, nachas, happiness and prosperity.

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Rabbi Dovid Goldwasser, a prominent rav and Torah personality, is a daily radio commentator who has authored over a dozen books, and a renowned speaker recognized for his exceptional ability to captivate and inspire audiences worldwide.

From: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>

to: ravfrand@torah.org

date: Mar 22, 2023, 12:35 PM

subject: **Rav Frand - Parshas HaTamid and Akeidas Yitzchak**

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: #1242 Seder with the Zayde – Not as Simple As You Think and Other Seder Issues. Good Shabbos!

Appending a Pasuk from Parshas Vayikra onto Parshas HaTamid Invokes Akeidas Yitzchak

Parshas HaTamid, which is contained in the "Korbonos" section of Shachris (the morning daily prayers) is from Parshas Pinchas. The Parshas HaTamid as it is written in Parshas Pinchas (Bamidbar 28:1-8), concludes with the pasuk: "and the other lamb shall you present at dusk; as the meal-offering of the morning, and as the drink-offering thereof, you shall present it, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savor unto Hashem." (Bamidbar 28:8). However, after quoting the eight pesukim from Parshas Pinchas, the Parshas HaTamid that we recite daily, concludes with one additional pasuk from Parshas Vayikra: "He is to slaughter it on the north side of the Mizbayach before Hashem, and Aharon's sons, the Kohanim, are to dash its blood upon the Mizbayach all around." (Vayikra 1:11).

This last pasuk, from this week's parsha, is not even referring to the Korban HaTamid! It therefore seems very strange that it is appended to our daily recital of Parshas HaTamid. It is true that the Korban Tamid, as well as other "Kodshei Kodashim" offerings, are all slaughtered on the north side of the Mizbayach. But why do we append this pasuk to Parshas HaTamid?

The Mishna Berurah explains that this pasuk is appended to our daily recital of the Parshas HaTamid based on the teaching of a Medrash. The Medrash states that the Ribono shel Olam invokes Heaven and Earth as His witnesses that "Whenever this particular pasuk is recited—whether by Jew or Gentile, man or woman, freeman or slave—I will remember Akeidas Yitzchak." In other words, mention of this pasuk is our way of sneaking in, so to speak, another remembrance of Akeidas Yitzchak. This also seems strange because this pasuk seems to have nothing to do with Akeidas Yitzchak! What is the connection between this pasuk and Akeidas Yitzchak?

The Maharal Diskin makes a very interesting point: In Biblical times, when they slaughtered an animal for a korbon, it was slaughtered on top of the Mizbayach, rather than the later-prevalent practice to slaughter the animal on the side of the Mizbayach. Why?

Avraham put his son Yitzchak on top of the Mizbayach, as was common practice, in order to offer him as a korbon. Yitzchak wanted to be bound on the Mizbayach because he was afraid that he would jerk and invalidate himself as a korbon. That is why it is called Akeidas Yitzchak (the Binding of Yitzchak). Avraham Avinu bound Yitzchak to the Mizbayach, and was about to slaughter him when the malach came forth and said, "Do not send forth your hand against the lad, do not do anything to him..." (Bereshis 22:12). We might think that at that point Avraham would say to his son, "Okay, Yitzchak, let's untie the ropes. Let's get out of here." But no, Avraham Avinu leaves him bound. Why does Avraham leave him bound? The Maharal Diskin explains: Avraham traveled all the way to Har Hamoria. He had to offer some kind of korbon. So he looked up and saw that a ram was caught by its horns in the thicket. Okay, so now Avraham had his ram – so why was Yitzchak STILL

bound on the Mizbayach? It was because Avraham was not yet sure that this animal was kosher for a korban. “Maybe it has a mum (blemish). Maybe it is a ba’al mum,” he feared. After all, it was caught up in the thorns! Avraham Avinu was afraid to unbind Yitzchak because he was not sure that the ram would be an acceptable substitute offering. Therefore, what does he do? He slaughters the ram ON THE NORTH SIDE of the Mizbayach.

That is why from that day forward, all the major korbonos – the Olah, the Chatas, and the Asham – are slaughtered on the north side of the Mizbayach. This reenacts what Avraham Avinu did. He was the first person to slaughter an animal on the north side of the Mizbayach rather than on the Mizbayach itself. Therefore, when we recite the pasuk “He slaughtered it on the northern side of the Mizbayach...” we are once again invoking the merit and the memory of Akeidas Yitzchak. This is why we say it as part of the daily Parshas HaTamid, as the Mishna Berura indicates.

The Roptshitzer Rebbe on Doing Mitzvos Correctly
Rav Naftali Tzvi Horowitz, known as the Roptshitzer Rebbe, gives a chassidische insight into a pasuk in this week’s parsha. The Torah uses the following pasuk to introduce the halacha of the bull brought as a sin offering by the Sanhedrin as an atonement for an erroneous ruling: “And if the whole congregation of Israel shall err, the thing being hidden from the eyes of the assembly, and do any of the things which the L-rd has commanded not to be done, and are guilty.” (Vayikra 4:13)

The wording of this pasuk seems strange: “...and do any of the things which the L-rd has commanded not to be done...” does not refer to doing an aveira (sin). It says they did something which Hashem commanded not to be done. The Roptshitzer Rebbe says that the pasuk is not referring to doing aveiros. It is referring to not doing mitzvos correctly. “One of the mitzvos of Hashem ... asher lo sei’asena” – that you are not doing it the way you are supposed to be doing it! That in itself is sinful.

We are now on the threshold of Pesach. Leil haSeder is a night full of mitzvos. There is no other night like it throughout the year. There are so many mitzvos, both D’Oraisa (Biblical) and D’Rabanan (Rabbinic). Matzah and Sipur Yetzias Mitzraim are D’Oraisa; Maror and Arba Kosos are D’Rabanan. A person needs to be careful not only to perform the mitzvos, but to perform the mitzvos correctly – with the proper intentions, meticulousness, and enthusiasm that this once-a-year situation merits.

The Roptshitzer Rebbe quotes a story involving two chassidim of the Baal Shem Tov. They were talking with each other: One chossid said, “Oy, what will be with me? After 120 years, I will approach the Kisei haKavod and I will need to give an accounting on all the aveiros that I did during my lifetime.” The other chossid answered back: “I am not worried about my aveiros. When the Ribono shel Olam will call me on the carpet and ask me why I did this and that aveira, I will explain that I had this lust and that lust and I could not control myself.

However, I am really worried about the mitzvos that I did. I am worried that perhaps I did not do them properly. What is my excuse for that?

We may have lapses and fall down spiritually by transgressing certain prohibitions. That may be understandable. But once we are already doing a mitzvah – do it correctly! That was his worry: “hamitzvos asher lo sei’asena” – the mitzvos that he was not performing correctly.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem
DavidATwersky@gmail.com Edited by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD dhoffman@torah.org This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A complete catalogue can be ordered from the Yad Yechiel Institute, PO Box 511, Owings Mills MD 21117-0511. Call (410) 358-0416 or e-mail tapes@yadyechiel.org or visit <http://www.yadyechiel.org/> for further information. Rav Frand © 2022 by Torah.org. Join the Jewish Learning Revolution! Torah.org: The Judaism Site brings this and a host of other classes to you every week. Visit <http://torah.org> to get your own free copy of this mailing or subscribe to the series of your choice. Need to change or stop your subscription? Please visit our subscription center, <http://torah.org/subscribe/> -- see the links on that page. Torah.org: The Judaism Site Project Genesis, Inc. 2833 Smith Ave., Suite 225 Baltimore, MD 21209 <http://www.torah.org/> learn@torah.org (410) 602-1350

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Rav Kook Torah

Vayikra: Animal Sacrifices in the Third Temple? Rabbi Chanan Morrison

Rav Kook’s views on the Temple service are sometimes misconstrued. A superficial reading of a passage in Olat Re’iyah (vol. I, p. 292) indicates that only grain offerings will be offered in the reinstated Temple service. To properly understand Rav Kook’s approach, it is necessary to read a related essay from Otzarot HaRe’iyah. What will the rebuilt Temple be like? Will we really offer animal sacrifices once again?

Protecting Animals Some people object to the idea of sacrifices out of concern for the welfare of animals. However, this objection contains a measure of hypocrisy. Why should compassion for animals only be expressed with regard to humanity’s spiritual needs? If our opposition to animal slaughter is based not on weakness of character, but on recognition of the issue’s fundamental morality, then our first step should be to outlaw the killing of animals for food, clothing, and other material benefits. In the world’s present state, the human race is weak, both physically and morally. The hour to protect animal life has not yet arrived. We still need to slaughter animals for our physical needs, and human morality requires that we maintain clear boundaries to distinguish between the relative value of human and animal life. At this

point in time, to advocate the protection of animals in our service of God is disingenuous. Is it moral to permit cruelty towards animals for our physical needs, yet forbid their use for our spiritual service, in sincere recognition and gratitude for God's kindness? If our dedication and love for God can be expressed - at its highest level — with our willingness to surrender our own lives and die al kiddush Hashem, sanctifying God's name, then certainly we should be willing to forgo the life of animals for this sublime goal.

The Return of Prophecy Currently, however, we are not ready for an immediate restoration of the sacrificial service. Only with the return of prophecy will it be possible to restore the Temple order. In a letter penned in 1919, Rav Kook explained: "With regard to sacrifices, it is more correct to believe that all aspects will be restored to their place.... We should not be overly troubled by the views of European culture. In the future, God's word to His people will elevate all the foundations of culture to a level above that attainable by human reason. "It is inappropriate to think that sacrifices only reflect the primitive idea of a worship of flesh. This service possesses a holy inner nature that cannot be revealed in its beauty without the illumination of God's light to His people [the return of prophecy] and a renewal of holiness to Israel. And this will be recognized by all peoples. But I agree with you that we should not approach the practical aspects of sacrifices before the advent of revealed divine inspiration in Israel." (Igrot HaRe'iyah vol. IV p. 24)

The Future World In the writings of the Kabbalists, we find a remarkable description of how the universe will look in the future, a world vastly changed from our current reality. All aspects of the universe will be elevated. Even the animals in that future era will be different; they will advance to the level of people nowadays (Sha'ar Hamitzvot of the Ari z"l). Obviously, no sacrifice could be offered from such humanlike animals. At that time, there will no longer be strife and conflict between the species. Human beings will no longer need to take the lives of animals for their physical, moral, and spiritual needs. It is about this distant time that the Midrash makes the startling prediction, "All sacrifices will be annulled in the future" (Tanchuma Emor 19, Vayikra Rabbah 9:7). The prophet Malachi similarly foretold of a lofty world in which the Temple service will only consist of grain offerings, in place of the animal sacrifices of old: "Then the grain-offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to God as in the days of old, and as in ancient years." (Malachi 3:4)

Hints to the Future Even in the current reality, we may feel uncomfortable about killing animals. This does not mean that the time for full animal rights has already arrived. Rather, these feelings come from a hidden anticipation of the future that is already ingrained in our souls, like many other spiritual aspirations. Hints of these future changes may be found in the text of the Torah itself. Thus, it says that offerings are slaughtered on the northern side of the altar. Why this side?

The north traditionally represents that which is incomplete and lacking, as it is written, "Out of the north, the evil shall break forth" (Jeremiah 1:14). In other words, the need to slaughter animals is a temporary concession to life in an incomplete world. Furthermore, the Torah stipulates that sacrifices must be slaughtered לְרֵצוֹנָם — 'willingly' (Lev. 19:5). The Temple service must correspond to our needs and wants. As the Talmud in Erchin 21a explains, one must be able to say, "I want to bring this offering." When the slaughter of animals is no longer generally acceptable to society, this condition will not be fulfilled. Finally, the Torah describes a person offering an animal sacrifice as adam (Lev. 1:2). This word indicates our current state of moral decline, a result of the unresolved sin of Adam, the first man. An individual offering a grain offering, on the other hand, is called nefesh, or soul (Lev. 2:1). The word nefesh implies a deeper, more essential level of humanity, independent of any temporary failings. (Gold from the Land of Israel pp. 173-176. Adapted from Otzarot HaRe'iyah, vol. II, pp. 101-103; Olat Re'iyah vol. I, p. 292) Copyright © 2022 Rav Kook Torah

Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ou.org>

Thu, Mar 23, 2023 at 8:13 PM

OU Torah Rabbi Sacks on Parsha

The Pursuit of Meaning

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l

The American Declaration of Independence speaks of the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Recently, following the pioneering work of Martin Seligman, founder of positive psychology, there have been hundreds of books published on happiness. Yet there is something more fundamental still to the sense of a life well-lived, namely, meaning.

The two seem similar. It's easy to suppose that people who find meaning are happy, and people who are happy have found meaning. But the two are not the same, nor do they always overlap. Happiness is largely a matter of satisfying needs and wants. Meaning, by contrast, is about a sense of purpose in life, especially by making positive contributions to the lives of others. Happiness is largely about how you feel in the present. Meaning is about how you judge your life as a whole: past, present, and future.

Happiness is associated with taking, meaning with giving. Individuals who suffer stress, worry, or anxiety are not happy, but they may be living lives rich with meaning. Past misfortunes reduce present happiness, but people often connect such moments with the discovery of meaning. Furthermore, happiness is not unique to humans. Animals also experience contentment when their wants and needs are satisfied. But meaning is a distinctively human phenomenon. It has to do not with nature but with culture. It is not about what happens to us, but about how we interpret what happens to us. There can be happiness without meaning, and there can be meaning in the

absence of happiness, even in the midst of darkness and pain.[1]

In a fascinating article in *The Atlantic*, “There’s More to Life Than Being Happy,”[2] Emily Smith argued that the pursuit of happiness can result in a relatively shallow, self-absorbed, even selfish life. What makes the pursuit of meaning different is that it is about the search for something larger than the self.

No one did more to put the question of meaning into modern discourse than the late Viktor Frankl, who has figured prominently in these essays on spirituality.[3] In the three years he spent in Auschwitz, Frankl survived and helped others to survive by inspiring them to discover a purpose in life even in the midst of hell on earth. He knew that in the camps, those who lost the will to live died. It was there that he formulated the ideas he later turned into a new type of psychotherapy based on what he called “man’s search for meaning.” His book of that title, written in the course of nine days in 1946, has sold more than ten million copies throughout the world, and ranks as one of the most influential works of the twentieth century.

Frankl used to say that the way to find meaning was not to ask what we want from life. Instead we should ask what life wants from us. We are each, he said, unique: in our gifts, our abilities, our skills and talents, and in the circumstances of our life. For each of us, then, there is a task only we can do. This does not mean that we are better than others. But if we believe we are here for a reason, then there is a *tikkun*, a mending, only we can perform; a fragment of light only we can redeem; an act of kindness, or courage, or generosity, or hospitality only we can perform; even a word of encouragement or a smile only we can give, because we are here, in this place, at this time, facing this person at this moment in their lives.

“Life is a task,” he used to say, and added, “The religious man differs from the apparently irreligious man only by experiencing his existence not simply as a task, but as a mission.” He or she is aware of being summoned, called, by a Source. “For thousands of years that source has been called God.”[4]

That is the significance of the word that gives our parsha, and the third book of the Torah, its name: *Vayikra*, “And He called.” The precise meaning of this opening verse is difficult to understand. Literally translated it reads:

“And He called to Moses, and God spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting, saying...” *Vayikra* 1:1

The first phrase seems to be redundant. If we are told that God spoke to Moses, why say in addition, “And He called”? Rashi explains as follows:

And He called to Moses: Every [time God communicated with Moses, whether signalled by the expression] “And He spoke,” or “and He said,” or “and He commanded,” it was always preceded by [God] calling [to Moses by name]. Rashi on *Vayikra* 1:1.

“Calling” is an expression of endearment. It is the expression employed by the ministering angels, as it says, “And one called to the other.” (*Isaiah* 6:3)

Vayikra, Rashi is telling us, means to be called to a task in love. This is the source of one of the key ideas of Western thought, namely the concept of a vocation or a calling, that is, the choice of a career or way of life not just because you want to do it, or because it offers certain benefits, but because you feel summoned to it. You feel this is your meaning and mission in life. This is what you were placed on earth to do.

There are many such calls in Tanach. There was the call Abraham heard to leave his land and family (*Gen.* 12:1). There was the call to Moses at the Burning Bush (*Ex.* 3:4). There was the one experienced by *Isaiah* when he saw in a mystical vision God enthroned and surrounded by angels:

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!” *Is.* 6:8

One of the most touching is the story of the young Samuel, dedicated by his mother Hannah to serve in the sanctuary at Shiloh where he acted as an assistant to Eli the Priest. In bed at night he heard a voice calling his name. He assumed it was Eli. He ran to see what he wanted but Eli told him he had not called. This happened a second time and then a third, and by then Eli realised that it was God calling the child. He told Samuel that the next time the voice called his name, he should reply, “Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.” It did not occur to the child that it might be God summoning him to a mission, but it was. Thus began his career as a prophet, judge, and anointer of Israel’s first two kings, Saul and David (see *I Samuel* 3).

When we see a wrong to be righted, a sickness to be healed, a need to be met, and we feel it speaking to us, that is when we come as close as we can in a post-prophetic age to hearing *Vayikra*, God’s call. And why does the word appear here, at the beginning of the third and central book of the Torah? Because the book of *Leviticus* is about sacrifices, and a vocation is about sacrifices. We are willing to make sacrifices when we feel they are part of the task we are called on to do.

From the perspective of eternity, we may sometimes be overwhelmed by a sense of our own insignificance. We are no more than a wave in the ocean, a grain of sand on the seashore, a speck of dust on the surface of infinity. Yet we are here because God wanted us to be, because there is a task He wants us to perform. The search for meaning is the quest for this task.

Each of us is unique. Even genetically identical twins are different. There are things only we can do, we who are what we are, in this time, this place, and these circumstances. For each of us God has a task: work to perform, a kindness to show, a gift to give, love to share, loneliness to ease, pain to heal, or broken lives to help mend. Discerning that task, hearing *Vayikra*, God’s call, is one of the great spiritual challenges for each of us.

How do we know what it is? Some years ago, in To Heal a Fractured World, I offered this as a guide, and it still seems to me to make sense: Where what we want to do meets what needs to be done, that is where God wants us to be.

[1] See Roy F. Baumeister, Kathleen D. Vohs, Jennifer Aaker, and Emily N. Garbinsky, "Some Key Differences between a Happy Life and a Meaningful Life," *Journal of Positive Psychology*, vol. 8, issue 6 (2013): pp. 505–16.

[2] Emily Smith, "There's More to Life Than Being Happy," *The Atlantic*, 9 January 2013.

[3] See in particular the essay from earlier in this series for entitled "Reframing."

[4] Viktor Frankl, *The Doctor and the Soul: from Psychotherapy to Logotherapy* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1965), p. 13.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ztz"l was a global religious leader, philosopher, the author of more than 25 books, and the moral voice for our time. Until 1st September 2013 he served as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, having held the position for 22 years. To read more from Rabbi Sacks, please visit www.rabbisacks.org.

Rabbi Yisroel Reisman's Weekly Chumash Shiur
Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>

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Rabbi Reisman - Parshas Vayikra 5774

1. A couple of thoughts on the Parsha. The first has to do with the Korban Minchas Nedava which we find at the beginning of Perek 2 (וַיִּקְרָא, כִּי-תִקְרִיב קָרְבָן מִנְחָה לַיהוָה). It is the only place that we find the expression Nefesh in regard to one of the Korbanos. Chazal Darshun from here that Korban Zeh Ba Leratzos Al Hanefesh that there is a Kapparah involved in the Mincha just as there is in the Olah, Chatos, and the Asham. All Korbanos are connected to Kapparah and that a Minchas Nedava (donated Mincha) is something which comes for Kappara. However, we don't find anywhere, not in the Gemara, not in the Midrashei Chazal what the specific Kappara of a Mincha is. We find regarding the Olah, the Chattas, and the Asham, but nothing regarding the Mincha.

The Netziv in the Hameik Davar on the Parsha makes a suggestion. It is absolutely incredible the Gadlus of the Netziv. He comes to a conclusion based on Pesukim (Pesukim all over Tanach). Normally we find that Gedolim say Nir'e Misugya D'shas or Nir'e Misugya D'shmaytsa. They take a Sugya, but the Netziv from Diyukim from the word Mincha in assorted places comes to a conclusion. His conclusion is the following. He says, this (Korban Mincha) comes for a Kappara for Aveiros that are done due to Middos. Middos here doesn't mean Middos in the sense of Middos Tovos. It means misbehavior which is due to depression, due to jealousy, due to obsession, due to anger. When somebody misbehaves due to a Kilkul Hamiddos, something which is causing him to misbehave due to Middos.

So the Mincha is a Kappara specifically for misbehavior due to Kilkul Hamiddos. Where does he get this from? I will mention a few of the Pesukim. In Shmuel Aleph 26:19 when Shaul is pursuing Dovid and Dovid confronts him. Dovid says (אִם-יָרִיךְ אֶם-הָסִיתָךָ בִּי, יָרַח מִנְחָה) for what you are doing to me the Kappara comes from smelling a Mincha. What in the world does a Mincha have to do more than any other Korban which is a Kappara? The Netziv explains, because we know that Shaul pursued Dovid because of a Ruach Hashem, a depression which came upon him so he said (אִם-יָרִיךְ הָסִיתָךָ בִּי) if Hashem led you to pursue me (יָרַח מִנְחָה), smell the Mincha and that will be the Kappara for you.

Another example, in the Haftorah of Chazon Yoshiyahu which is found in Yeshaya Perek Aleph. Yeshaya tells the people 1:13 (לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ, הִבִּיא מִנְחַת-שָׁוְא) don't continue bringing worthless Menachos. Why Menachos? All Korbanos were brought, what is special about the Mincha? Again the Netziv explains, the Mincha is a Kappara for misbehavior which is due to a person who is depressed, is jealous, is angry, anyone of the different Kilkul Hamiddos. However, the generation of Yeshaya were making a deliberate effort, a Beshita effort to sin. Therefore, he tells them (לֹא תוֹסִיפוּ, הִבִּיא מִנְחַת-שָׁוְא) you bring a Kappara for the wrong thing, you are pretending that it is a Kilkul Hamiddos that leads you to this behavior. It is not.

In Chumash in Parshas Korach 16:15 Moshe Rabbeinu says to the Ribbono Shel Olam (אַל-תִּפְּנוּ אֶל-מִנְחֹתֵם) don't turn to their Mincha offering. What does a Mincha offering have anything to do with Korach? The same thing. The Netziv explains, because had the Aveira of Korach been because of Kilkul Hamiddos they would not deserve such a severe punishment, such a once in the history of the world punishment. However, it is not that way. Moshe Rabbeinu says to the Ribbono Shel Olam their Kilkul comes from a Shittas Hachaim, from an opinion that they have certain rights to go against what HKB"H decreed and for that reason (אַל-תִּפְּנוּ אֶל-מִנְחֹתֵם).

We find a similar use in the second Perek of Malachi 2:13 (מֵאַיִן (עוֹד, פְּנוּת אֶל-הַמִּנְחָה) The same idea of not turning towards a Mincha where people sin deliberately. It is amazing the Gadlus of the Netziv from these Pesukim in various places in Tanach to come to a conclusion which fits beautifully in these places and in others regarding the uniqueness of a Mincha.

We find four types of Mincha. 1) is flour and water, 2) when it is baked, 3) when it is on a (Machavas) pan, and 4) which is cooked in a pot and it is a softer Mincha. Four types of Mincha. The Netziv explains that it comes for the four types of Kilkul Hamiddos. 1) depression, 2) when the person is too involved in levity and in Kalus, 3) anger, and 4) that which comes from Taiva or the pursuit of pleasure. Four types of Menachos against these four dangerous Kilkul Hamiddos.

Based on this Netziv we understand that we find by the Mincha a Lav in 2:11 (לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה, הֶמֶץ) that it is not allowed to be Chometz. Why a Lav on it being Chometz, we all understand. Since Chometz is a symbol of Kilkul Hamiddos it can hardly be

a Michapeir on Kilkul Hamiddos and therefore, these Menachos were all Matzah Dafka. We find Chometz, we find a few Korbanos that could be Chometz but not a Minchas Nedava. Minchas Nedava is never Chometz unlike for example the Shte Halechem that we bring on Shevuos which is allowed to be Chometz. This is a Vort regarding the Korban Mincha.

2. Let's move on to something regarding to Korbanos, the other half of Sefer Vayikra. As you all know we find the expression Raiach Nichoach by every Korban (Menachos too). They are Raiach Nichoach Ishei L'Hashem. There is one Korban where we don't find anywhere in the Torah the expression of Raiach Nichoach. As a matter of fact it is probably the Korban mentioned the most times in Chamishei Chumshai Torah and we don't find the expression of Raiach Nichoach once, and that is the Korban Pesach. It is a bit of a Pele. I would think that the Korban that has to do with Yetzias Mitzrayim should have the biggest Raiach Nichoach to the Ribono Shel Olam. It needs an explanation.

In the Sefer Tzitz Hasadeh on Chag Hapesach he has a beautiful explanation and if you remember you can save this as a Vort for the upcoming Chag HaPesach. The Ramban at the beginning of Vayikra 1:9 quotes the Rambam. The Rambam says that the reason for the Mitzvah of Korbanos was because the Goyim had Korbanos to their Avodah Zorah and to offset that HKB"H gave Klal Yisrael a Korban. We shouldn't have a Taiva to bring Korbanos to an Avodah Zorah so HKB"H said you can have Korbanos here. This is what the Rambam writes in Moreh Nivuchim. It is of course a Ketzas Pele. The whole purpose of a Korban is as a safeguard against Avodah Zorah? The Ramban along with virtually almost every Rishon that quotes the Rambam disagrees vehemently. The Ramban says what do you mean? A Korban is Raiach Nichoach Lashem. The Korban is brought as a Raiach Nichoach as something which is positive. He asks that Noach brought a Korban when he came out of the Taiva. Kayin and Hevel brought Korbanos, there was no Avodah Zorah in the world and therefore, the Rambam is seen as a Pliya Atzuma.

It could be says the Sefer Tzitz Hasadeh that Ain Hachi Nami, all Korbanos that are Raiach Nichoach come for positive reasons. Nevertheless, the Korban Pesach which is unique is not called a Raiach Nichoach Lashem, can be understood based on the Rambam that it is brought as a Geder against Avodah Zorah. So that all Korbanos come as a Siman of Ahavah and Hiskarvus to the Ribono Shel Olam and the Korban Pesach which is different in so many ways, it is different not only on when it is brought and when it is eaten but also in the Halachos of the Korban. There is no part of the Korban which is offered onto the Mizbaiach, there is no Raiach Nichoach opportunity. It may be that the Korban Pesach remains as the Rambam says as a Geder to Avodah Zorah. Shemos 12:21 (מִשְׁכֹּב, וּקְחוּ לָכֶם), when the Ribono Shel Olam commanded Korban Pesach he said (מִשְׁכֹּב, וּקְחוּ לָכֶם). Mishchu Yidaichem Mai'Avodah Zorah and go take a Korban Pesach. How beautiful. It fits absolutely into this

Machshava that the Korban Pesach is not Raiach Nichoach. It is meant as a Hakdara a Sur Maira, a Mishchu Yidaichem Mai'Avodah Zorah. We find by the Korban Pesach that there was a certain amount of Mesiras Nefesh in bringing the Korban Pesach. That again fits well. It was again a Geder against Avodah Zorah.

What we gain with this is something incredible for those at least who are interested in learning Nach. We find in Nach when Malchei Yisrael started movements of Teshuvah that they had Klal Yisrael come together and bring a Korban Pesach. We find it at least twice. Yoshiyahu Hamelech in Melachim II 23:21 when he has Klal Yisrael doing Teshuva and Yoshiyahu was the last great Machzir B'teshuvah from all the Malchei Yisrael. He says (וַיִּצְוֵה הַמֶּלֶךְ, אֶת-כָּל-הָעָם לְאָמֹר, עֲשׂוּ פֶסַח, לַיהוָה (אֲלֵרִיכָם). We find the same thing regarding Chizkiyahu who of course the Posuk says was the greatest person that brought Klal Yisrael to Teshuva in Divrei Hayamim II at the beginning of Perek 30 it is brought that Chizkiyahu or as it is brought in Divrei Hayamim Yechizkiyahu had Klal Yisrael bring a Korban Pesach (וַיִּשְׁלַח יְחִזְקִיָּהוּ עַל-כָּל-יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוָה, וְגַם-אֲגָרוֹת כְּתַב עַל-אֶפְרַיִם (וּמְנַשֶּׁה, לְבוֹא לְבֵית-יְרֵדָה, בִּירוּשָׁלַם--לַעֲשׂוֹת פֶּסַח, לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל). Again he asks them to bring a Korban and if you know anything about Nach it is an incredible thing that he said (וְגַם-אֲגָרוֹת כְּתַב עַל-אֶפְרַיִם וּמְנַשֶּׁה). Chizkiyahu was only the Melech on the two Shevatim as it was in his days that the 10 Shevatim went to Galus. As part of his Teshuva movement he brought a Korban Pesach. This fits well with this Yesod. The Korban Pesach is a Geder against Avodah Zorah. Of course this sheds new light on the Seder Shel Pesach. The Pesach Seder is supposed to have Matza, Maror, and the Korban Pesach. Pashtus they have no connection to each other, they are just the three Mitzvos Hayom. If the Korban Pesach is Raiach Nichoach then it doesn't fit into the idea of Chametz Umatza. However, given our understanding that the idea of having Matza and not Chametz is part of Biur Hara, Biur Chametz, getting rid of that which is bad, then the Korban Pesach fits absolutely beautifully. The Korban Pesach is the Hakdara against Avodah Zorah. And so, we have an insight into the Korban Pesach and I am sure as we study the Korban Pesach in preparation for Chag HaPesach we will find additional places where this Yesod fits. Any solid Yesod that a person comes up with if it is true fits in other places.

Rav Chaim Brisker used to say if you go on a good road you will meet people. In learning, if you go on a good road, if you have a Mehaleich, an approach, a Klaliyosdika approach and it is true then you see that it fits in numerous places. And so, in the 5 weeks or so until Pesach, in these weeks learn about the Korban Pesach. Looking forward to finding other places where this Yesod fits well.

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Shema Yisrael Torah Network

Peninim on the Torah - Parashas Vayikra

פרשת ויקרא תשפ"ג
אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לד'

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

The underlying concept of *korbanos*, ritual offerings, is shrouded in deep, esoteric wisdom. The early commentators – such as *Rambam*, *Ramban*, *Ibn Ezra* – each presents his individual approach and opinion concerning the efficacy and purpose of *korbanos*. For our purposes, I will cite from the *Ramban*'s commentary to the beginning of the *parshah*: “Since the actions of humans are consummated through thought, speech and action, Hashem commanded that, when a person sins, he shall bring an offering. He shall place his hands on it, corresponding to the action component of his sin. Then he shall confess his sin, verbalizing it with his mouth, corresponding to the speech component of his sin. The innards and kidneys are burnt in the fire of the Altar. These are organs of thought and desire; thus, their offering corresponds to the thought aspect of his sin. The rest of the animal's organs and its hands and feet, coincide with its hands and feet. The blood spilled on the Altar corresponds to the blood of its soul... All this is intended, so that the person should contemplate while he is doing these rituals, that he sinned to Hashem with his body and soul, and it is only through the kindness of Hashem that He has exchanged the life of the animal for his (the sinner's) life.”

We derive from the words of *Ramban* that the primary intention of the one who brings the *korban* should be his preparedness to sacrifice himself to Hashem in place of the *korban*. It is only by the grace of Hashem that the *korban* takes his place. The *Shlah HaKadosh* adds that one who brings a *korban* elevates himself to such a high spiritual level that the fact that he is willing to relinquish his life for Hashem is in and of itself a *kapparah*, atonement, for him.

We glean from this that the barometer of a man's spirituality and relationship to Hashem is his total abnegation, to the point of self-sacrifice for the Almighty. The *Baalei Mussar*, Ethicists, teach that this level of *mesiras nefesh*, self-sacrifice, may apply to – and is fulfilled, when one exerts himself in – the study of Torah. *Yegiah*, toil, to learn, to understand, to innovate, are all expressions of *mesiras nefesh* which demonstrate one's love for Hashem. Today, one does not have to battle enemies from without who prohibit Torah study. One primary contemporary deterrent is overcoming indolence and maintaining focus on learning and not on the world outside the *bais hamedrash*.

At the funeral of *Horav Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik, zl*, *Rosh Yeshivas Brisk* (eldest son of the *Brisker Rav, zl*), the deceased's son and successor, *Horav Avraham Yehoshua, Shlita*, said the following in his *hesped*, eulogy.

“*Abba*, I heard from you numerous times that the greatest form of *mesiras nefesh* is one's sacrifice to understand with optimum clarity every passage in the Torah. (This applies to both the Written and Oral law, as well as its commentators.) One should not forgo, give in and not press forward, clarifying every issue

in *halachah* that is presented. This is the ultimate *mesiras nefesh*. The reason for this is that a spectator is unable to ascertain and determine the level of such *mesiras nefesh*, its veracity and sincerity, its love for Torah and Hashem. Only the Almighty knows. Only He who peers into the deepest recesses of one's heart knows the depths of one's true *mesiras nefesh*.”

As an aside, I feel it prudent to address the difference between *mesiras nefesh* in Torah theology and that of varied cultures who, often to prove a point, will immolate themselves or blow themselves up with a bomb just to inflict injury and worse on their enemies. The basic difference is our outlook on life in contradistinction to theirs: We view life as the greatest and most important gift that Hashem has given us. Life is sacrosanct; thus, every moment must be cherished and used for a higher purpose in service to the Almighty. If a life is in danger, one may transgress just about any sin – regardless of its severity. (This excludes the three cardinal sins, for which, under specific circumstances, one is compelled to give up his life.) Having said this, we understand what is involved for a Jew to make the decision when he is in a position in which he must relinquish his life. This is the epitome of devotion to the Almighty. Those who freely sacrifice their life either have no clue concerning the value of life or they consider their lives of no substance or no value. In addition, when one sacrifices his life out of hatred for an enemy or acts on the brainwashing orders and encouragement of a despotic cleric bent on making a name for himself, he is truly a very sick, very foolish, person. In short, we value life. Thus, when we give it up, it is *mesiras nefesh* of the highest order. On the other hand, in their minds, their life has little value to them and therefore, giving it up has little meaning to them.

We take our Torah leaders for granted, assuming that their distinction in Torah is, for the most part, due to their brilliance. *Horav Yechezkel Levinstein, zl*, the venerable *Mashgiach* of Mir and Ponovezh, said otherwise, “If you notice an *adam gadol*, great man, who has merited to achieve a pivotal plateau in Torah erudition or in his *avodah*, service to Hashem, you have no cause to search for a reason for his ascension to eminence. You may be certain that he endured and passed numerous difficult challenges, trials and ups and downs, in order to reach this point. On the contrary, the greater the *gadol*, the greater the indication that he went through even greater vicissitudes to reach this point.”

Exerting oneself to study Torah is clearly a prerequisite to achieving lofty goals. We are aware, however, of an added ingredient without which the toil expended will ultimately not achieve its desired goal: *simchah*, joy, enthusiasm, excitement in being able to learn Hashem's Torah. At the funeral for *Horav Moshe Shmuel Shapiro, zl*, *Rosh Yeshivas Be'er Yaakov*, *Horav Michel Yehudah Lefkowitz, zl*, was among the *maspidim* who eulogized him. *Rav Moshe Shmuel* achieved the distinction that his *sefarim*, *Kuntros HaBiurim*, became a staple in the *yeshivah* world. *Rav Michel Yehudah* began by underscoring the

deceased's *ameilus*, toil, in Torah. He then added that, under no circumstances, regardless of the challenges, travail and illness which he confronted, did he ever lose his *simchah* in learning. His success was a result of his joy. It gave life to his toil and allowed him to appreciate and value every moment of his exertion.

Horav Shlomo Zalmen Auerbach, zl, related to one of his sons that, when he was a youth, the Yerushalayim community was suffering through a debilitating famine. There was no food, even for those who could afford to pay for it – let alone for those, like the Auerbach family, who lived in abject poverty. He remarked that, when he returned home from the *yeshivah* and noticed that all there was to eat was some stale bread, he decided to return to the *yeshivah* to continue learning. He ruminated, “My sisters have nothing else to eat and no other means for soothing their hunger pangs. I can return to the *yeshivah* and, in a short while, be so engrossed in learning that the joy I will experience will help me to mitigate my starvation. My sisters do not have that option. He returned to the *yeshivah* and left his portion for his sisters.

אדם כי יקריב מכם קרבן לד'

When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem.

(1:2)

Korbanos are a medium for bringing one closer to Hashem. Hence, (we use) the term *korban*, which is connected to *karov*, near. The various *korbanos* comprised one aspect of the person's atonement process. Once he recognizes and acknowledges his sin, states it and acts remorseful, he is now able to commence the journey toward penance and forgiveness. As part of the *teshuvah* process, he offers a *korban* which is sacrificed on the *Mizbayach*, Altar, with the understanding that, what takes place concerning the animal, really should have happened to him. The realization of the chasm created by his lapse in behavior will catalyze a sense of regret and acceptance for the future that such behavior will no longer be a part of his life. Today *korbanos* are no longer extant. As a result, *tefillah*, prayer, is our service to Hashem. Everything else, acknowledgement and remorse, followed by acceptance for the future, however, remain the same. These are part and parcel of the *teshuvah* process.

The following story, which I wrote a few years ago, is worth repeating. It is about a girl who, when up against the wall, decided to bring her own innovative *korban*.

A few years ago, a terrorist packed his car with 100 kilos of explosives and parked it near a supporting pillar at the Cinemall in Haifa. It did not explode. Had his intentions achieved fruition, the tragedy would have been cataclysmic. Not only would it have destroyed the pillar, but it would have also caused a conflagration when the other cars in the lot would have ignited. This is one of the most popular malls in the area, and it was full at the time. We cannot even begin to contemplate the extent of the tragedy had that bomb gone off.

An alert passerby noticed smoke coming from the car and summoned the police, who brought in the bomb squad and diffused the bomb. Everyone – even Ehud Olmert, then Prime Minister – recognized that they were spared by Hashem. This was clearly a miracle.

Now, for the rest of the story. Several weeks prior to this occurrence, a teenage girl in Haifa who had been complaining of stomach pains went to the doctor, and, after a battery of tests, was diagnosed with a malignant tumor that had metastasized. The doctors gave the grim verdict: They could do nothing other than give her pain meds to make her comfortable. She had mere weeks to live.

The girl did not give up; her parents did not give up. They might not have been observant Jews, but hope is a value that is inherently Jewish. They pleaded with the doctors to try something – anything – at least to make an effort to save their daughter's life. The doctors finally agreed and scheduled surgery for the next day. Feeling that their chances for success were very low, they assigned a young, inexperienced surgeon, with the feeling that it would be good practice for him. Since he had nothing to lose, the surgeon really could not go wrong.

They say that there are no atheists in a foxhole. The night before the surgery, the non-observant girl began to plead with Hashem. She said, “*HaKadosh Baruch Hu*, I am not perfect, and I probably do not deserve any favors from You. In ancient times, when we had a *Bais Hamikdash*, a sinner would confess and offer a *korban* and achieve penance. Today, we have no *Bais Hamikdash*, no *korbanos*, no *Kohanim*, but I still want to bring a *korban*.”

At that moment, she walked into her closet, removed all of her immodest clothing and carried it out to her yard. She made a pile and struck a match, creating a large pyre of burning clothing. She cried out, “Hashem, this is my *korban*!”

The next day, the girl went to the hospital in her nightgown and robe. She had no other clothing. Her entire wardrobe had been elevated to *korban* status. She had the surgery, and, lo and behold, the tumor had not metastasized. It was totally contained – and benign. She had just been the fortunate recipient of a miracle. When she shared the story behind the miracle with her friends, they, too, wanted to reap the benefits of dressing modestly. The next day, they all came together, brought out their immodest attire and made a bonfire!

The girls were now left with nothing presentable to wear. No problem – that is what malls are for. They all went together to celebrate their newly-accepted modesty – by shopping for new clothes. When that terrorist bomb was set to go off, those girls were at the mall, shopping for new, modest clothing!

אשר נשיא יהטא ועשה אחת מכל מצות ד' אלקיו אשר לא תעשה בשגגה

When a ruler sins and commits one from among all the commandments of Hashem that may not be done – unintentionally. (4:22)

The other *pesukim* (addressing private and communal sin) begin with the logical *v'im*, if (someone sins). Concerning the *Nasi*, the Torah begins with the word *asher*, which means when (a *Nasi* sins). Why, concerning everyone else, it is “if” and regarding the *Nasi*, it is “when”? It is almost as if the Torah is implying that, for the *Nasi*, sin is inevitable. It is only a question of when it will occur. *Rashi* quotes the *Sifra* that teaches that the word *asher* alludes to *ashrei*, fortunate, implying that a generation whose leader sins and seeks atonement for his error is truly fortunate. A leader who does not hide behind his cloak of power, who is prepared to come clean and seek atonement for his unintentional indiscretions, will surely repent his intentional sins. We wonder whether having a leader who concedes his unintentional sins is better than a leader who does not sin at all. One would think that a leader who is free and clear of all transgressions – both unintentional and intentional – would be the kind of leader a generation would be fortunate to have. Why settle for second choice?

Horav Sholom Shachne Zohn, zl (quoted by *Horav Eliezer HaLevi Turk*) related an exposition he heard from ***Horav Chaim Ozer Grodzenski, zl***. When a generation has a leader who never errs, never sins, this can be attributed to either of two reasons: 1) The leader is that good, that circumspect, that careful that he does not commit an unintentional sin. 2) The leader does very little. He rubber stamps what his congregation wants. He never takes a stand, never takes the initiative, never goes on the offense for fear that he might lose support. A leader who does nothing cannot really err. (The second reason sadly occurs more often than we care to admit.)

One of the *gedolei ha'mussar*, Ethicists, analogized this in the following manner. A person attending a wedding was asked to pour wine for the participants sitting at his table. He replied, “I refuse to pour wine for the guests.” When he was queried for a reason, he responded, “I am afraid of spilling wine on the tablecloth.” Those who heard his reply looked at him incredulously, “What is so bad if you spill a little wine? That is what tablecloths are for.”

This man was overly careful, and perhaps he should be commended for his caution. Not pouring the wine, however, is taking caution too far. His non-action borders on absurdity. A well-known quote (secular), “Your job is to achieve greatness, not to avoid mistakes.” Errors are normal; people are often stressed, especially if they are under pressure. If they do nothing, however, they might not make mistakes, but they will have made the mistake of not doing anything.

This, explains *Rav Chaim Ozer*, is why a generation whose leader offers a *korban* for his unintentional sin is fortunate. The sin came as a result of his seeking to do, to achieve, to create for his community. He does not sit back ensconced in his ivory tower fearing what could result from his error. He acts, and, come what may, he knows that he had made every attempt to help those who rely on him.

Horav Aharon Leib Shteinman, zl (Ayeles HaShachar) notes the language of *Rashi's* commentary, “The word *asher* here is related to *ashrei*, fortunate. Fortunate is the generation whose ruler sets his heart (*nosein lev*) to bring an atonement for his unintentional sins.” *Rashi* lauds neither the *Nasi's* bringing the *korban*, nor his courage in not concealing his error. Rather, *Rashi* underscores the fact that he set his heart to introspect and examine himself, to correct his ways and repair his error.

Rav Turk explains this meaningfully. By his very nature, man refuses to accept responsibility. It is always someone else who is responsible for his oversight. Thus, whenever an error occurs, he will convince himself that it is not his fault. He will find every reason to justify his actions. *Teshuvah* is comprised of introspection, such that it does not allow for ambiguity and cover up. The *Nasi* has every excuse to project his unintentional guilt onto others. He carries enormous responsibility on his shoulders. Thus, he has numerous venues on which to lay blame. The leader who is man enough to accept responsibility and not seek a way to expunge his guilt by blaming it on someone or something else is truly a great ruler – one that the generation is fortunate to have.

A great leader whom the generation is privileged to have at its helm is one who, not only does not conceal his errors, but one who actually searches for any perceived failing in his behavior. He will not leave any stone unturned in his self-examination.

Rav Turk relates an incredible incident which occurred with *Horav Yechezkel Levenstein, zl, Mashgiach* of Ponovezh, Mir and Kletsk. The *Mashgiach* was a *Levi*, and, as such, is enjoined to wash the hands of the *Kohanim* prior to *duchaning*, blessing of the congregation. Despite the fact that *duchaning* occurs at the end of *Mussaf*, the *Mashgiach* was unable to participate in this noble endeavor because he was reciting *Shemoneh Esrai*. On *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, however, due to the lengthy *piyutim*, liturgy, he was able to complete his recital of *Shemoneh Esrai* in time. He had one stipulation. He would only wash the hands of the *Rosh Yeshivah, Horav Yosef Kahaneman, zl, Ponovezher Rav*.

Rosh Hashanah Mussaf everyone, *Kohanim* and *Leviim*, lined up to participate in this pre-*duchaning* ritual. *Rav Turk*, who was a young boy at the time (he had accompanied his father), noticed that, while there were many *Leviim* assembled by the water faucets, in a corner he saw a solitary *Kohen* and a solitary *Levi*. This piqued his curiosity. After all, what made them different? He moved closer to see. When he saw who it was, he also wanted to wash the *Rav's* hands. (*Rav Turk* is a *Levi*.) He went over and was about to pick up a cup when the *Mashgiach* said, “*Nu, nu!*” and shooed him away.

The *Mashgiach* was distraught that perhaps he had hurt the young boy's feelings. He went over to *Rav Turk's* father and begged his forgiveness. He asked him to apologize to his son – which, of course, he did. Nonetheless, the *Mashgiach* could not rest. He worried lest he had hurt a young boy's feelings. On *Yom Kippur*, as the *Mashgiach* walked over to the faucet, he

stopped at (young) Rav Turk's seat and motioned to him to come along. The *Mashgiach* filled the cup with water and signaled to Rav Turk to hold the cup with him, and together they washed the *Rosh Yeshivah's* hands. This was all because he might have slighted a young boy and hurt his feelings. Concerning such a leader, the Torah asserts, *Ashrei hador*; "Fortunate is the generation."

In memory of our beloved parents Rabbi Dr. Avrohom Yitzchok Wolf & Rebbetzin Anna Moses Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family, Ari and Rivky Wolf and Family, Abba and Sarah Spero and Family, Pesach and Esther Ostroy and Family, Sruly and Chaya Wolf and Family Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, ©All rights reserved prepared and edited by Rabbi L. Scheinbaum

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Laws of the Blessing of Bread and Mezonot Revivim

By Rabbi Eliezer Melamed

Bread is a general term for satisfying food, therefore its blessing exempts the rest of the food in a meal * Foods that a person is used to eating because of their good taste and not for the purpose of satiety, blesses before eating them, even during a meal * Someone who wants to eat cakes at a meal, should decide in his mind from the beginning whether they are part of the meal and exempted with the blessing HaMotzi, or they are separate, and require the blessing Mezonot * One who eats an amount of Mezonot that usually satisfies him, should recite HaMotzi over them

Q: Why does the blessing over bread exempt the other foods in a meal?

A: There are two reasons for this: 1) Bread is the main part of a meal, and all the other foods are secondary to it. 2) 'Bread' is a general term for satisfying food, as written: "Jacob then made a vow, saying, "If God remains with me, protecting me on this journey that I am making, and giving me bread to eat and clothing to wear" (Genesis 28:20). Hence, bread is a general term for food. Also, we find during the famine in Egypt, when the Egyptians turned to Joseph and asked: "Give us bread, lest we die before your very eyes" (Genesis 47:15), and likewise, when Joseph provided for his father's household, everything he gave them was called bread, as written: "Joseph sustained his father, and his brothers, and all his father's household with bread, down to the little ones" (ibid., 12). Thus we see that the blessing 'HaMotzi' is not directed only towards bread and what is eaten with it, rather, at all the foods that are meant to satisfy.

Therefore, the blessing 'HaMotzi' exempts all the foods that are eaten at a meal, such as meat, fish, potatoes, rice, lentils, cheeses, raw and cooked salads, etc. And even if they are eaten separately, while not eating the bread, the blessing of 'HaMotzi' exempts them.

Dessert Foods are not Exempted by the 'HaMotzi' Blessing Q: Which foods eaten at a meal are not exempted by the blessing 'HaMotzi'?

A: Foods that a person is accustomed to eating because of their good taste and not for satiety, such as dates, grapes, watermelon, and the like. This is because the blessing 'HaMotzi' applies only to foods intended for satiation, which are the main part of the meal, but desserts that are eaten to add a good taste, which are usually eaten at the end of the meal or in between, are an addition to the meal, and should be blessed separately.

Therefore, one who eats fruits of the tree during his meal, blesses 'Ha'Etz', and one who eats watermelon blesses 'HaAdamah'.

Similarly, many people eat ice cream or pudding at the end of a meal, and since they are eaten for dessert and not included in foods intended for satiation, one recites the blessing 'Shehakol' over them.

All of this applies to the first blessing, but the Bracha Achrona (after-blessing) does not need to be recited over them, because Birkat Hamazon exempts all the foods eaten at the meal, whether foods eaten for satiety, or as a dessert (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 3:6).

Carrot or Waldorf Salads No blessing is recited on carrot or Waldorf salad served with dishes intended for satiation, because since they are served with the main dishes, they are generally considered to be included in dishes intended for satiation. However, if a sweet carrot salad or Waldorf salad are served after the meal for dessert, a 'Bracha Rishona' should be recited. And also on compote, i.e., fruits cooked in sugar served at the end of the meal, a 'Bracha Rishona' is recited.

Which Drinks are Not Exempted by the 'HaMotzi' Blessing? Drinks that a person is accustomed to drinking during his meal, such as water, juice, and spirits, are exempted with the blessing of 'HaMotzi'. But wine, because of its importance, is not exempted by the 'HaMotzi' blessing.

Coffee and tea that people usually drink after the meal are considered as part of the meal, and are exempted by the 'HaMotzi' blessing.

On the other hand, spirits drunk after the meal are not considered part of the meal, and require a blessing.

Do Cakes Eaten at a Meal Require a Blessing? Q: Rabbi, do cakes served at a meal require a blessing?

A: This is one of the most difficult questions in the laws of blessings, because in this halakha there are two polar opinions. Some poskim say that the 'Mezonot' blessing should not be recited because cakes are similar to bread and they are also satisfying, and therefore, they are part of the meal and are exempted with the blessing of 'HaMotzi' (Rashba). In addition, this question is related to the safek (doubt) regarding the pastry called in our Sages' parlance 'Pat ha'ba b'kisnin' (see, Peninei Halakha: Brachot 6:2). Therefore, some poskim say that since there is a safek about the matter, and since the general rule is

safek brachot le'ha'kel (if one is in doubt whether one can make a Bracha, the general rule is that one shouldn't make the Bracha), one who eats them during a meal should not recite a blessing over them. And those who wish to glorify the mitzvah and avoid the safek, it is preferable they refrain from eating mezonot at a meal (Chida).

In practice, those who wish to eat mezonot at a meal, have to decide how they relate to eating them. If they decide that it is part of the meal, they should determine in their minds that the 'HaMotzi' blessing will always exempt all the mezonot they will eat at the meal, and consequently, they will not bless 'Mezonot' over them, as suggested by the author of the 'Chayei Adam' (43: 9). And if they decide that eating the mezonot is intended for dessert, they should determine in their minds that the blessing 'HaMotzi' will never exempt the mezonot, and recite over them the blessing 'Mezonot', as Rabbi Ben Zion Abba Shaul suggested (Ohr Le'Tzion Vol.2, 12:10, in the footnote). And as long as they have not decided, because of the safek, they should not bless beforehand 'Mezonot', and those who wish to glorify the mitzvah – should refrain from eating them at a meal (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 3:8, 9).

One Who Sets his Meal on Baked Goods are Considered Bread A person who wants to eat bread, even in a very small amount, has to recite the blessing 'HaMotzi', because bread is intended for the setting of a meal, and even if one eats a 'ke'zayit' (the size of an average olive), one recites the important blessing over it, and thus exempts all the foods in the meal.

But for the rest of baked goods from the five types of grain, such as cakes, biscuits and crackers, since it is not customary to set a meal over them, the blessing 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' are said. However, when a person decides to set a meal over them, they are 'up-graded' to the level of bread, and then, in order to eat them, one must wash his hands with a blessing, and recite the blessing 'HaMotzi' over them, and with this blessing, exempts all other foods he will eat with them at the meal. And when finished eating, 'Birkat Hamazon' is recited over everything one ate.

This is because all grain pastries that are not bread have an intermediate status: on the one hand, since they are pastries, they are similar to bread, but on the other hand, since it is not customary to set a meal on them, they are not considered bread. Therefore, the usual bracha is 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya', however, when a meal is set over them, their bracha is 'HaMotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon' (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 6, 2).

What is the Amount of 'Setting a Meal'? In the opinion of the majority of poskim, the amount for keviyat seudah (setting of a meal) is the amount acceptable to eat at a regular meal, in such a way that the diner leaves it satiated, and does not need to eat again until the next meal. It is impossible to determine a measure according to volume, because there are airy pastries that satisfy only when one eats a large amount of them, and

then there are compressed pastries that satiate by eating a relatively small amount. Rather, everything follows what is customary – if one usually is full from what he intends to eat, their bracha is 'HaMotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon'.

And one should not feel he does not know how much food he needs to eat in order to be full, because with any amount that satiates, just like after eating a regular meal, one has basically set his meal on such an eating, and recites 'HaMotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon'.

Some poskim say that the amount for keviyat seudah is the volume of four eggs from the mezonot pastry (about the amount of a medium cup), and even though this amount does not usually satiate, people are customary to set a meal on such an amount of mezonot. In practice, we do not rule according to this method, and one who eats the volume of four eggs of a mezonot pastry, as long as he has not eaten as much as is usual to satiate from a regular meal, he recites the 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamechiya' blessings. However, le'chatchila (ideally), it is preferable not to eat a volume of four eggs, so as not to enter into a safek, rather, one should either eat less than the volume of four eggs, and thus say the 'Mezonot' blessing, or eat an amount that usually satiates, and say 'HaMotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon' according to all opinions.

In summary: A person who eats an amount of mezonot that satiates as if he had eaten a regular meal, or even if he only eats an amount of mezonot the volume of four eggs, but together with the other foods he eats, will be as full as if he had eaten a regular meal, blesses before eating the mezonot 'HaMotzi', and after eating, 'Birkat Hamazon'.

On Cooked Grain Dishes, the Blessings 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' are Always Recited If one cooked the grains, such as semolina, bulgur and oats (Quaker), or made their flour into a kind of cooked dish, like noodles, tiny pasta, or quiche – since they 'up-graded' to the level of a tavshil (cooked dish) that 'fills man's heart', the blessing 'Mezonot' is said. And after one has eaten from them a ke'zayit (about half an egg), he blesses 'Al hamichiya', which is the blessing 'Me'ein Shalosh' (Shulchan Aruch 208: 2).

However, if one sets his meal on noodles or tiny pasta, since they are cooked dishes and not baked goods, one must always recite the blessing 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' over them.

The Term 'Mezonot Rolls' is Misleading, because their Blessing is 'Hamotzi' As we have learned, a baked food that is not bread (pat ha'ba b'kisnin) has an intermediate status: if it is eaten between meals, the blessings of 'Mezonot' and 'Al hamichiya' are said, and if a meal is set over it, the blessing 'Hamotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon' are said. On the other hand, on bread, even when eating a little, 'Hamotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon' are said. The question is, where is the line between bread and baked goods?

The general rule is that anything that one regularly sets a meal over, is judged as bread, and on the other hand, anything that is regularly eaten between meals, for sweetness, or to alleviate

hunger to a certain extent, is judged as a mezonot pastry. According to this, sweet challah and sweet rolls are considered bread, since they are normally eaten at meals, and they are not usually served for a taste between meals. They are also eaten with different types of salads, or used as a sandwich with cheese or tuna, and thus, are used as bread. Therefore, even when one eats just a little bit of them, one must say the blessing 'Hamotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon'. In our language, anything that is called bread, or challah, or a bun – we regularly set a meal over them. On the other hand, if a pastry is called a 'cake' – it is not customary to set a meal over it.

Indeed, many Sephardic Jews are accustomed to bless 'Mezonot' on sweet challah, because in the past, they were not used to serving it at a meal, but were used to serving slices of sweet challah as a snack between meals. But today, since they are intended for satiety and a meal, and not as a dessert between meals, their bracha is 'Hamotzi'. Similarly, 'mezonot rolls' are usually sold with tuna and egg and the like, very similar to rolls without sweetness.

In addition to this, there is usually a volume ratio of four eggs in the 'mezonot buns', and consequently, even if it were a cake, some poskim say that one should say the bracha 'Hamotzi' and 'Birkat Hamazon' over them (Rama Me'Pano, Maharam Ben Habib, Beit David, Peninei Halacha: Brachot 6, 2), all the more so when they are usually eaten with additional foods that come to a cumulative amount that can substitute for a regular meal (Peninei Halakha: Brachot 6: 6, 5).

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