

O H R N E T

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

STARRING IN MY OWN MOVIE

“When a man from among you brings an offering to G-d...” (1:2)

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 yellowy-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 streetlamp, 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 no one except ourselves perceives our existence.

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*, 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 ourselves, our egos. That is the offering that is truly “from among you”.

PARSHA 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 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.

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THE MERRY MONTH

“When the Month of Adar begins simcha should be increased.” This is what our Talmudic Sages tell us in regard to the month we begin this week. In his commentary Rashi explains that the counsel is based on the fact that in the months of Adar and Nissan we enjoyed great miracles. The miracles to which he refers are the rescue from Haman’s plan for genocide and the Exodus from Egyptian bondage.

In our daily prayers we offer thanks to G-d “for Your daily miracles for us.” If one reflects on the ever-present threats to our health, our security and our sustenance, he can truly

appreciate that we safely make it to the end of the day thanks to the miracles of which we are not even aware.

For this reason we should feel a sense of simcha every day and every month of the year. Since, however, this joy is dulled by the pressure of our daily routine, we need a portion of the year to awaken us to the simcha of knowing that G-d is always with us. It is hoped that this “increase in simcha” will overflow into every day of our lives.

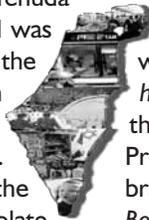
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LOVE OF THE LAND - THE PEOPLE

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

RABBI GEDALIAH – WHERE STRANGERS TREAD

One of the people who accompanied Rabbi Yehuda Hachasid on his pilgrimage to Eretz Yisrael was Rabbi Gedaliah, author of the book “Seek the Peace of Yerushalayim”. One of the sights which troubled them when they arrived in 1701 was that of Yishmaelite Arabs walking on the Temple Mount. The Hebrew word *shualim* is mentioned in the Prophet Yirmiyahu’s lament that Mount Zion is desolate



and *shualim* tread there. Rabbi Gedaliah calculated that the numerical value of the letters which make up this word is equivalent to that of the ones which form the word *hayishmaeli* (456), leading him to interpret the presence of the Yishmaelites on this mountain as a fulfillment of the Prophet’s vision, that strangers would some day make a brazen claim to ownership of the site upon which stood the *Beit Hamikdash*.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

1. Who does the word “*eilav*” in verse 1:1 exclude?
2. Name all the types of animals and birds mentioned in this week’s Parsha.
3. What two types of sin does an *olah* atone for?
4. Where was the *olah* slaughtered?
5. What procedure of an animal-offering can a non-*kohen* perform?
6. Besides the fire the *kohanim* bring on the altar, where else did the fire come from?
7. At what stage of development are *torim* (turtledoves) and *bonei yona* (young pigeons) unfit as offerings?
8. What is *melika*?
9. Why are animal innards offered on the altar, while bird innards are not?
10. Why does the Torah describe both the animal and bird offerings as a “satisfying aroma”?
11. Why is the term “*nefesh*” used regarding the flour offering?
12. Which part of the free-will *mincha* offering is burned on the altar?
13. The Torah forbids bringing honey with the *mincha*. What is meant by “honey”?
14. When does the Torah permit bringing a leavened bread offering?
15. Concerning *shelamim*, why does the Torah teach about sheep and goats separately?
16. For most offerings the *kohen* may use a service vessel to apply the blood on the *mizbe’ach*. For which *korban* may he apply the blood using only his finger?
17. Who is obligated to bring a *chatat*?
18. Where were the remains of the bull burnt while in the wilderness? Where were they burnt during the time of the *Beit Hamikdash*?
19. What two things does a voluntary *mincha* have that a *minchat chatat* lacks?
20. What is the minimum value of a *korban asham*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to this Week’s Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi’s commentary unless otherwise stated.

1. 1:1 - Aharon.
2. 1:2,14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (*torim*), and doves (*bonei yona*).
3. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
4. 1:5 - In the *Mishkan* Courtyard (*azarah*).
5. 1:55. - Ritual slaughter.
6. 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.
7. 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, *bonei yona* are too old and *torim* are too young.
8. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one’s fingernail.
9. 1:16 - An animal’s food is provided by its owner, so its innards are “kosher.” Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with “theft.”
10. 1:17 - To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.
11. 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, G-d regards it as if he had offered his *nefesh* (soul).
12. 2:1 - The *kometz* (fistful).
13. 2:11 - Any sweet fruit derivative.
14. 2:12 - On Shavuot.
15. 3:7 - Because they differ regarding the *alya* (fat tail). The lamb’s *alya* is burned on the altar but the goat’s is not.
16. 3:8 - The *chatat*.
17. 4:2 - One who accidentally transgresses a negative commandment whose willing violation carries the *karet* (excision) penalty.
18. 4:12 - a) Outside the three camps. b) Outside Jerusalem.
19. 5:11 - *Levona* and oil.
20. 5:15 - Two *shekalim*.

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- *Menachot* (meal offerings) whose service is performed with the wrong intention
- The dissenting position of Rabbi Shimon and the challenges to it
- Sacrifices whose purpose is to qualify one for entering the Sanctuary
- The wrong person or wrong position which can disqualify a *mincha*
- Why the sinner's *mincha* is so bare
- Left-handed service in the *mincha* offering
- The effort of the Sage Avimi to regain lost knowledge
- The daily *minchat chavitin* of the *kohen gadol*
- Eating sacrificial meat in the *heichal*
- Which sacred vessels sanctify their contents

SHELTER IN THE SANCTUARY

The meat of *kodshei kodshim* (*olah*, *chattat* and *asham*) sacrifices, as well as the remnants of a *mincha* offering, must be eaten by *kohanim* within the precincts of the *azarah* courtyard of the *Beit Hamikdash*. Does this preclude their doing so within the *heichal*, whose sanctity is on a higher level? Such a question could arise in the event that enemies were bombarding the besieged open *azarah* and shelter could be found only in the covered *heichal*.

The ruling of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira is that in such circumstances the *kohanim* could eat these sacred foods in the *heichal* and it would not be considered that they

rendered them unfit by removing them from the prescribed area of consumption.

Tosefot (*Zevachim* 29a) cites this ruling as a challenge to the statement of Rashi (*Zevachim* 63a) that there was no consumption of sacrificial meat in the *heichal*. It is interesting to note the difference between Rashi's explanation of the above-mentioned danger to the *kohanim* in *Mesechta Zevachim* and in *Mesechta Menachot*. In the former he describes it (*Zevachim* 63a) as bombardment from "arrows and catapult boulders" while in our *gemara* it is described as exposure to "spears and bows". The *gemara* does not report that such a situation ever developed, so that the nature of the danger remains only a theoretical one.

• *Menachot* 7b

What the SAGES Say

"The *mincha* offered by the sinner is not treated with oil and frankincense because he does not deserve to have it adorned."

• *Rabbi Shimon - Menachot* 6a

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BUYING MITZVOT

From: Ira

Dear Rabbi,

I saw a website that sells mitzvot like feeding the poor, visiting the sick, providing the needs of a bride and groom, mezuzah, bar mitzvah, kollel study, etc. Is this kosher? Approved? A loophole? Is this what G-d wants us to do? The idea that a wealthy person could just shell out some cash to fulfill his commitment to perform mitzvot seems to me a bit less than what G-d intended.

Dear Ira,

As an idea in general, if a certain charitable organization were to use this venue to fund the various good deeds they do, it would be fine. We're required to give charity not only in money but also in deed, and this could serve as a partnership whereby the organization serves as the agent of the one who "buys" the good deed and bestows it upon the recipient. Most individuals do not have direct, personal access to such a variety of causes, so the organization is helping one to fulfill the mitzvah of charity in a well-rounded, practical way.

I would just add two qualifications: 1. The website/organization should have reliable approbations. 2. The word "buy" should be placed in quotation marks and it should be explained what that really means – namely that the "buyer" of the mitzvah is contributing to cover the costs involved in these charitable deeds.

Regarding your concern that a person should not be able to just buy *mitzvot*, you're raising a good point. But I think what's happening here is that the organization is directing money toward various charities of one's choice, acting as the giver's agent to fulfill the specific mitzvah of charity.

This is fine. A person can give his charity money personally, directly to the recipient, or via an agent (which has an advantage in that it's anonymous, sparing the recipient embarrassment).

However, this is different than paying money for someone else to do your *mitzvot*, which I think is the case you're taking issue with. One certainly cannot pay for a mitzvah and get the credit for it if he didn't fulfill it himself. For example, one must keep Shabbat, don tefillin, eat kosher, etc. It is not possible to pay someone to do these *mitzvot* for you. They must be fulfilled by the person himself.

What could be done, however, (and this would seem to be the intention of the site regarding certain of the causes you mention), is to contribute money to help others fulfill *mitzvot*, in which case you would have the mitzvah of charity in the specific form of helping others do *mitzvot*. What's more, in such cases, in addition to getting the mitzvah of *tzedaka*, one would also have a portion in the merit of the mitzvah itself, which is being made possible through his auspices.

As I wrote, this cannot take the place of the person's own requirement to fulfill the *mitzvot* that are incumbent upon him, but even if he doesn't keep the *mitzvot* himself, if he supports others that do, he receives at least a portion in the *mitzvot* that are performed through his support.

So, for example, he might not have a mezuzah. But if he contributes to such an organization for the purpose of providing *mezuzot* for the needy who want them, he does get the mitzvah of charity, and has a certain indirect reward for the mitzvah that is being performed through him. The same applies for supporting Torah study or Shabbat observance, etc.

So the bottom line is, one may not pay money for others to do *mitzvot* in his stead. He is required to perform them himself. One may perform his mitzvah of charity by having others dispense the money for him. It is his money, and he's the one performing the mitzvah, albeit through an agent. However, even if one does not perform *mitzvot* himself, he may fulfill the mitzvah of *tzedaka* by giving to needy people, and if this takes the form of helping others fulfill specific *mitzvot*, he gets a portion of the reward for the mitzvah as well, but that's not in lieu of his own obligation to fulfill the *mitzvot* that are incumbent upon him.

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WHEN NOT TO “TELL IT AS IT IS”

Question: A friend of mine recently purchased a second-hand automobile and is anxious to show me the acquisition he is so proud of. I happen to know that this car is not what he thinks it is. Should I tell him what I really think or should I let him be happy in his ignorance?

Answer: The right thing for you to do depends on the seriousness of the problem with the car. If it is of so substantial a nature that your friend will have real trouble in driving and maintaining such a vehicle, there is a likelihood that he would, upon hearing this from you, be able to cancel the bad deal he made and get his money back. If this is indeed the case you have a responsibility to help him retrieve his investment just as you would have to return a lost item which you found.

If, however, it is simply a matter that you don't like the car he bought and believe he could have done a better deal your

obligation is to make him feel good about his purchase. The source for this is a debate in the Talmud (Mesechet Ketubot 17a) between the Academies of Hillel and Shammai about how one should sing the praises of a bride. In contrast to the Shammai approach that one must refrain from praising her charms when there is something obviously wrong with her because this would be considered a falsehood, the Hillel approach is to offer comprehensive praise. To support this position these Sages rhetorically ask: “When one has made a purchase do you praise it or put it down?” The obvious answer is that you praise it in line with the caution of our Sages that one should always strive to get along with people.

Why this is not considered a falsehood, explains Maharsha, is that we must assume that the purchaser was attracted to the item he bought, and you are merely praising the “beauty in the eye of the beholder”.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

JUST IN TIME!

An American youngster who spent a couple of years studying in a Jerusalem yeshiva for foreign students returned home to get married. Neither his family nor that of his *kalla* had sufficient funds to make a respectable wedding or to get the couple started with basic necessities.

The community to which they belonged pitched in to help them. The local synagogue offered free use of its social hall and a caterer agreed to provide the meal at cost. But with so

many startup expenses looming in the very near future there was room for concern.

Two days before the wedding the *chatan* received the good news that the ticket he bought in the raffle sponsored by his former yeshiva as a fundraising effort won the first prize of ten thousand dollars.

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NATIONS IN UPROAR TODAY AND TOMORROW

BY RABBI MENDEL WEINBACH

“Why are the nations in an uproar?” asks King David (*Tehillim* 2:1).

While the Psalmist was referring to the Messianic era when “the rulers of the world will take counsel against G-d and His anointed Mashiach” (ibid. 2:2), we may ask the same question today when it is the people who are rebelling against the rulers. Egypt, Libya and Tunisia are all undergoing dramatic changes and this has created a domino effect in other African and Middle Eastern lands. And even in Israel, the only true democracy in this part of the world, the country was on the verge of a peaceful civil rebellion because of the government-induced rise in the cost of living.

The common denominator seems to be the failure of those in power to properly relate to the needs of the people. “Power corrupts,” said Lord Acton, “and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

While those like Mubarak and Gaddafi, who wielded absolute power, were finally challenged for their absolute corruption, even where power is limited, like in Israel, there is the danger of corruption arising from good intentions. The idealistic ambition to develop Israel’s economy into American-style capitalism backfired when the Hisdadrut Labor Union joined forces with the manufacturers and municipality heads to successfully challenge the government.

Of course the above-mentioned developments are causes for concern for Israel. Will the “cool peace” with Egypt survive if the radical Moslem Brotherhood comes to power? How will the changes in Egypt affect the efforts to free Gilad Shalit in which Mubarak seemed to

play a positive role?

One other concern, that the Arabs living in Judea, Samaria and the rest of Israel may also be moved to violent protest, is dismissed by political analysts. The anger of the starving, jobless masses in the countries of upheaval is hardly present in Israel where Arabs enjoy a higher standard of living than their brothers in Arab lands. The hatred of despots enriching themselves and their families at the expense of a suffering populace is certainly not applicable to Israel’s democratically elected leaders.

We may suggest another perspective of the recent developments. Our Talmudic Sages call attention to the connection between the Psalm mentioned at the outset and the one following it, which refers to the rebellion of Avshalom against his father, King David. The explanation given is that if someone should be skeptical about the prophetic vision of the nations rebelling against G-d, he should be reminded that if so unlikely an occurrence as a son rebelling against his father could have taken place, it is also possible that a rebellion against the Heavenly Father will happen. Perhaps the totally unexpected current wave of rebellion against human rulers is a Heavenly-orchestrated preview of that universal rebellion which will be the prelude to our ultimate redemption.

May this thought strengthen us in our constantly repeated declaration that we anxiously look forward to the arrival of Mashiach, soon in our days.