

LAMPLIGHTER

5 Adar II
Parshas Vayikra

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayikra, focuses on the korbanot, the offerings brought by the Jewish people in the Sanctuary in the desert and afterwards, in the Temple in Jerusalem. It introduces this subject with the verse (translated literally): "When a man will offer of you a sacrifice to G-d of the animal." Now proper grammar would have the verse read: "When a man from among you offers...." But the verse is structured in this manner to teach that the offering is "of you," dependent on each person and no one else.

The word "korban" has its root in the word "karov," meaning "close." Bringing an offering means coming close to G-d. And the Torah teaches us that coming close to G-d is dependent on each individual. No external factors can stand in his way. Every person can come close to G-d. If he truly desires, he can reach the highest peaks.

Also implied is that the offering comes "of you," of the animal within the person himself. For each one of us has an animalistic side. This isn't necessarily something bad, for not all animals possess negative qualities such as cruelty or parasitism. On the contrary, most animals are pleasant creatures that are not harmful to humans or other beasts.

Even so, an animal is not considered a positive model for our Divine service. For an animal acts only to fulfil its own instinctual drives. It thinks of nothing more than satisfying its own needs and achieving gratification. Its selfishness lies not in the desire to take advantage of others; it just doesn't think of others. It is concerned with one thing: how to get what it wants and needs.

We each have a certain animal dimension to our personalities. There are times when we think only of ourselves and what we want. This is not necessarily bad, but it can lead to conflict when two people want the same thing, and it does not represent a developed state. One of the unique dimensions of a human being is that he can think and his brain can control his feelings and desires. But when a person allows the animal in him to control his conduct, he does nothing with this human potential. He will leave the world the same way he came in without having developed himself.

That is not why G-d brought us into being. He created us to make a change in the world and to begin by making a change in ourselves. Instead of just acting because we feel like doing something, our actions should be motivated by thought. We should act because what we're doing is right, because it follows G-d's intent in the world. Instead of always taking we should think of looking outward and giving. And this involves changing the animal in ourselves, bringing it closer to G-d. That's the spiritual service associated with bringing a sacrifice.

How is this done? Through thought. The animal in us is also intelligent. What does it want? To feel good. When it appreciates that giving can be more satisfying than receiving and that the greatest happiness comes from attuning oneself to G-d's will, it will also act in that manner. That's why we must continually expose ourselves to inspiring ideas and uplifting concepts. In this way, we will be motivated to look beyond our self-interest and seek goals that benefit mankind as a whole.

From Keeping in Touch, vol. 2 by Rabbi Eliyahu Touger, published by Sichos in English

The Ultimate Mitzvah

By Naftali Silberberg

The division of the Torah into five books is neither random nor simply intended to make a long text more user-friendly. Each of the Five Books of Moses has its own unique theme. Nachmanides explains that the theme of the Book of Leviticus, which we begin reading this Shabbat, is mitzvot. While a good amount of commandments are also imparted in the other four books, they are mentioned there incidentally, in the course of conveying the events or messages which are the primary message of those books.

Considering that this is the "Book of Mitzvot," we would have expected this book to open with some of the primary mitzvot which form the basis of the Jew's day. Prayer, tefillin, mezuzah, the laws of kashrut and Shabbat are some which immediately come to mind. Instead, the first portions of Leviticus discuss at length the laws of the various sacrifices offered during Temple times. This begs the question-why does the book devoted to mitzvot start with commandments which: a) aren't permanent fixtures of Jewish life - they have been non-practicable for nearly two thousand years now; and b) were not part of the daily life of the average Jew (who only visited the Temple thrice yearly) even when sacrifices were offered in the Temple in Jerusalem.

A closer examination of the deeper significance of mitzvot will lead us to conclude that sacrifices encapsulate the inner meaning of mitzvot perhaps more than any other individual mitzvah.

An animal is consumed by its desires and impulses of the moment, giving nary a thought to purpose, to future, to its betterment and refinement. Its emotions control its mind, using its limited cognitive abilities to further the heart's agenda. The human, on the other hand, is endowed with the ability to harness his emotions, to act based on need, purpose and ambition rather than expediency and instant gratification. In truth, however, every person is born an animal, and must be educated from without and tamed from within before earning the title of "mentch" - human.

Becoming "human" in its truest sense is indeed a lofty objective. The world would be so much more pleasant and inviting if more and more people actively pursued this goal. But while mitzvot also greatly assist in this quest, this is hardly their ultimate objective. Mitzvot are intended to take the animal-turned-human and connect him to his Creator, to allow him to rise above the limitations of a mere mortal and become sanctified-human-turned-holy. This completes the circle; this creation which was originally animal has become holy.

Torah philosophy doesn't agree with vegetarian activism, because the Torah recognizes the value of animal-turned-human - which is accomplished when someone who *earned* the title of human consumes the flesh of an animal. Indeed, it is a favor for the animal no less that it is a favor for the human: the animal now reaches a state it never could have reached while grazing in the field.

But animal-turned-holy - that's what sacrifices are all about. An animal is taken and becomes sanctified by being offered to G-d.

The commandments associated with sacrifices set the tone for the entire book, clarifying what the ultimate objective of the mitzvah really is.

Slice of LIFE

Thank You

by Ben Goldman

The last time I saw Rabbi Shaya Gansbourg was on the second night of Chanuka, a few months ago. I had just completed my army service in the IDF, and my wife and I were on our last night in New York City after traveling abroad for several weeks. The next morning, we would be returning to our home in Israel.

It was a bitterly cold and quiet night in New York, but when I opened the door to the Chabad of Harlem, I was greeted with the warmth and jubilant laughter of several dozen children, all of whom had shown up with their parents for a Chanuka party being held by the rabbi and his family. The children excitedly busied themselves decorating donuts, building lego menorahs, and playing "spin the dreidel." Some kids danced, others chased each other through the legs of adults, and several posed for pictures with "Yehuda the Maccabee" - an orthodox Jew and U.S. army officer who has served multiple tours in Afghanistan.

At a certain point the menorahs were lit, and I joined hands with the rabbi as we danced in a circle while singing "L'shana haba'a b'Yerushalayim" - "Next Year in Jerusalem."

It is somewhat fitting that my last memory of Rabbi Shaya Gansbourg is from Chanuka, the holiday where we celebrate light being found in the most unlikely of places. For me, Chabad of Harlem was the epitome of this idea. But it wasn't just remarkable for its unlikely location, but also for the absolute potency of the light produced by Rabbi Gansbourg as a leader of the community. He was, in all senses, the candle that burned miraculously, despite all odds, and whose light reached corners both dark and distant.

In his eight years dedicated to the revival of the Jewish community in Harlem, Rabbi Gansbourg and his wife Goldie managed to open Chabad of Harlem, organize a chabad club on the campus of City College of New York, start a Jewish day-care, and punctuate all of Judaism's numerous holidays with an event. Chanukah parties like the one above were not the exception, but the rule.

And in the whirlwind of Rabbi Gansbourg's ceaseless activity, he changed lives forever.

When I first moved to Harlem four years ago, I was in many ways awash in the sea of impending adulthood without a life raft. I was in my final year of university and preoccupied with the development of my career; my interest in God was minimal, my observance non-existent, and I was prepared, as so many other young Jewish Americans are, to abandon most of my heritage.

Rabbi Gansbourg changed this, not through indoctrination, but through example. Through his unassuming, modest one-room synagogue in Harlem, converted from a ground-floor apartment, he created a community that provided so much of what I found missing in the secular world - meditation, human bonding, unconditional acceptance, and a connection to something beyond oneself. Though I did not know it initially, what the rabbi had created was Jewish life.

What began for me as the occasional attendance at Friday night services developed rapidly into regular, almost perfunctory ritual, and within a matter of months, Shabbat evening and morning services were beating out bars, clubs and parties for my attention - even before I had adopted observance. I perceived something wholesome to the environment, something healthy and soul-enriching. I perceived something invaluable.

The world that Chabad of Harlem opened up to me was a beautiful one, but it was also

a revolutionary one. Rabbi Gansbourg exposed me to a world where friendly faces, home cooking, and a little wine could produce an exponentially greater happiness than an American Express Black Card at the finest club in Manhattan. He created a world where job title could be checked at the door, and one could be appreciated for who they are, rather than what they do. It was a world where a person could reflect on himself, on life, and on G-d, and in the process learn more about the universe than any textbook could provide.

It was an alien world, and a fantastic one, and it was incredible enough to change the course of my life.

I am happy and unbelievably privileged to say that I knew Rabbi Gansbourg, who recently passed away, and I thank G-d every day for having introduced the two of us - and for showing me this new world. I thank him for inspiring me to move to Israel, where I could pursue both career and spirituality, and where I later met my wife, who I love with all of my being, and with whom I have now started my own Jewish life.

And I thank Rabbi Gansbourg for what he taught me both in life and now in death; that the material world is fleeting, that ultimately the universe unknowable and the ways of G-d are mysterious, and that the only thing we can do is to live a good life, do what's right, be kind to others and walk as closely along the path that G-d set out for us as possible, because life is too precious to live in any other way.

Rabbi Gansbourg, thank you for everything. I will always miss you.

Ben Goldman is a writer, TV producer and filmmaker. Before moving to Israel, he worked for MTV and Comedy Central, and co-founded the community service organization Superheroes Anonymous. While in Israel, he has worked as a freelance reporter for the IBA English News, the Israel Now News, and served as Director of Video Operations for the IDF Spokesperson's New Media Unit.

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ISSUE 1129

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The reward of the souls and their existence in the World of Souls is called the Garden of Eden by our Sages. After the World of Souls will come the era of Moshiach, which is part of this world. At the conclusion thereof, the great judgment and the resurrection of the dead will occur. This is the recompense that includes the body and the soul... This is the great principle that is the hope of all who look longingly to the Holy One, blessed be He. The people of the resurrection will exist forever, from the time of the resurrection of the dead, to the world-to-come, which is an everlasting world. (*Nachmanides - The Gate of Reward*)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

By the Grace of G-d
9 Iyar, 5719 [May 17, 1959]
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Greeting and Blessing:

[This is] in response to your letter of the 3rd of Iyar, in which you relate the main points of what has transpired with you and your present situation, and conclude with the query: Why is it that when you desire to ascend in Torah and mitzvot, you encounter many difficulties, while at the same time one sees young men who elect to live a "free" life experience no difficulty, and require no toil or effort, to achieve their goal?

The answer to your question is to be found in your own letter. You describe how in order to realize your plans you need to study the profession for three to four years, and that in the interim you earn only 110 lirat per month, as an ordinary labourer. In other words, for work to be of greater value, it must be preceded by study and knowledge, in proportion to which the work is enhanced and more highly rewarded.

The reason for this is simple: the greater the achievement, the greater and broader the investment required; lesser achievements or activities which do not achieve anything require a lesser investment or no investment at all.

By the same token, a meaningless life requires no prior effort. Whatever satisfaction such a life holds is but momentary, so it should be no surprise that it requires no investment.

Anyone who gives thought to his future will readily devote several years of concentrated effort and investment, since by this means he will improve his life many times over in the near future, and in the decades to follow. As in the succinct and acute saying of our sages, "According to the pain is the gain." Indeed, the gain is many times the pain, toil and effort; that is to say, each increase of the "pain" yields an even higher rate of exchange in terms of reward and utility.

I hope that these few lines of mine will suffice so that, contemplating their content, you will reach the proper conclusion: that you must utilize these years and the youthful vigour they contain to make the proper investment for your entire future, one that would bring you happiness both materially and spiritually. There is but a single path that leads to this: the spiritual investment in the study of Torah, the Law of Life, and the fulfilment of its mitzvot ... in fulfilment of G-d's request, encouragement and command: "You shall choose life."

(A freely-translated excerpt from a letter)

The following is a freely-translated excerpt from a letter by the Rebbe to Mr. Shneur Zalman Shazar (president of the State of Israel in the years 1963-73), dated Tevet 14, 5714 (December 20, 1953), in which the Rebbe touches on the parallels between the spiritual light unleashed on Kislev 19 and modern-day lighting methods.

It was with pleasure that I received the news that electrical power has been installed in Kfar Chabad, and that farbrengens were already held by its light on the luminous day of the 19th of Kislev. I am told that the matter was arranged thanks to your effort and vigour, and I thank you and congratulate you on this.

It is an age-old Jewish custom to seek a deeper meaning and instruction in every occurrence, as per the saying of the Mishnah, "Who is wise? He who learns from every man"; to which the Baal Shem Tov adds that one must also learn something from every event and its every detail.

From the day of his redemption on the 19th of Kislev, the double light of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi began to spread, free of all disturbances and obstructions, and in a manner that could reach also the simplest of folk. Indeed, this is the elementary principle of Chassidism: to draw down and connect the ultimate heights with the lowest depths...

The electrical force is one of the hidden forces of nature. It cannot be perceived by any of the five senses--we know of its existence only through its causations and effects. Yet this hidden force most potently banishes darkness and illuminates the night. Thus, electricity is a physical analog for the spiritual force of Chassidism, whereby the hidden element of Torah and its most arcane secrets--as revealed via Chassidic teaching and the Chassidic way of life--banish the darkness of the material world and illuminate the murkiness of the physical existence.

CUSTOMS CORNER

Despite the fact that Moses was great in prophecy, Torah and wisdom, the trait that G-d found fit to mention in the Torah was his humility. Regarding humility it is stated:

- G-d answers the prayers of a humble person.
- One who lifts himself up (i.e., behaves arrogantly), G-d will bring him down. Whereas one who lowers himself (i.e., behaves humbly) will be raised up by G-d.
- G-d chose the Jewish people because of their humility and the humility of the Patriarchs.

One of the ways to achieve humility is to contemplate the fact that we come from a mere drop, and that we will ultimately return to dust.

There are many signs of true humility. Some of them are:

- If you can forgive someone who wronged you, even though you have the power to take revenge.
- If difficult times befall a person, he should humbly accept G-d's judgment with love, knowing that for some reason he deserves this difficulty.

A WORD

from the Director

Every Jew is heir to the entire spiritual legacy of our people. There is a golden chain extending throughout the generations, reaching back to our forefathers, Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov, and to our Matriarchs Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah. Every Jew in the present generation is a representative of the entire collective as it has existed and evolved throughout history. As such, G-d cherishes every Jew as a father cherishes an only son.

The unique love which G-d shows the Jewish people is reflected in the beginning of our Torah reading, which states: "And He called to Moshe, and G-d spoke to him." Before G-d spoke to Moshe, He called to him, showing him a unique measure of endearment. G-d did not call Moshe to impart information; on the contrary, He called him to express the fundamental love He shares with our people. (For although it was Moshe alone who was called, this call was addressed to him as the leader of our people as a whole.)

The inner G-dly nature which we possess constantly "calls" to us, seeking to express itself. This is reflected by the subject of the Torah reading, the sacrificial offerings. The Hebrew word for sacrifice, korban (קרבן), shares a root with the word kerov (קרוב), which means "close." Sacrifices bring the Jews' spiritual potential to the surface, carrying our people and each individual closer to G-d.

The above concepts are fundamental when it comes to relationships with fellow Jews, even those whose conduct (at present) is estranged from our heritage. Above all else, we must appreciate who the other person truly is. When speaking to a Jew, we must be aware that we are speaking to a soul that is "an actual part of G-d."

J. I. Guttentag

IT HAPPENED *Once...*

Getzel Shlomo was his name. He was a pauper, one of those beggars who roamed the town of Harki, going from door to door, asking for alms. If anyone pitied him and handed him a coin, and even if they didn't, his only response was "Shma Yisrael," and the townspeople were sure he was incapable of uttering any other words. He was regarded as an imbecile, a half-wit, who occasionally passed through their lives like a shadow and then was thought about no more.

The beggar's young son, Chaim Shmuel grew up, it seemed, with little help from his parents. When it was time for his Bar Mitzva, a local, kind-hearted teacher taught him how to read and don tefilin with the blessings. When the boy reached the age of fourteen, he left Harki to strike out on his own to try to make his fortune in another town where he wouldn't be known as "The beggar Getzel Shlomo's son."

Life was not easy for him, but he was honest and hardworking, and he eked out a living doing handy-work. After ten years, he married the daughter of a local villager and settled down.

During that time, Getzel Shlomo continued his daily rounds of the householders of Harki. And throughout all the years no one ever heard him say anything more than the two words, "Shma Yisrael."

Now, Getzel Shlomo was very old, and he sensed that he was about to die. He called the members of the Chevra Kadisha (the Jewish burial society) to come to him and hear his last request. The men entered the bare room where Getzel Shlomo lay on a wooden pallet.

"My friends, I would like to ask you the favour that you carry out my final wish and bury me in the poorest section of the cemetery at the beginning of a new row. I am very sorry to say that I have no money to pay for the burial, but at least I have saved you the trouble of bringing water to wash my body," and he pointed to the corner of the room where a barrel of water stood.

The Chevra Kadisha members were astounded. Getzel Shlomo could actually speak! They had obviously been wrong about him. He was not the imbecile they all had taken him for. Then, Getzel Shlomo handed one of the gravediggers a basket and said, "Please be sure to bury this with me."

The gravediggers gathered around the basket, curious to discover what it might contain. Looking inside, they saw a pile of papers. "Maybe its Getzel Shlomo's literary works," one joked, and loud chuckles broke out from the others in the crowd.

When, a short while later, they returned to Getzel Shlomo's room, they found him lying with closed eyes, reciting his last prayers. He then arranged himself and drew his last breath.

The Rabbi of Harki, who always made it a point to attend all funerals, whether of the great or the small, asked that he be notified of the time of Getzel Shlomo's funeral. When the Rabbi arrived, the sexton showed him the basket of papers and told the Rabbi that the deceased had wished to be buried with them. Was it allowed? The Rabbi's astonishment could be seen on his face as he flipped through the papers. They contained a meticulous accounting of every penny Getzel Shlomo had collected over all the years. The tiny figures told how he had collected money and then distributed it to the poor of Harki. Getzel Shlomo had performed the demeaning work of begging to spare others from suffering the shame of begging.

The Rabbi looked up at the crowd and declared, "Getzel Shlomo is a hidden Tzadik and he must be accorded the honour which is his due." The Rabbi himself undertook to recite the Kaddish until the dead man's son could be located.

It was only after two years that Chaim Shmuel heard of his father's death and discovered that his father had been a hidden Tzadik. It was then that he returned to Harki together with his family. He continued working very hard to earn his daily bread, but he never complained of his difficult lot. And he never thought of capitalizing on the growing reputation of his saintly father.

One person, though, took a particular interest in Chaim Shmuel, and that was the Baal Shem Tov. Soon after Chaim Shmuel returned to Harki, the Baal Shem Tov instructed his followers there to take him under their wing. He informed them that the son of the Tzadik possessed a very lofty soul and was destined for great spiritual and material riches.

Under the loving tutelage of the Chasidim, Chaim Shmuel began to advance in his study of Torah. He also became very successful in business and it wasn't long before he became one of the greatest philanthropists in Harki, as well as a well-respected scholar.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

A man who shall bring near of you an offering to G-d (1:2)

The verse does not say, "a man of you who shall bring near an offering," but, "a man who shall bring near of you an offering"--the offering must come from within the person. It is the animal within man that must be "brought near" and elevated by the divine fire upon the Altar. (*The Chassidic Masters*)

An ascending offering, a fire-offering of a sweet savour to G-d (1:9)

It is pleasurable to Me that I have spoken and My will was done. (*Sifri; Rashi*)

CANDLE LIGHTING: 7 MARCH 2014

BEGINS		ENDS
7:34	MELBOURNE	8:31
7:29	ADELAIDE	8:23
5:57	BRISBANE	6:48
6:48	DARWIN	7:37
5:55	GOLD COAST	6:47
6:28	PERTH	7:21
7:08	SYDNEY	8:02
7:17	CANBERRA	8:12
7:29	LAUNCESTON	8:27
7:35	AUCKLAND	8:31
7:38	WELLINGTON	8:36
7:29	HOBART	8:28
6:55	BYRON BAY	7:47
7:01	SINGAPORE	7:49



CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS VAYIKRA
5 ADAR II • 7 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	7:34 PM
	MINCHA:	7:40 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	8:10 PM
SHABBOS:	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	10:21 AM
	MINCHA:	7:30 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	8:31 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS:	SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
	MON-FRI:	8:00 AM
	MINCHA:	7:35 PM
	MAARIV:	SUN-FRI: 8:25 PM