

LAMPLIGHTER

8 Adar Beis
Parshas Vayikra
(Zachor)

1391

15 March
5779/2019

PUBLISHED BY THE CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD

LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Vayikra, is the first portion in the book of Leviticus. It discusses the various types of sacrifices the Jewish people were commanded to offer during the times of the Tabernacle, and later the Holy Temple. In the description of the first few types of sacrifices, the wood used for the fire on the altar is mentioned numerous times.

The Talmud relates that when the Jews returned to Israel from the Babylonian Exile, after the destruction of the First Holy Temple, they found no wood for the altar in the Temple's storehouses. Several families banded together and donated wood. Later, these families were given the permanent honor of supplying the wood for the altar. The Sages decreed that the days when the wood was donated should be celebrated as a minor festival by the families.

Interestingly, there is another instance in which celebrations are connected to wood. The Mishna states: "There were no other holidays as great to all of Israel as the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur." One of the reasons for the joy on the 15th of Av was that this day marked the end of the harvest of trees whose wood would be used to burn the sacrifices.

What is so significant about the wood for the altar that its donation mandated an actual holiday, and its harvest brought such joy to the entire Jewish nation?

The wood was not merely fuel for the fire by which the offerings were burnt; it played a far deeper role in the spiritual function of the Holy Temple, and was an essential element of the sacrifices themselves.

But to grasp the importance of wood, we must first understand the significance of the sacrifices. According to Nachmanides, an individual bringing an offering was to have in mind that the animal being slaughtered was in his stead. Only through G-d's good will did He accept an animal in exchange.

There were many different types of offerings, and the thoughts accompanying each of them varied. For example, when a person brought a sin offering, he was required to dwell on thoughts of repentance and make amends for his wrongdoing, whereas the thanks-offerings aroused a deep love for G-d. Each offering was to be brought with its appropriate reflections and meditations.

But the most fundamental thought of all, no matter which offering was brought, was that of giving oneself totally over to G-d. This absolute self-sacrifice transcended any personal emotions or motivations. Only after this requirement was met could the individual go on to express the emotions demanded by the particular offering.

This self-sacrifice was expressed by the burning of the wood on the altar. The Torah likens man to a tree. The burning of the wood symbolized the willingness to sacrifice oneself without personal considerations. For, when bringing an offering, the donor might derive some degree of satisfaction, personal glory or benefit from the act. However, the burning wood reminded him that there should be no such ulterior motives. The celebrations surrounding the provision of wood for the altar therefore epitomized the purest and most lofty aim of the sacrifices themselves.

Sacrificing Five Minutes

By Levi Avtzon

After closely observing myself and the world around me, I have come to realize that it is much easier to make large lifestyle changes than small ones.

People regularly plunge head-first into huge commitments such as marriage, bringing a child into the world, or volunteering time to the local charity chapter. Some even fly to a third-world country and dedicate their lives to help unfortunate souls.

When it comes to the small sacrifices however, like spending a mere five minutes with that same child or spouse that we so wholeheartedly chose to care and nurture for the rest of our lives, a world war takes place.

The same phenomenon can be found in our relationship with G-d. Many of us, especially those who have grown up in Torah-observant homes, readily commit to eating only kosher food our entire lives, to abstain from work one day a week, and pray three times every day... forever!

Why does the holy "give-my-life-away" individual find it so difficult to win the tiny battles? But small battles, such as praying with a bit more concentration, infusing our Shabbat not only with don'ts, but more importantly with do's, such as studying extra Torah and beating to a higher tune, seem as unbeatable as Mount Suribachi!

Why? Why does the holy "give-my-life-away" individual find it so difficult to win the tiny battles?

Sacrifices are the theme of this week's Torah reading, Vayikra. The chassidic masters have taught that in our post-Temple era, we don't sacrifice four-legged animals; rather we sacrifice animals of temptation and natural instincts—the animal within us.

Not to demean the big stuff which are the bedrock of who we are and what we do, but may I venture to say that the real battle, the real sacrifices that are sacrificed daily on our altar, are the small stuff—those that when won don't make us feel like a "prince in shining armor," and unfortunately don't cause too much guilt when avoided or lost.

Like the time we refrain from giving that knee-jerk reaction to our spouse/child/boss/local-nudnik.

The time we pray to G-d not only with our mouth, but with our heart and mind as well.

The two minutes we spend doing homework with our child.

These are not ego-building victories, but they are the victories that G-d seeks from us. The battles that make every day a D-Day.

Slice of LIFE

My Friend with Special Needs

By Esther Greenwald

In the fall of 1997, I took my very first trip to Israel to begin a year of post-high school study at a seminary in Jerusalem. From the moment I stepped off the plane, I was overcome by feelings of awe and disbelief. After years of dreaming about our wondrous Holy Land, I had finally arrived.

As I settled into my new home away from home, I learned that my learning program placed a special emphasis on volunteering. Every Monday, students would volunteer at private homes, clinics, hospitals, and nonprofit organizations of all kinds, assisting with anything and everything that was asked of them.

I was given the opportunity to volunteer at a place called ALEH, in Jerusalem. ALEH is a residential facility for children and young adults with severe physical and mental disabilities, who require intensive and constant care and support. Though I had never been exposed to children with disabilities before, I was more than happy to volunteer there.

My first visit to ALEH was surreal. Powerful feelings of love and warmth washed over me the moment I arrived. The corridors were abuzz with song and laughter. The atmosphere was electric. And that's where I met Tal.

Anyone who knows Tal loves him. You can't help but smile every time you see him. Though he can't speak, Tal always makes an effort to connect with people, to really listen to them and make it clear that he is listening (a trait that I have long sought to emulate). From the moment I met him, I knew that Tal was someone special. But I could never have imagined how our relationship would shape my life.

At that time, Tal was only seven years old. Communicating with his hands and facial expressions, he asked me who I was and what I was doing at ALEH. After speaking with Tal for several minutes, I was once again ready to leave. But Tal

stopped me again, motioning that he wanted to escort me out. He raced his wheelchair to the entrance, bade me goodbye, and waved until I was no longer in sight. I was touched by the experience, and decided that I would return for regular weekly visits. Soon enough, we grew very close, and my visit with Tal became the highlight of my week.

The weeks and months flew by, and my year abroad came to an end. I spent the summer with my family in the U.S., but returned to Israel in the fall of 1998. Upon my return, I immediately reinstated my Monday visits with Tal.

Tal spotted me the moment I walked through the door, and waved me over for a huge "welcome back" hug. He then started tugging at my purse. Not knowing what he wanted, I handed it to him. He stuck his hand inside and felt around until he finally pulled out a photo album that had been lent to me by a friend. The album contained pictures from her son's bar mitzvah. She wanted me to look at a few specific pictures that included an older boy from her father's yeshivah named Yishai, whom she wanted me to meet. Tal opened the album and began leafing through the pictures. He looked at each picture and studied the faces. His face lit up, as though he had finally found what he was looking for, when he saw a picture of Yishai. He excitedly pointed to the picture of Yishai and then to me. I asked him if he was trying to tell me something. He nodded and mimicked putting a ring on my finger. I asked him if he thought that I was going to marry this boy. He nodded vigorously and smiled from ear to ear. I wasn't sure if I was even interested in Yishai at that point. But Tal knew better.

Sure enough, once I met Yishai, I knew Tal was right. It didn't take long to know that Yishai was the man I wanted to marry.

Soon after the wedding, Yishai and I moved out of Jerusalem, and it became difficult to visit Tal. Several more months passed, and I became pregnant with my first child. I really missed Tal, and wanted to visit him to share the exciting news. When I arrived at ALEH, Tal once again saw me first and waved me over. Before I could speak, he pointed to my stomach and then stroked his chin as though he had a beard—his way of informing me that I would have a boy. I didn't even know the gender of the baby at that point. But Tal did.

I carried to term and gave birth to a beautiful baby boy, just as Tal predicted. With a newborn in the house, it became almost impossible to travel to Jerusalem to visit Tal. I missed him, and kept hoping and praying for an opportunity that would bring us back to Jerusalem. As luck

would have it, just such an opportunity arose a little over a year later, and we moved back to Jerusalem. I started visiting Tal again, with big gaps in-between visits.

The months and years rolled on, and I was blessed with two more children. Life had become very hectic, and I simply couldn't find the time to visit Tal.

And then, last year, we finally were able to see Tal again. Though quite a few years had passed, Tal didn't miss a beat. He saw me first and waved me over for a huge "welcome back" hug. He asked me where my children were, and I promised him that I would bring them all to visit him soon.

As promised, I returned a few weeks later with my children and a special surprise: a photo album filled with pictures from our original Monday visits so many years ago. Tal was elated, and studied each and every picture, smiling wider and brighter every time he turned a page.

This past April, ALEH invited us to the organization's first-ever Jerusalem march to increase public awareness of the disabled. A procession of over three hundred marchers, including ALEH's amazing kids, their families, caregivers, and volunteers and friends from around the globe, set out from the Jerusalem facility to cross over the Jerusalem Chords Bridge. My family proudly marched with Tal. I was deeply moved by the event, and I was happy to see that my whole family thoroughly enjoyed it as well.

As we headed home, I felt a sense of completeness and deep satisfaction in knowing that I had fused the two most salient parts of my life. Tal finally got to meet my whole family (as had been his wish for many years), and my family was fortunate enough to join those lucky few who know and, thus love, Tal.

While Tal's sixth sense is truly unique, my experience at ALEH is not unique at all. Nearly every staff member and volunteer feels enriched by the time they spend with these earthly angels, and blessed to make a connection with individuals who are so profoundly authentic, sincere and pure of spirit. As any volunteer can attest, the experience changes you from the inside out. You are forced to put down your guard, bare your soul, and strip away the layers of superficiality. Until you become someone that you can be proud of.

Published by **The Chabad House of Caulfield** in conjunction with the

Rabbinical College of Australia and N.Z.

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ISSUE 1391

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The Official homepage for worldwide *Chabad-Lubavitch* movement that promotes Judaism and provides daily Torah lectures and Jewish insights



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Blessings for a businessman who sought to expand his business

This letter was addressed to R. Nachum Zalman Gurevitch of Melbourne, Australia.,
4 Tammuz, 5711,
Brooklyn.

Greetings and blessings,

I received your undated letter and also the enclosed, that I will read at the gravesite of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, at a time of Divine favor. Certainly, he will arouse abundant mercies so that G-d will fulfill the desires of your heart for good, and you will be able to share good news concerning this [matter].... I am happy that you purchased more machines for your factory. Undoubtedly, you have heard the adage that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, repeated in the name of his grandfather, the Rebbe Maharash: "People at large say: 'If you can't crawl under, climb over,' and I say: 'At the very outset, one should climb over.'" May G-d assist you. From now on, may the influence come from His holy, full, and open hand. May your sustenance be granted amidst tranquility of the soul and tranquility of the body....

Enclosed is a dollar from the funds of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, for you to put toward the expenses that you undertake for your factory. [Of relevance is] the adage of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, based on our Sages' statement: "Everyone who takes a perutah from lyov will be blessed," 'When one takes from lyov, the amount is not significant. [It is] the very taking from his funds, even one perutah, that brings success.' Since this dollar is from the funds of my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, it will certainly bring success in all aspects of earning your livelihood.

I would be interested in knowing who your partner is and what his spiritual standing is. Most likely, it will be possible to influence him to become your partner also in the study of nigleh, the Torah's revealed teachings, and pnimiyus haTorah, its inner, mystical dimension. Please inform [me] of good tidings in this matter as well.

With blessings for success in your personal matters and in your involvement in communal affairs, Signed.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Do Jews Celebrate Halloween?

By Tzvi Freeman

Question: *Do Jews celebrate Halloween? I know its origins aren't very "Jewish," but I'm worried that my kids will feel left out if they can't go trick-or-treating in the neighborhood.*

Answer: Let me tell you about a wonderful Jewish holiday: once a year, our children dress up as sages, princesses, heroes and clowns. They drop by the homes of our community, visit the infirm and the aged, spreading joy and laughter. They bring gifts of food and drink, and collect tzedakah (charity) for the needy.

You guessed it - it's called Purim, when it's customary to send mishloach manot - gifts of food - to one's friends, and even more gifts to those in hard times.

Flip it over (October instead of March, demanding instead of giving, scaring instead of rejoicing, demons instead of sages, etc.) and you have Halloween. There you have it: a choice of one of two messages you can give to your children. I call that a choice, because one of the beautiful things about kids is that, unlike adults, they don't do too well receiving two conflicting messages at once.

I know how hard it is to be different, but as Jews, we have been doing just that for most of our 3,800 years. Since Abraham and Sarah broke away from the Sumerian cult of gods and demons, we have lived amongst other peoples while being very different from them. And we dramatically changed the world by being that way.

That's a proud and nurturing role for any child: To be a leader and not a follower, to be a model of what should be rather than of what is.

Make your kids feel that they are the vanguard. They belong to a people who have been entrusted with the mission to be a light to the nations—not an ominous light inside a pumpkin, but a light that stands out and above and shows everyone where to go. Forget about Halloween and wait for Purim to turn the neighborhood upside down!

A WORD

from the Director

Over 2,000 years ago in ancient Persia, the wicked Haman schemed to destroy the Jewish People. But through a miraculous sequence of events involving Mordechai and Queen Esther, the tables were turned; Haman and his henchmen were hanged on the gallows instead.

Haman, in those days, did not need to resort to newfangled inventions in his attempt at the first "Final Solution." With the mere signing of a royal proclamation giving him the power to do as he pleased, our fate as a people seemed to be sealed.

But Haman's plans were foiled by Esther, who had been placed in the palace by G-d to deflect Haman's evil decree.

Modern-day Hamans try to wreak havoc on the Jewish people in the Holy Land, and on all people throughout the world.

Every year the victory of the survival of the Jewish people, despite all odds, is celebrated on the joyous Festival of Purim. And although the story of Purim happened so long ago, its lesson of faith and trust in G-d is as relevant today as ever.

This year, celebrate Purim. And send a message of true Jewish strength - that trust in G-d is stronger than anything. For, with each special Purim mitzva or general mitzva we do, we are strengthening ourselves, the Jewish people, and the entire world.

J. I. Gutterman

IT HAPPENED



Purim Repeated in Persia

By Yerachmiel Tilles

Five hundred years ago, there lived a king in Persia who was a descendant of King Achashverosh. He took interest in the history of his family, and found out that the Jewish people had in its possession an old handwriting called "The Scroll of Esther". This scroll describes in detail the origin of his ancestor's royal dynasty.

The Persian king researched the details of the scroll. Among other interesting facts, he found out that it said in the scroll that Haman had offered to pay King Achashverosh 10,000 silver ducats in order to do whatever he wanted with the Jews. In the end the money was not paid. Smiling, the Persian king worked out a smart idea.

He summoned the rabbis and the leaders of the Jewish community and asked them:

"Tell me - is everything written in the Scroll of Esther true?"

The Jews did not understand the intention of the king, but they of course assured him that everything written in Megillat Esther is true.

"If that is the case", said the king, "I command you to pay the 10,000 silver ducats you owe my ancestors!"

The Jewish rabbis tried to explain to the king that King Achashverosh remitted the money to Haman as it says: "The money is given to you", but the Persian king did not give in: "I am a descendant of King Achashverosh and you are the descendants of the Jewish people. I want the money within a month. If not, you will be expelled from your homes!"

The harsh decree shocked the Persian Jews. All over Persia the Jewish leaders proclaimed days of prayer and fasting. The synagogues were full of people reciting Psalms day and night, and large sums of charity were distributed.

The Jewish leaders started estimating how much money they would be able to collect. Within a few days they reached the conclusion that even if they were to sell all their properties, they would not reach the sum that the king requested. Since time was short, they were unable to send emissaries to the whole Jewish world in order to collect money from Jews outside of Persia.

In their plight, they decided that the best thing to do was to send a messenger to Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, the Holy Ari, who resided in Tsfat in the Holy Land, in order to ask for his blessing and advice.

The messenger set out on his trip on a fast camel and shortly arrived in Tsfat. He handed over the letter written by the Rabbis of the Jewish community in Persia and pleaded in tears for help, asking the holy Ari to pray on their behalf to our Father in Heaven.

The Holy Ari went into his private study for a while and then returned to the messenger, holding a small box in his hand.

The Ari said to him: "The Jews have repented with a full heart and the evil decree has been revoked. There is no need to pay the ransom money.

"Instead, on the day of payment, the leaders of the Jewish community are to hand over this box to the king. The box must not be opened by anyone but the king."

In the meanwhile, the king was very satisfied with his plan. If the Jews would pay him the money - all the better. If they did not pay him, he would confiscate their property after the expulsion and would make a profit in any case.

That night the king did not sleep well. He had a terrifying dream. In it a mighty storm was raging outside his palace. Suddenly the windows to his room burst open. A man clad in white with fiery eyes entered his room through the window. The king wanted to cry for help, but the words got stuck in his throat and he was unable to utter a word.

The white figure took him by the hand and led him outside through the open window. They passed houses and fields until they reached a forest. There was an open area between the trees.

The white figure turned to the king and asked him in a stern voice: "What do you see in the open place?"

"I see a high pole - and somebody is hanging from its top," the king said in fear.

They continued their walk another few steps, and again the figure in white asked the king what he saw.

"I see another high pole with somebody hanging from its top - and there is another one and yet another...."

"How many poles do you see?" the figure asked.

"I can see eleven poles with people hanging from the top - and over there is another pole - but nobody is hanging from it," said the king trembling with fear.

"The people hanging there are Haman and his ten sons," said the figure to the king. "The empty pole is meant for people who walk in their evil ways!"

Ashver went over the body of the king.

The white figure took the king by his hand and led him back to the king's palace.

The figure made the king sit down next to his writing desk and said: "Give up all your claims against the Jews and sign the document with the royal seal!"

The king wrote the document with a trembling hand, signed it, and stamped the royal seal under his signature. He handed the document to the man in white who disappeared through the window.

Suddenly the king woke up from his nightmare. He found himself sitting next to his desk, shivering with fear and his face covered by cold sweat.

Outside there was a quiet summer night.

"What a strange dream I had," he thought and went back to sleep in his bed.

The following morning he still remembered the dream, but dismissed it.

The messenger came back from Tsfat to the Jewish leaders in Persia with good tidings. The Holy Ari had indeed helped! The Jews, however, correctly, did not rest the whole month. They studied much Torah, spent many hours in prayer every day, and took upon themselves to rectify everything that needed improvement. Especially, they asked each other for forgiveness and increased dramatically in brotherly love.

When the designated day came, the leaders of the Jewish community took the box that they had received from the Holy Ari and approached the king.

"Where is my money?" the king roared.

"Your majesty, we have been instructed to bring this box for you," said the spokesman of the delegation and handed the box to the king.

The king took the box in his hand, opened it and found a signed document inside. When he started to read what was written there, he suddenly screamed in terrible fear and fell in a swoon to the floor.

The king's doctors who immediately were summoned finally managed to wake him up. Immediately his body began trembling uncontrollably.

"Oh no, it was not a dream!" he whispered in panic. "The next hanging pole was meant for me because of my behavior towards the Jews."

Nobody knew what he was talking about, but when he recovered somewhat he handed the document to the Jewish leaders and said, "Everything which is written in this document is hereby established in law. I give up all my claims regarding the debt. I promise not to harm any Jew from now on. You are released from all previous monetary claims."

"The Jews had light and joy and gladness and honor" (Esther 8:16). They immediately dispatched a special messenger in order to express their gratitude to the Holy Ari. All over Persia the Jews celebrated parties of thanksgiving to G-d for their wonderful delivery.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

G-d calls to Moses from the Tent of Meeting, and communicates to him the laws of the korbanot, the animal and meal offerings brought in the Sanctuary. These include:

- The "ascending offering" (olah) that is wholly raised to G-d by the fire atop the altar;
- Five varieties of "meal offering" (minchah) prepared with fine flour, olive oil and frankincense;
- The "peace offering" (shelamim), whose meat was eaten by the one bringing the offering, after parts are burned on the altar and parts are given to the kohanim (priests);
- The different types of "sin offering" (chatat) brought to atone for transgressions committed erroneously by the high priest, the entire community, the king or the ordinary Jew;
- The "guilt offering" (asham) brought by one who has misappropriated property of the Sanctuary, who is in doubt as to whether he transgressed a divine prohibition, or who has committed a "betrayal against G-d" by swearing falsely to defraud a fellow man.

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, ST KILDA EAST

PARSHAS VAYIKRA (ZACHOR) • 8 ADAR BEIS • 15 MARCH

FRIDAY NIGHT:	MINCHA	7.30 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS	8.00 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA	10.23 AM
	SHACHRIS	10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.15 PM
WEDNESDAY: FAST OF ESTHER:	SHABBOS ENDS	8.18 PM
	FAST BEGINS	6.04 AM
	MINCHA	7.00 PM
	FAST ENDS/MAARIV Followed by Megillah Reading:	8.12 PM
THURSDAY: PURIM	MEGILLAH READINGS	During Shachris (approx 8.20, 9.40 & 10.30)
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA	7.20 PM
	MARIV	8.10 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 15 - 16 March	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	7:22	8:18
Adelaide	7:17	8:11
Brisbane	5:47	6:39
Darwin	6:43	7:32
Gold Coast	5:46	6:38
Perth	6:17	7:10
Sydney	6:56	7:50
Canberra	7:05	7:59
Launceston	7:15	8:12
Auckland	7:23	8:18
Wellington	7:24	8:22
Hobart	7:14	8:13
Byron Bay	6:45	7:37