

# OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHAT VAYIKRA-HACHODESH · 1 NISSAN 5772 · MAR. 24, 2012 · VOL. 19 NO. 23

## PARSHA INSIGHTS

### WHY CAN'T I HEAR G-D TALKING TO ME?

*“And He called...”(1:1)*

The London Symphony Orchestra takes its place on the podium of the Royal Albert Hall. The large double basses mournfully tune up. The piccolos prance from one octave to another. The dull dooming thud of a muted timpani is heard. Two swift taps of the baton on the lectern. The cacophony ceases, replaced by a mighty chord played by eighty instruments. The chord grows longer and longer and louder and louder. The entire audience is enthralled in rapt attention. The entire audience, that is, except a rather eccentric gentleman leaning over the balcony. He seems somewhat distracted. He keeps looking this way and that. His concentration is anywhere except on the music. It's not surprising, however, for covering his ears are a large pair of canary yellow plastic sound-excluders. The sort that you see ground crews use when they refuel airplanes.

After a couple of minutes the next-door neighbor to this fellow cannot contain himself any longer. He leans over the balcony and starts gesturing to the fellow, pointing at the sound-excluders and miming “Your ears are blocked! You can't hear anything because your ears are blocked!” The other fellow scrunches up his brow, cocks his head to one side as if to say, “What are you saying?” So once again the other points to the sound excluders and mimes even more loudly than before, “YOU CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING BECAUSE YOUR EARS ARE BLOCKED!”

The other fellow finally realizes that someone is trying to communicate with him and so he takes off his canary yellow sound-excluders and says blithely to the other, “I'm sorry. I

can't hear you. You see, my ears are blocked.”

Look at the world. It's not a pretty picture. I don't want to spoil your Shabbat, but I'm sure it comes as no surprise to you that world-wide poverty is on the increase, that our natural resources are dwindling at an alarming rate and that selfishness, greed and intolerance are as popular as ever.

Where is G-d? Is this a G-dly world?

No. This is not the world that G-d wants. It's the world that man wants. G-d has created man as the being that chooses. This is man's unique privilege — and his responsibility. There can be no choice without the potential to choose incorrectly. A world where choice has no consequences is, effectively, a world without choice. The world looks like it does because man chooses it to be this way, and most of the time man's choices are dominated by his own selfishness.

The spiritual Masters teach that when G-d spoke to Moshe He spoke in voice that was overpoweringly loud, a voice that was vast enough to pulverize mighty trees. Nevertheless, the only one person who heard the voice was our Teacher, Moshe. And when Moshe heard that voice it sounded to him like a loving and gentle summons: “Moshe, Moshe...”

G-d's voice is the loudest thing in this world. If we can't hear it that's because our ears are plugged with the wax of our own selfishness and egos, the detritus of ignoring the Designer and His design for this world.

• Sources: Rashi; Sifra

OHRNET magazine is published by OHR SOMAYACH Tanenbaum College  
POB 18103, Jerusalem 91180, Israel • Tel: +972-2-581-0315 • Email: info@ohr.edu • www.ohr.edu

Israel Forever, Love of the Land, TalmuDigest, What's the right thing to do?, The Human Side of the Story written by Rav Mendel Weinbach  
Parsha Insights written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair • General Editor: Rabbi Moshe Newman • Design: Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro  
© 1992 - 2012 Ohr Somayach Institutions - All rights reserved • This publication contains words of Torah. Please treat it with due respect.

## 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.

## ISRAEL Forever

### COUNTING JEWISHLY

Just as Jews are different in their way of life, they are also different in the way they count their days, months and years.

In the additional Torah chapter read this week, known as *Parshat Hachodesh*, we are reminded of the uniqueness of our method of measuring time.

*Hachodesh hazeh lachem*. “This month shall be for you” (*Shmot* 12:2) is the way this chapter begins. While other nations calculate their months and years based on the sun, the Creator commanded His chosen people to maintain a lunar calendar with the Month of Nissan as the first month because it was the month of the Exodus. This was intended to serve as a constant reminder of the great miracles which

accompanied our liberation from Egyptian bondage.

But this is not the only element in the Hebrew calendar that serves as an important reminder that G-d created and runs the world. The names of the months we now use are of Babylonian origin and remind us of the redemption from Babylonian exile. And finally the days of the week have no names at all in the Jewish calendar. They are identified only by the number of days between them and Shabbat, enabling us to daily fulfill the Torah command to “Remember Shabbat and keep it holy”.

Counting Jewishly preserves our identity as a people above time, a nation of Israel forever.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

### KIRYAT SEFER – THE CITY OF THE BOOK

Although the Israeli government insists on calling it “Modiin Elit” virtually everyone refers to this relatively new community as Kiryat Sefer.

The name has its source in the Tanachic description of the fierce battle waged by Kalev, at



the head of the Tribe of Yehuda, to conquer the Canaanite city which was to bear the name Kiryat Sefer.

The modern city of Kiryat Sefer is located about a half-hour's distance from Jerusalem and is fast becoming the third largest observant community in Eretz Yisrael.

לע"נ

מרת פייגה בת ר' דוד ע"ה

ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

## 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 *bnei 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 (*bnei 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, *bnei 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*.

- The 36 sins punished by *karet* (extirpation)
- Why total number is mentioned in addition to listing the details
- Which violations of Torah prohibitions are not punished with lashes
- How it is possible to be guilty of three sins for one act of eating forbidden matter
- The formula for preparing incense to be offered daily in *Beit Hamikdash*
- Who and what were anointed with the special oil prepared by Moshe
- More about the ingredients of the incense
- Which sins do not gain atonement of Yom Kippur
- The sacrifice brought by a woman after childbirth

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The formula for preparing the incense that was offered on the golden altar in the Beit Hamikdash every morning and afternoon is recited daily as part of our Shacharit morning service (and by some in the Mincha afternoon service as well).

This formula, which is spelled out in our *gemara*, mentions the need to apply a liquid called *borit karshino* to the cloves used in the incense in order to bring out its full fragrance. Something called *mei raglayim* could have been even more effective in producing this effect, says the *gemara*, but it can-

not be brought into the Sanctuary because it would be disgraceful.

What exactly is *mei raglayim*?

There are two approaches to identifying it. One is that it is urine, which easily explains why it would not be fitting to bring into the Sanctuary such an ingredient.

The other approach is that there was a certain plant which was called by that name. The very fact that the same name is applied to urine created an association that made it unfit for entry into a place of holiness.

• Kritot 6a

## WHAT THE Sages SAY

"Many miracles occurred in regard to the oil of anointment which Moshe prepared."

• Rabbi Yehuda - Kritot 5b

AVAILABLE AT JEWISH BOOKSTORES & WWW.OHR.EDU

THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY PRESENTS

THE WASSERMAN TALMUDIGEST SERIES

*A tantalizing gateway to the incomparable wealth of intellect and guidance contained in the Talmud*

VOLUME ONE - THE COGUT EDITION  
VOLUME TWO - THE WINKLER EDITION

## MONEY CAN'T BUY YOU LIFE

**From: Melissa**

*Dear Rabbi,*

*I am financially independent and reasonably well-off. I feel that my financial situation is a function of my hard work, and therefore have trouble with the idea that G-d is the source of my wealth, or that I must pray to, or thank G-d, for my livelihood. I can buy anything I need, and certainly feel no shortage for things as basic as food. What are your thoughts? Thanks.*

Dear Melissa,

I am happy for you that you are fortunate enough to be not only financially independent, but also successful in your endeavors, which affords you material abundance, and which, I hope, gives you true personal fulfillment as well.

However, the Torah warns one of attributing such success to one's labors alone, thereby taking G-d out of the picture:

"Beware that you do not forget G-d, by not keeping His commandments, His ordinances, and His statutes, which I command you this day... lest you eat and be sated, and build good houses and dwell therein... and your herds and your flocks multiply, and your silver and gold increase, and all that you have increases... and you will say to yourself, 'My strength and the might of my hand has accumulated this wealth for me'...But you must remember G-d, for it is He that gives you strength to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant which He swore to your forefathers" (Deut. 8:11-18).

So we see that the Torah foresees the possibility of a person's G-d-given wealth actually being a reason for denying G-d

and ultimately leading one to rebel against His will, when, in fact, that wealth was bestowed specifically for the purpose of drawing one closer to G-d and enabling one to serve Him all the better.

I don't question or make light of your abilities and effort. But one should consider what the source of those abilities is, and why he or she has them, while others don't. You did not create yourself with those endowments, but rather they were gifted to you. Furthermore, there are certainly others with similar, or perhaps even greater, abilities who also expend effort, perhaps even more than you and yet they have not achieved the bounty you have. Why is this? Please recognize the special blessing you've been given.

In addition, not everyone who has wealth is happy. Nor can wealth purchase happiness. At most it may buy distractions from unhappiness. Such wealth is not a blessing. Wealth cannot purchase health either, nor does it necessarily guarantee life, or even its basic necessities, as the following story illustrates:

A certain very wealthy man boasted that while he may die of many things, given his great wealth he will certainly never die of hunger. As a regular pastime the man would visit his treasure vaults and wander blissfully through his vast wealth. One day the vault door closed behind him and he was locked in with lots of gold, silver and jewels – but no food. As the story goes, there, without even pen and paper, he wrote his own epitaph with blood drawn from a brooch and stenciled onto a banknote: "Here died one most wealthy of starvation".

Whether the story is true or not, it certainly shows most poignantly that money can't buy you life – nor can it be relied on to buy even something as basic as a piece of bread. It is for this reason that one must acknowledge and request Divine favor.

## WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

### GOING DOWN IN SMOKE

**Question:** In view of the wide range of medical opinion that cigarette smoke is dangerous to health, is it proper to tell a smoker that you object to his smoking in your presence and to even suggest that he stop smoking altogether?

**Answer:** In his new 151-page book entitled "Life without Smoking According to the Torah", Rabbi Yechezkel Ischayek cites a ruling by the late great halachic authority Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, *zatzal*, that smokers who expose others to their smoke must compensate them financially for the damage they cause and equates the mitzvah of saving people

from smoking to that of redeeming Jewish captives.

Although the author's position is clearly that smoking is a violation of halacha, none of the halachic authorities he quotes in his book go that far. They do say that it is wrong to start but as for one already into the habit, all they do is urge him to quit. There are, however, other prominent rabbis not quoted in the book who have gone on record as condemning smoking as "slow suicide" and even suggesting that they are guilty of a sin deserving of lashes.

So go right ahead and tell him to stop smoking!

**Yoseph Kakou**

Minneapolis, MN

Wisconsin Madison University, Communications Major  
Salesman/Counselor

For Yoseph, Judaism was little more than a game of “Ultimate Frisbee” with his fellow socially-Jewish pals until his L.O.R.D (Local Orthodox Rabbinic Dude) began feeding him delicious food and teaching him “tasty” Torah. Yoseph realized that he could get reduced fees to travel to Israel and spend winter in the Middle East instead

of at school in the middle of a frat house. The JLE was the trip he chose, and by the third day, he knew that the Torah understood relationships if nothing else. The beauty and common sense of a suspension from the physical side to relate with your loved one in a new way every month rang true. A paradigm shift or two later, Yoseph extended his trip to be a full semester of study which has developed into three years now. What began as a convenient way to spend a winter break became a wonderful way to live a life. He is now a counselor on the Ohr Somayach JLE trips.

## THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

### MEZUZAHS ON STRANGE DOORS

A large silver mezuzah adorns the doorpost of a Supreme Court Justice’s chambers in Washington D.C. In a recent talk to a thousand participants at the United Jewish Communities International Lion of Judah Conference, Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg explained that this mezuzah and the works of art in her chambers inscribed with a commandment from the Torah translated as “Justice, justice shall you pursue” serve as “ever-present reminders of what judges must do.”

To students of American history this may have recalled the legendary gentile journalist Lincoln Steffens who wrote a great deal about Orthodox Jewish immigrants on New York’s East Side. In the book “Poor Cousins” by Ande Manners, a little-known facet of Steffens is revealed. “To the amusement of his Jewish friends,” writes the author, “he had a mezuzah nailed to his office door and fasted on Yom Kippur.”

THE JEWISH LEARNING LIBRARY IS PROUD TO PRESENT

# THE ESSENTIAL MALBIM

THE KOHN FAMILY EDITION

VOLUME ONE - BEREISHET/GENESIS • VOLUME TWO - SHEMOT/EXODUS

PUBLISHED BY ARTSCROLL / MESORAH

**NOW AVAILABLE AT YOUR JEWISH BOOKSTORE OR [WWW.OHR.EDU](http://WWW.OHR.EDU)**