

O H R N E T

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

AROMATHERAPY

“A pleasing aroma for G-d” (13:17)

Why is it that when someone takes some unidentifiable glob out of the fridge that has been hiding there for more than a month, they bring it over to you and say, “This smells terrible! *Smell it!*”?

Why is that we have to share the smell of something terrible with others?

Truth be told, the sense of smell is unique. Smell was the only human sense not party to the sin of Adam and Chava. The other senses were all involved in the sin. Chava started off by *listening* to the snake and then, “The woman *saw* that the tree was good to eat and it was appetizing to the eyes... and she *took* (touch) from its fruit and she *ate* (taste).” (Ber. 3:6)

Notice that the sense of smell is conspicuously absent here.

The nose is the place where life begins. G-d blew the living soul of man into his nostrils (Ber. 2:7). Perhaps it is for that reason that the nose is the first place that we sense decay, for decay is no more than the evidence that life has left the living.

The “*shehechyanu*” blessing that we recite on eating fruits that we have not eaten since their previous season is not recited on a fragrance that we have not enjoyed since its previous season. Maybe this is because the sense of smell was never blighted by the sin of Adam and Chava and remained on a higher realm — beyond time.

A scent is something that we discern from afar, and thus anything that we recognize before we actually encounter the thing itself can be called its “aroma.”

It is the job of a *korban* sacrifice to be a harbinger of good to come; that we sense now the good deeds that will emanate from the person bringing the *korban* from now on. This is because the essence of a *korban* is *teshuva* — a return to G-d by rectifying our negative actions. And without this resolution to change for the better, the *korban* itself is valueless. As G-d says, “What good to Me are the multitude of your sacrifices?” (Yeshayahu ch. 1)

The precursor of good deeds to come is “a pleasing aroma to G-d.”

• Source: based on the *Chidushei HaRim*

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.

KETUVOT 51 - 57

“If the husband wants to add even a hundred ‘mana’ — he may do so.”

Although there are fixed amounts that a husband must obligate himself at the time of marriage to pay his wife in the event of her becoming a widow or divorcee, our *mishna* teaches that he may add any additional amount that he chooses. This is known as the “*tosefet ketuva*” — the amount he promises in addition to the basic obligation.

“What is the *mishna* coming to teach us?” asks the *gemara*. It’s obvious that he may add onto the amount. What reason could there possibly be to forbid this? We might have thought that an additional amount promised to his wife might embarrass a poor husband who is not capable of promising to pay any extra amount, and therefore the formalization of this extra amount in the context of the marriage contract would not be allowed. The *mishna* teaches that despite this possible concern, it is indeed permitted. (See Shulchan Aruch Even Ha’Ezer 66:7 regarding the halacha.)

• *Ketuvot 54b*

“He may add even a hundred ‘mana’.”

How much may a husband add as an extra payment for his wife’s *ketuva*? “Even a hundred *mana*” states our *mishna*. Although one *mana* is literally 100 *zuz*, and 100 *mana* is 10,000 and certainly a large amount, the intent appears clear that he may write as large a number as he wishes for the *tosefet ketuva*.

Does he need to actually own the entire amount in assets when he commits himself to an exorbitant sum? We would think he must possess the amount at the time he obligates himself, so that a lien can be placed on these assets to assure that his wife will receive payment if necessary. However, *Tosefot* points out that it was common practice that a husband would write a very large amount in the *ketuva* despite the fact that he was broke! One explanation offered by *Tosefot* is that the lien is on the *person* himself; and that if and when he acquires any property it is “retroactively” considered as collateral and insurance for payment of the *ketuva*.

• *Ketuvot 54b*

“Go out and read your verses outside!”

This seemingly harsh statement was made by Rabbi Yannai to Rabbi Chanina in our *sugya*. When Rabbi Chanina was sitting in front of Rabbi Yannai and reading verses of the Torah, he also stated a ruling that the halacha was like Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria that a woman who was widowed or divorced after *kiddushin* but before *nesu'im* receives her *ketuva* payment but not the extra amount of the *tosefet ketuva*. The Chachamim argue and hold that she receives the extra amount as well.

When Rabbi Yannai heard Rabbi Chanina’s ruling he told him to read his verses outside; his ruling was wrong. The halacha was in fact not like Elazar ben Azaria. The “*Yafe Einayim*” points out that the Talmud Yerushalmi also cites this exchange and that a commentary on the Yerushalmi explains that Rabbi Yannai was using wry humor to make his point. Since Rabbi Chanina was a *ba'al koreh* who would read the Torah in the prayer services, he was told to “take *his* verses” to read them for the congregation but not mix into matters of halacha. Certainly Rabbi Yannai had only the highest respect for the great Sage Rabbi Chanina, but he used what sounds like severe language in order to express how *strongly* he felt that his own ruling was the correct one, and not that of Rabbi Chanina.

• *Ketuvot 56a*

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 burned while in the wilderness? Where were they burned 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. 1:5 - 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. 2:2 - 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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Abarbanel

ON PARSHAT VAYIKRA

By Rabbi Pinchas Kasnett

Understanding Sacrificial Offerings

The chapters in the Torah which detail the practice of animal sacrifice in the Temple are some of the most difficult for a 21st century individual to understand. As such practices have completely disappeared from civilized society we tend to view them as cruel, primitive and superstitious. They seem incompatible with other humane and progressive commandments of the Torah, which were revolutionary when the Torah was first given, and today form the basis for not only a vibrant Judaism but for the moral and ethical standards of most of the rest of the world as well.

Writing in the early 16th century and incorporating the words of Maimonides, who preceded him by several hundred years, Abarbanel provides a perspective on sacrifices that we can appreciate today. The primary reason for the necessity of these rituals was to assist the nascent Jewish nation in believing in the existence and oneness of G-d and to draw closer to Him by following His directives. Human perfection can be more effectively realized by attaining knowledge and faith through prayer, enlightenment and adherence to the Torah's other precepts than by burning animals on an altar. However, the Jewish People were commanded to devote themselves to the worship of G-d, and the prevailing form of worship at that time was through animal sacrifice in specially-designated temples. G-d determined that the Jewish People would not be able to easily abandon such a well-established universal custom. By shifting the mode of worship from polytheistic paganism to the worship of one G-d, idolatry could be eliminated without radically interfering with practices already familiar to the people. In fact, the enormous detail of the many differences between the various offerings symbolizes many fundamental precepts of man's responsibilities to himself and his Creator.

The first type of animal offering is the *Olah*, or Elevation Offering, which is completely consumed on the Altar. This represents the uniting of the soul with G-d. Just as the animal's body is united with the flames, so too is man's eternal soul united with G-d after death. This offering demonstrates that our sole purpose is to devote ourselves completely to the service of G-d. Since it symbolizes man's

Divinely-created non-physical soul, material man has no share in it and cannot partake of it

The second type of offering is the Sin Offering. This offering functions as one aspect of the atonement process that is required of one who transgresses Torah commandments. It encourages the transgressor to be more vigilant and to consider the consequences of his actions. It functions as a monetary fine as well, since the transgressor must provide the animal. Even if one is unsure whether he transgressed he still must bring an offering. The procedures of the offering differ for unintentional transgressions committed by the High Court or the High Priest, as their positions involve greater responsibility.

The third type of offering is the Peace Offering, which is brought by people who are thanking G-d for His numerous favors — for granting us the Land of Israel and for other acts of miraculous Divine intervention. It can represent gratitude for a past favor or act as a way of beseeching G-d to help us in the future. A festive meal is sometimes part of the offering. The one who brings the animal and the priests who conduct the rituals are allowed to consume part of the offering as they all join in thanking G-d for His blessings. The internal organs are burned on the Altar, as they are symbols of man's internal thoughts. It is as if the owner is saying that he is pouring out his inner soul before G-d.

All of these offerings always consist of the most expensive animals: cattle, sheep and goats. They are also accompanied by the finest wheat flour, oils and wines. Here the Torah is emphasizing that the finest products of Israel depend on G-d's blessing.

In summary, the Elevation Offering is ideological in nature. It symbolizes the immortality of the soul and its intimate connection with G-d. The Sin Offerings teach the importance of personal vigilance and accountability, the just reward for those who fear and worship G-d and the punishment for those who defy Him. At the same time, it is essential for that person to understand that his sins can be pardoned. Otherwise, there is the possibility that he will lapse even more. Finally, the Peace Offerings illustrate our faith in Divine providence, in our recognition that G-d is the ultimate source of our material blessings.

RABBI RELATIONS

From: Chaim

*Dear Rabbi,
I have not had much interaction with rabbis, but recently I had an experience with one rabbi that was not as I expected – I found him to be somewhat aloof and perhaps disinterested. Is there any religious reason why a rabbi might be this way, for example maybe to maintain a certain decorum, or maybe it was just his specific personality or mood?*

Dear Chaim,

I am sorry that your experience with this person, who as a rabbi represents people we look to for guidance and inspiration, left you somewhat disappointed.

Without my knowing you or the rabbi involved, I can't say anything specific about this particular, personal experience. Of course, there is a possibility that the problem is more a matter of personality or circumstance, either on your part or the rabbi's part, and less about "rabbis".

But in any case, this experience of yours should not be seen as indicative of rabbis in general, or as a reflection of the Torah.

On the contrary, Torah teachings indicate that true Torah scholars are not only immersed in study, but simultaneously live Torah by empathizing with and helping others.

The Midrash says that when Moshe came down from Sinai after forty days of isolation with G-d during which time he had no food or drink, and reached the most spiritually elevated state of any human, he not only gave the Torah to

the adults, but he actually distributed treats among the children. Despite his very elevated status, he was able to empathize with even the mundane needs and interests of others.

In Jacob's dream, the ladder is described as having its "head" in Heaven and its "feet" firmly connected to the earth while angels of G-d were moving up and down the ladder. According to one interpretation of this dream, the ladder represents a true Torah scholar, such as Jacob, who, despite having his head in Heaven, is still nevertheless firmly connected to this world, its people and their needs. In this way, he's positioned to be a conduit through which blessing benevolently flows between both worlds.

An exemplary story is told about Rabbi Nachum of Horodna. In his town, the community prayed the morning prayers at sunrise, requiring one to rise at the crack of dawn. One wintery, snowy day, as the congregants traipsed through the early morning snow on their way to shul, they saw an elderly man grappling with a shovel in the newly-formed snow drifts. When they approached the figure, to their great surprise they saw it was Rabbi Nachum!

They asked in surprise, "What is the Rav doing up earlier than everyone else and shoveling snow for?" The Rav replied, "Soon mothers will need to get to the market to provide for their families and children will want to go to school in order to learn Torah. G-d forbid that anyone should be prevented from their venerable tasks, or slip and fall and get hurt. So I wanted to clear the way earlier enough to finish before others are out and about."

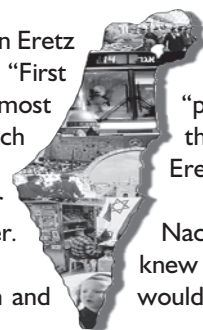
LOVE OF THE LAND

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

THE ORIGINAL ALIYA

Although historians refer to the arrival of Jews in Eretz Israel a little more than a century ago as the "First Aliya", the truly original *aliya* took place almost four millennia ago. This was when the Patriarch Avraham was commanded by G-d: "Go out from your country, from your birthplace and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." (Ber. 12:1)

As we ponder these words written in the Torah and



read in the synagogue we should take note of the fact that Avraham was not told the location of this "promised land", and yet he headed in the direction of the Land of Canaan which was to eventually become Eretz Israel.

In his commentary on the Torah, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban) suggests that Avraham instinctively knew that the Land of Canaan was the G-dly place which would be given to him for his spiritual perfection.

SHEMONEH ESREI — ELEVENTH BLESSING: PART 3

***“Blessed are You G-d, King
Who loves righteousness and judgment.”***

The conclusion of this blessing seems puzzling. Why is it necessary to mention that G-d loves righteousness and judgment? Certainly G-d’s judgment is righteous, and so too, G-d’s righteousness must hold up to His true judgment. Before answering this question let us explore a well-known story of the Baal Shem Tov.

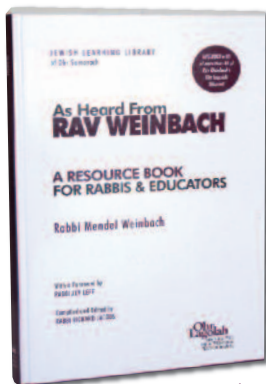
The Baal Shem Tov once sent his disciple the Maggid of Mezritch to the forest. There he saw a soldier stop to eat and rest by the lake. He left without realizing that he forgot his purse full of money. A young boy strolling by noticed the purse and took it as he continued on his way. Shortly after, a poor, old man arrived. He sat down to eat some scraps of food. As he napped the soldier returned. To his surprise he was woken up to shouting, “Thief! Thief! Where is my money?” The shouting was quickly followed by brutal strikes to a weak and defenseless old man. Still in a rage the soldier rode off, unsuccessful in finding his money.

Upon the Maggid’s return the Baal Shem Tov explained the hidden story behind what had transpired. In a previous

reincarnation the soldier owed that boy the exact sum of money. It was therefore arranged that the soldier would forget his money, enabling the boy to be properly compensated for his prior loss.

In this way the soul of the soldier would be cleansed of his earlier wrongdoing, and could return to Gan Eden, where souls are rewarded for their good deeds in this world. But what does the old man have to do with this story? Answer: He was the judge whose incorrect verdict caused the wrong person to lose the money.

We see from the above story that sometimes there can be a judgment which is unjust. In order to bring about justice in such a case, the Heavenly Court may decree things that seem unjust, like the soldier losing his money, and the old man being wrongfully accused and beaten for a crime he did not commit. However, these are in truth “righteous judgments” since they rectify the wrongdoings of the past. Alternatively, the “righteous judgments” can refer to a person who loses a court case on a technicality; he will be paying money even though he was right. How can this be? Here too, the so called “wrong judgment” is needed to bring about true and eternal righteousness.



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Yosef first came to Ohr Somayach several years ago. That visit was amidst his crossing borders between studies in Monterrey, Mexico and UC San Diego with aspirations of working on the Mexican Stock Exchange. It was already at that point that he was beginning to attend a Daf Yomi *shiur* in San Diego — the beginnings of his crossing even more distant borders.

Yosef grew up as a non-Jew, church-going three times a week — at fifteen he was teaching and leading prayer services. “I would pray for my college roommates” he says with a smile. “I was doing what I felt was right. I had a happy, quality life, a good family, and a wholesome environment. It was hard to break away from that.” But as a youth minister he began to question contradictions in texts and church practices, as well as become disturbed by the material excesses of clergy members and relative poverty of their followers. He began investigating his roots, and his having two Jewish grandfathers helped direct his search. In 2008 Yosef left Christianity and became a Ben Noach. One Rosh Hashana a couple of years later he came to know that Judaism “was it.” He converted in 2012 through the *Beit Din Tzedek* of HaRav Nissim

Karelitz, *shlita*.

Yosef says that the best thing about being a Jew is striving to connect every aspect of life to Hashem; he finds a myriad of opportunities, drawing from his formal education and travels. “Many new economic concepts of the last twenty years have been in-vogue in Judaism for thousands of years. A financial transaction is very spiritual and can build a *neshama* up. The difference lies between hand-outs and getting someone back on his feet; something as seemingly mundane as business can actually be used to reveal the greatness of Hashem in the world. From the choice between lying and being honest, to creating values in society, doing all of this while being an observant Jew is recognized by people — and that’s a *kiddush Hashem*.”

Yosef is an accomplished public speaker, telling over his side of the story every other Shabbat to audiences all over Israel through an expansive breadth of subject matter —ranging from neuroscience (yes, he also studied neuroscience) to answering questions on his former faith — all with the intention of inspiring his listeners. Yosef describes *gemara* learning as “hard,” but the biggest challenge he admits is “always striving to grow while being happy where I am.”



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Rav Bulman *zt"l*
on the
Torah Portion of the Week