

OHRNET

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

STARRING IN MY OWN MOVIE

"When a man from among you brings an offering to G-d..."

I remember, as a child, walking home one night from the underground station. It was a long twenty-minute walk. The misty night and the yellowish-orange street lamps made those chill London streets a bit like something out of an old Ealing movie.

Over my shoulder, I could see my reflection shorten as I got nearer to each street lamp, and then begin to lengthen in front of me as I moved away from it. At some point in the middle, the competing light from both lamps would extinguish my shadow altogether for a second or two. The sound of my shoes clicking on the concrete echoed through the empty streets. I was quite alone.

I thought to myself the only person who can see me — is me. I began to imagine myself in a film. I was the cast, the crew, the writer and the director all rolled into one.

I suppose that most of us at some point have had a simi-

lar daydream, the feeling that our existence is perceived by no one but ourselves.

The nature of a child is that he sees himself as the center of existence. The minimum definition of adulthood is that I no longer see myself as the center of all things. I know that G-d is the center. (According to this definition, not too many of us escape puberty.)

At the center of our lives there is a battle, a battle between the ego on the one hand, that sees itself as the essential existence around which all else revolves, and the *neshama*, the soul, that knows that it is a piece of G-dliness, of holiness from on High.

This is the essential battle of our lives: to wean ourselves away from ourselves and return ourselves to the One, to the true Center of all.

"When a man from among you brings an offering to G-d..."

The only true offering that we can bring to G-d is ourselves, our egos. That is the offering that is truly "from among you".

PARSHA OVERVIEW

The Book of *Vayikra* (Leviticus), also known as *Torat Kohanim* — the Laws of the Priests — deals largely with the *korbanot* (offerings) brought in the Mishkan (Tent of Meeting). The first group of offerings is called *korban olah*, a burnt offering. The animal is brought to the Mishkan's entrance. For cattle, the one bringing the offering sets his hands on the animal. Afterwards it is slaughtered and the *kohen* sprinkles its blood on the altar. The animal is skinned and cut into pieces. The pieces are arranged, washed and burned on the altar. A similar process is described involving burnt offerings of other animals and birds. The various meal offerings are described. Part of the meal offering is burned on the altar, and the remaining part is eaten by the *kohanim*.

Mixing leaven or honey into the offerings is prohibited. The peace offering, part of which is burnt on the altar and part is 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.

THE VIOLENT AND THE PURE

Juvenile crime is at an all-time high in Israel. According to the annual police report the number of juvenile police files opened in 2003 rose to a record 33,957, up from 31,714 the year before. Inspector General Shlomo Aharonishky explained the increase as a result of the police crackdown on school violence.

The Police Chief correctly blamed Israeli society when he told reporters, "It is impossible to ask why youths are violent and why youths use drugs when the society is violent."

As Jews this Shabbat hear the weekly portion of Vayikra, which introduces the Torah chapters on sacrifices, they should reflect on the custom of Jewish children beginning their study of Chumash (the Five Books of the Torah) with the opening words of this chapter. The reason for this given

by our Sages is "Let the pure ones – the young child – come and be involved with the pure ones – the sacrifices offered in the Sanctuary."

Children raised with concepts of purity rather than with the vulgarity and violence of modern entertainment are not candidates for police files on juvenile crime. Some voices are being heard in Israel for instituting a night curfew on youths, or at least on the dens of iniquity which they inhabit till the early hours of the morning. Even if this were feasible it would be no more than a very partial solution. As long as Israeli society grows in its impurity by imitating the worst of the western world, it cannot expect its youth to be pure. Since it is this youth that is the future of our nation, there is a need to purify our society so that its "pure ones" will not become corrupted but will be the pride of Israel forever.

THE HUMAN SIDE OF THE STORY

WINE OR MILK?

As the Festival of Pesach approaches Jews throughout the world not only prepare wine and matzot for their own holiday celebration but care for others as well. Whether it is called *Kimcha DaPischa* or *Ma'ot Chittin*, the campaign conducted in each community has the same purpose – to provide indigent families with their basic holiday needs.

The story is told about a Jew in the Lithuanian community of Slutsk a century ago who came to the spiritual head of the community, the renowned Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, to receive help from the communal fund. Upon receiving funds to purchase matzot he asked the rabbi if it was possi-

ble to fulfill the mitzvah of the four cups on Seder night with milk instead of wine. Shocked by the question the rabbi called to his wife to give the man a large sum of money from the fund to purchase wine. She did as instructed but after the grateful man left she asked her husband why the man was given so much money when the wine he needed did not cost so much.

The response of the rabbi was an expression of the brilliance and sensitivity of this Torah giant. "If he was planning to use milk for the four cups," he said, "it means that he couldn't afford to purchase meat for the meal, and it was necessary for us to supply him with money for that as well."

לע"נ

הרה"ח ר' דוד בן הרה"ח ר' אהרן ז"ל
ומרת לאה בת ר' שמואל ע"ה
ת.נ.צ.ב.ה.

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PARSHA Q&A ?

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

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to This Week’s Questions!

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

1. 1:1 - Aharon.
2. 1:2,14, 3:12 - Cattle, sheep, goats, turtledoves (*torim*), and doves (*bonei yona*).
3. 1:4 - Neglecting a positive command, and violating a negative command which is rectified by a positive command.
4. 1:5 - In the *Mishkan* Courtyard (*azarah*).
5. 1:55. - Ritual slaughter.
6. 1:7 - It descended from Heaven.
7. 1:14 - When their plumage turns golden. At that stage, *bonei yona* are too old and *torim* are too young.
8. 1:15 - Slaughtering a bird from the back of the neck using one’s fingernail.
9. 1:16 - An animal’s food is provided by its owner, so its innards are “kosher.” Birds, however, eat food that they scavenge, so their innards are tainted with “theft.”
10. 1:17 — To indicate that the size of the offering is irrelevant, provided your heart is directed toward G-d.
11. 2:1 - Usually, it is a poor person who brings a flour offering. Therefore, Hashem 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*.

LOVE OF THE LAND - THE NAMES

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

MOTZA – THE TAX-FREE ARAVA SOURCE

What was the source for the *arava* willow branches brought daily to the Beit Hamikdash during the Succot festival?

The answer is a small settlement just outside Jerusalem that was called Motza and sometimes referred to as Kalania. Both of these names refer to



the special status that the government gave to this community by exempting it from taxes.

While today’s residents of this attractive suburb of the Israeli capital are no longer exempt from taxes, their area still yields a bountiful crop of *aravot* which Jews use for the mitzvah of the four species on Succot.

WEEKLY DAFootnotes

CHULLIN 58 - 64

THE LION'S ROAR

“**W**hen a lion roars who does not fear; when Hashem the L-rd speaks who cannot prophesy? (Amos 3:8) This comparison of G-d to a lion served the Roman emperor as a tool for teasing Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chanania. What's so great about being like a lion, he challenged him, when a warrior is capable of slaying a lion?

The Sage's response was that the lion to which the prophet referred was an awesome creature that roamed the jungle of Bei Iloui. Despite the Sage's warning that he could not see this mighty lion the Roman insisted. Rabbi Yehoshua then prayed to Heaven for the lion to leave his jungle and begin heading for Rome. Terrible things happened in Rome with every roar of the lion as he came closer until the emperor finally begged the Sage to pray for the creature to return to its jungle.

Maharsha explains that the Roman vaingloriously imagined that there was no force more powerful than him, and if the Hebrew G-d were only a mere lion, he, a mighty warrior, was capable of overcoming them. Summoning the mighty lion from his jungle to terrorize Rome with his roars was the Sage's opportunity to demonstrate the power of G-d in a tangible way. It not only vindicated the prophet's words about the fear instilled by the lion's roar but also served as an expression of G-d's power of retribution as the prophet pointed out in an earlier passage (*ibid.* 3:6) “Can there be a disaster in the city which G-d has not caused?”

It is interesting to note that Maharsha adds a unique interpretation to the passage quoted at our outset. “Who cannot prophesy,” he writes, refers not only to the inability of the prophet to not relay to the people the word of G-d but also to the inability of the people hearing his prophecy to relate to it without the same fear as they do the lion's roar.

• Chullin 59b

POPULATION TRANSFER

Yosef, the Torah tells us, carried out a massive population transfer of the Egyptian people in his capacity as virtual ruler of the country. After purchasing all the properties in the land from their owners in exchange for grain to feed them during the famine that had struck Egypt, “He transferred them from one city to another, from one end of Egypt to the other” (*Bereishet* 47:21).

On the surface Yosef's motivation for doing this was to demonstrate to the citizens of Egypt that they no longer owned their land and it was now the property of the king.

Since it is unlikely that the Torah would record this simply to show the political acumen of Yosef, the *gemara* discerns that there must have been a hidden agenda and the question is raised as to what that agenda was.

“In order that the Egyptians should not refer to his brothers as foreigners” is the answer given in our *gemara* and the one which Rashi cites in his commentary on Chumash.

Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Luntshitz (1549-1619), in his commentary on Chumash “*Klei Yakar*”, suggests that Yosef's concern was that the Egyptians might some day turn on the Hebrews in their midst and exploit the fact that they are foreigners as a sign that G-d is not interested in their welfare because He has not given them a land of their own. By placing the Egyptians themselves in the position of being landless foreigners in their new locations, Yosef was able to forestall such a claim that might expose his brothers to harm.

The *Klei Yakar* offers two other explanations of his own for Yosef's move. One is that someone who has never been a foreigner himself is incapable of empathizing with the difficulties of a foreigner. Yosef therefore wished to expose the Egyptians to this experience so that they would be more sympathetic to the Hebrew foreigners in their midst.

Another approach is based on the fact that Yaakov and his family had firmly established themselves in Goshen at Pharaoh's invitation. What would happen, however, if some future king would make a search of the historical records to check on ancestral right to property and could discover that the Hebrews had no ancestral roots in their cities? Yosef therefore made sure that none of the residents of Egypt would be living in cities where they had ancestral roots and Yaakov's descendants would be safe.

• Chullin 60b

The Weekly Daf

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A QUESTION OF RIDICULE

From: Anonymous

Dear Rabbi,

I came across an article in which a fictitious reader of Dr. Laura asks ridiculous questions about Judaism that are obviously meant to ridicule and undermine Orthodoxy. For example, some of the questions are:

1] When I burn a bull on the altar as a sacrifice, I know it creates a pleasing odor for the Lord - Lev.1:9. The problem is my neighbors. They claim the odor is not pleasing to them. Should I smite them?

2] Lev. 25:44 states that I may indeed possess slaves, both male and female, provided they are purchased from neighboring nations. A friend of mine claims that this applies to Mexicans, but not Canadians. Can you clarify? Why can't I own Canadians?

3] Most of my male friends get their hair trimmed, including the hair around their temples, even though this is expressly forbidden by Lev.19:27. How should they die?

4] I know from Lev. 11:6-8 that touching the skin of a dead pig makes me unclean, but may I still play football if I wear gloves?

The questioner then goes on to jeer the Torah for its restrictions on sexual relations as well. My question is what should our response be to such an approach towards G-d and the Torah? Should we respond? Should we explain? Or should we let them jest at our expense, since they won't listen to what we have to say anyway?

Dear Anonymous:

The questions are truly hilarious, first because they are really funny, (maybe we'll include them in next year's Purim play) and second because they reveal the warped imagination of an ill-intentioned ignoramus.

There is no point in answering people that have this attitude. They are not interested in answers (by the way, all the questions have simple, straight-forward answers). However, it is important that we realize what their motivation is and what they hope to achieve.

The "questioner's" argument is essentially based on the premise that since some things in the Torah don't seem to make sense, everything in the Torah is irrelevant. This would exclude "Honor your Parents", "Love your Neighbor", and "Have Mercy on the Widow and Orphan," as well. Lest one argue that these laws are different because they are based on morality, it was Judaism that introduced this morality to the world in the first place. The term "western morality" refers to the values and morals that have come to Western society from the Torah.

It is also fashionable to ridicule the Torah based on the sexual restrictions it imposes on pre- or extra-marital relations, as well as others. Should the prohibition against incest or rape also be used as a source to dismiss the Torah? If morality is not absolute but rather highly individual, why and where should one draw the line?

Ridicule is an old technique used to confuse people about the legitimacy of their opponent's viewpoint. One doesn't have to accept all the explanations, but he shouldn't be silly and pretend that the Torah was written by a bunch of superstitious Neanderthals. If a person wants to undermine the Torah in order to legitimize immorality, that's his choice. The Torah, which we believe was written by G-d, condemns it. The penalty written in the verses for such acts teaches us that some things are so severe that one can forfeit his existence if he does them.

One can say I don't believe in G-d, I don't believe He gave the Torah, I don't believe in the morality it espouses — that's free will. Adolph Hitler also said, "We are barbarians; morality is a Jewish invention." We Jews agree. If one wants to reject in a barbaric, close-minded fashion, he may. But an intelligent, thinking person, rather than making fun of people's belief, would take the time to try to understand it.

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NEW PLUS

Re: S. A. Jewish Report and Pesach

To whom it may concern,

I have contacted you in the past for permission to use some of your articles in the festival issues of the SA Jewish Report. Again we ask for permission to use three articles for our Pesach edition: 1) Passover Today by Rabbi David Orlofsky 2) As in Darkness, So Is the Light by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair 3) Pesach Cleaning by Rabbi Berel Wein.

Thanking you and best regards,

• Lara Greenberg
SA Jewish Report
Editorial Assistant/Youth Editor/Journalist

Ohrnet replies:

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WHAT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO?

REAL-LIFE QUESTIONS OF SOCIAL AND BUSINESS ETHICS

EATING OUT ON PESACH

Question: I have some very close friends who I would like to invite for a holiday meal. I have the feeling, however, that they are very reluctant to eat in our home on Pesach despite the fact that we keep an extremely kosher home and they would have no qualms about eating by us any other time of the year. How should I relate to this situation?

Answer: There are different customs in different communities and one must respect them. Customs vary most when it comes to Pesach. Ashkenazic Jews avoid eating rice, beans and anything else which comes under the classification of *kitniyot* while Sephardic Jews use them. Some families eat only hand-baked matzot while others use machine-baked ones as well. In some

communities matzot or matza meal soaked in a liquid (*shrya* in Hebrew and *gebroktz* in Yiddish) are avoided, while in others matza-ball *kneidlich* form a popular Pesach dish.

Because of these varying customs and the different standards families may have in their adherence to the strict laws of Pesach, there are communities that have adopted the practice of not eating outside of the home on Pesach. You should therefore not view the reluctance of your friend to accept your invitation as a put-down of your kashrut observance, but rather as his loyal adherence to his community's customs. At the same time you must not look askance at those Jews who do eat in the homes of others or spend their Pesach in a hotel with reliable kashrut supervision. Have a Happy and Kosher Pesach!

