

O H R N E T

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PARSHA INSIGHTS

BY RABBI YAAKOV ASHER SINCLAIR

WALKING WITH THE KING

“And He called...” (1-1)

The Vizhnitzer Rebbe *zatzal* used to say that it escaped him how someone could be charmed by being honored. Surely this honor would just fill a person with acute embarrassment to the extent that he wouldn't know where to put himself.

He gave a parable to explain his reasoning:

Once there was a king of who appointed an official to govern a provincial town. As the governor of this town, the official received a great deal of respect from the local inhabitants.

One day the king arrived in the town to see how his official was doing. The king had decided to travel incognito and didn't look like anyone special. Only the official knew the king's true identity. As they passed through the town, the inhabitants tipped their caps with great respect to the official, and completely ignored the ordinary-looking stranger who was accompanying him. Understandably, the more respect and honor which the official received, the more embarrassed and

uncomfortable he became, acutely feeling how this respect should rightfully belong only to the king.

This feeling of embarrassment is the way we should all feel.

We know that all honor is only due to G-d, and it's only because G-d accompanies us wherever we go that we are respected for the virtues that He has bestowed on us.

Moshe Rabbeinu was the humblest of all men. When G-d told him to write the first word in this week's Torah portion, *Vayikra*, “And he called...” — Moshe wrote it with a small *aleph*. The *aleph* is the letter of the “I”, of the ego. Moshe wrote the *aleph* at the end of the word smaller than the rest of the word, and it looks like the word *Vayikar* — “And He happened upon.” Moshe felt that he wasn't important enough to be intentionally called upon. Rather, from his humble perspective G-d “happened upon him”.

• Sources: based on the *Mayana Shel Torah* who heard this from the *Sadigura Rebbe* in *Pashmishel*

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.

## BAVA BATRA 67 - 73

Rav Papa bar Shmuel said, “Had I not been there I would not have believed it!”

What was this “unbelievable” sight that he saw? Our *gemara* reports on an extraordinary series of events that the Sage Rabbah bar Bar Chana saw in a prophetic vision. He describes something so incredible that it “needed to be seen to be believed”. The commentaries explain the significance of what he saw. (Please note: This area of *gemara*, which is known as *agadata*, requires additional discussion as to the manner in which it should be understood — literally, figuratively or both — and is planned to be the topic of a future column, G-d willing.)

The Sage says that he saw a frog that was the size of a sixty-house town. A snake came and swallowed it. Then a (female) raven came, swallowed the snake, and went up to dwell in the tree (on one branch, in the typical manner of birds — Rashbam). The Sage exclaimed rhetorically, “How great is the strength of the tree!” Rav Papa bar Shmuel expressed his amazement by saying, “Had I not been there I would not have believed it!”

The Maharsha explains the symbolic meanings and the message taught here. He explains that the Sage’s vision was in the manner of the vision of the Prophet Daniel. Just as Daniel saw a vision of the evil conquering nations of the world in the form of wild animals, likewise the Sage in our *gemara* saw the world-ruling kingdoms which would control the world from the time of the destruction of the Second Temple until the arrival of Mashiach.

The giant frog that he saw represents Yavan (ancient Greece). A hint to this is that the word for “frog” in Hebrew is “*tze-fardeah*”, which alludes to the renowned wisdom of ancient Greece (“*deah*” is Hebrew for knowledge). This was the kingdom of Alexander Mokdon, the famous “Alexander the Great”. Then came the kingdom of Edom (ancient Rome) and conquered the ancient Greek empire of destructive fire (“*moked*” in Hebrew means fire). The Maharsha explains that the ancient Roman Empire was called a “snake” due to its similarity to the wicked snake in the Garden of Eden, and also due to its great hatred of the Jewish People, which included its completely destroying our Second Temple.

Next came the raven, which symbolizes the kingdom of Yishmael. It was a female, since its strength descended from the prayers of its mother, Hagar. The nation of Yishmael ascended to the Land of Israel and conquered it. Then it “sat in the tree” — the tree being a reference to Avraham, who is described in our sources as a “tree of life”. Finally, the Sage declared, “How great is the strength of the tree!” This refers to the very great merits and strength of Avraham’s influence throughout history — that Avraham’s merits and strength will enable Yishmael to have a non-insignificant role in the life of the Jewish People in the Land of Israel until the arrival of Mashiach, may he come speedily in our days.

Finally, Rav Papa bar Shmuel commented that he would not have believed that it was possible for the Jewish People to survive this “great weight” — the many centuries of the harmful and detrimental ways of Yishmael in the history of the Land of Israel — if he had not seen it for himself. It is certainly due to our help from Above that we are able to survive — and even thrive to some degree — in the Land of Israel prior to Mashiach’s arrival.

• Bava Batra 73b

## PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

*“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”*

## 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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## 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 offer-

ing 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 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.

## REST IN PEACE

**From: Joseph**

Dear Rabbi,  
What is the source and significance of erecting a tombstone and what purpose does it fulfill for the deceased?

Dear Joseph,

One source in the Torah for erecting a tombstone over the grave is found regarding the death and burial of Rachel: "So Rachel died, and she was buried on the road to Efrat, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob erected a monument on her grave; that is the tombstone of Rachel until this day" (Gen. 35:19-20).

The most common term in Hebrew for the tombstone, and the one used in the above verse, is *matzeiva*. This word is derived from the various verbs for erecting, establishing or setting something in place. And as the verse itself implies, the term thus refers to the way that erecting a stone monument honors the departed and perpetuates the memory of the deceased for the living.

However, another term for the tombstone, which is a term often found in more mystical sources, is *nefesh*.

Insofar as this word is used in conjunction with the Sabbath, it connotes rest, or something coming to rest: "The children of Israel shall observe the Sabbath ... (for in) six days the L-rd created the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day He ceased and rested (*nafash*)" (Ex. 31:16-17). This suggests that the tombstone represents peaceful, Sabbath-like rest. For one, the erection of the monument brings to completion the departed person being laid to eternal rest. It

also allows for complete closure of the mourners, and thereby sets to rest their bereavement.

In kabbalistic teachings the term *nefesh* refers to the lowest of five levels of soul that maintain the connection between a person and G-d. In this way, G-dliness is transmitted from on High and comes to rest in a person through the connection of the *nefesh* to the body, thereby imparting spiritual and physical life. After death, a residual aspect of *nefesh* continues to rest in the remains of the body. The *matzeiva*, on which the person's name, his essence, is engraved, becomes the connection through which the soul remains partially anchored to the body. In this way the *matzeiva* serves as a type of *nefesh* for the body after death.

It is this residual, dormant point of contact between the *nefesh*, the *matzeiva* and the bodily remains, and in particular the *luz* bone, which will spark renewed and regenerated life that will be ignited at Resurrection. At that time the purified and perfected five levels of soul will restore and revive a purified and perfected physique, replacing the engraved stone *matzeiva* with a body of ethereal eternity.

The general practice is to inaugurate the tombstone upon the conclusion of either the first month or the first year after death. According to one custom, the tombstone is set as a standing headstone at the head of an earthen grave. Others have the custom of setting the tombstone by laying a large slab over the entire grave. In either case the stone should be engraved in Hebrew characters with the deceased's Hebrew name, Hebrew dates of birth and death, and an epitaph. Other languages and calendar dates may be added.

## LOVE OF THE LAND

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

## THE TOMB OF SHIMON HATZADIK

The world-renowned Yeshivat Ohr Somayach is the dominating structure on Shimon Hatzadik Street in Jerusalem, which takes its name from its proximity to the Tomb of Shimon Hatzadik a short distance away.

Shimon Hatzadik was one of the last of the members of the *Anshei Knesset Hagedola* (Men of the Great



Assembly), and succeeded Ezra as the *Kohen Gadol* of the Second Beit Hamikdash.

Many Jews visit this tomb on the *Yahrzeit* (date commemorating his passing from this world) of Shimon Hatzadik, and also on Lag B'Omer when they find it difficult to travel to Meron to be at the tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai.

## PRAYING IN HIGH PLACES — PART 2

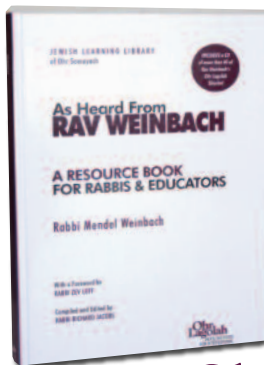
“**W**orkers that have ascended an olive tree or fig tree are allowed to pray the Shemoneh Esrei while on the tree, despite their being on a high place (see last week’s article in this column), since because they are there to do their work it is considered like being in an upper room of a house. They must, however, descend all other trees. The reason olive and fig trees are different is because they have many branches, making it difficult to climb and descend them, resulting in a significant amount of time being wasted while at work. Since the owner of the field does not work for anyone, he must descend all trees and then pray, including olive and fig trees.” (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 90:3)

Though today most people do not work in the above situations, this law delivers a very important contemporary lesson. The Torah treats very seriously the taking of time from one’s work when he is being paid for that time. If the Rabbis were lenient regarding praying the Shemoneh Esrei for the sake of the work due to the employer, we must all be careful not to wrongfully take time from our jobs. One is advised to study this subject well since many questionable situations

may arise, and we should always ask a qualified rabbi as needed (as is the case with any matter of halacha).

Today the above ruling applies to people who work on roofs, scaffolding and any other high place that is difficult to come down from. However, the halachic authorities (Kaf HaChaim 90:17) explain that nowadays our employers are generally not strict about this. One is therefore not allowed to pray in these places unless they are at least four by four *amot* in size, or are protected by a surrounding wall, so that a person will be able to pray there without being preoccupied or afraid. In places where employers are not strict, workers should recite the entire text of prayer and pray in synagogue with a *minyan*; and in places where they are strict, workers should do what they can to arrange their work time in order to be able to pray Shacharit, Mincha and Ma’ariv with a *minyan*. (Piskei Teshuvot)

Regarding the recital of *Shema*, even an employee is allowed to say it in all of the places mentioned above where praying the Shemoneh Esrei is forbidden. (Kaf Hachaim 90:18)



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## JUMPING FOR PASSOVER — PART I

The Hebrew name for the holiday of Passover is *Pesach*. The Paschal Sacrifice with which the holiday is associated is likewise known as the *Korban Pesach* (*Pesach* Sacrifice). What does the word *Pesach* actually mean? Rashi (to Exodus 12:11; 12:13; and Isaiah 31:5) explains that the word *pesach* is an expression of *dilug* and *kefitzah*. The latter two words are types of jumping, and as we shall see, Rashi correlates the idea of the Jews' Exodus from Egypt to the act of jumping. In order for us to fully understand Rashi's intent in doing so we must delve into the exact meanings of the words *dilug* and *kefitzah*, what each word implies, and how those ideas bely a deeper understanding of the word *pesach*.

The words *dilug* and *kefitzah* appear side by side in a Biblical passage that we read every year on the Shabbat of Passover: *The voice of my beloved — behold it comes! — jumps (midaleg) over the mountains, jumps (mikapetz) over the hills* (Song of Songs 2:8). What is the difference between these two different words used for jumping? In elucidating that passage, the Vilna Gaon explains, based on the Jerusalem Talmud (Beitzah 5:2), that *kefitzah* refers to a form of jumping whereby one lifts both feet from the ground. On the other hand, *dilug* refers to one who “skips” by grounding one foot and using the other foot to spring himself forward. This explanation is also cited by Maimonides (Rambam, 1135-1204) and the Rosh (Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel, d. 1328), in their respective commentaries to the Mishnah (*Ohalot* 8:5).

Rabbi Shimshon of Shantz (d. 1230) offers another way of differentiating between these two words. He writes in his commentary to said Mishnah that *dilug* is the word used for an *animal* that jumps, while *kofetz* is the word used for a *human being* who jumps. Thus, while Maimonides understands that the difference between *dilug* and *kefitzah* is in the style of the jump, Rabbi Shimshon understands that the difference lies in the *subject* of the action — but both words equally refer to the same way(s) of jumping.

While Rabbi Ovadia of Bartanura (1440-1500) cites both of these views in differentiating between *dilug* and *kefitzah*, Rabbi Yisrael Lipschitz (1782-1860) takes issue with Rabbi Shimshon's explanation. Bartanura openly accepts Maimonides' approach and points to different sources which seem to contradict Rabbi Shimshon's position. For example, the Mishnah (*Bava Kama* 2:3) which speaks of a case in which a goat jumps from a roof and damages another's property, uses the word *kofetz* to describe the goat's action. Similarly, when the Mishnah (*Bava Batra* 2:4) rules that one must distance his ladder four cubits from his neighbor's dovecote so that a marten (a cat-like animal) cannot jump from the ladder to the dovecote, it also uses the word *kofetz* to describe the

marten's action. Furthermore, when the Talmud (*Berachot* 19b) relates the halacha that one is permitted to jump over human graves in order to greet a king, the word used for jumping is *midaleg*. These sources suggest that the word *doleg* is not exclusive to animals and the word *kofetz* is not exclusive to humans. Moreover, the above-cited passage in Song of Songs proves that both verbs can apply to the same subject.

Rabbi Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer (1866-1935) suggests that while both words mean to jump, the difference is in how high. The word *dilug* implies a higher jump than does the word *kefitzah*, because in the above-cited passage from Song of Songs the former is used for jumping over a mountain, while the latter is used for jumping over a hill. We may posit that the word *dilug* could more accurately be translated as “skipping”, while *kefitzah* means “jumping”. In English the verb “to skip” refers to a leaping gait while walking (e.g., “Johnny happily skipped down the street.”) and to the evasion of something unneeded or unwanted (e.g., “Johnny skipped the boring parts of the book.”). In truth, both actions are conceptually similar, as the advantage of the ambulatory skipping is that one avoids walking on top of something upon which he does not want to tread, effectively “evading” it. Similarly, in Hebrew, the verb form of *dilug* refers to both of these types of actions.

Rabbi Shlomo Pappenheim of Breslau (1740-1814) explains that *kefitzah* refers to walking the distance of multiple footsteps with a single step. This may sometimes involve “jumping” above ground, but the goal of such a way of walking is simply its speed in getting to one's place of destination. When one is *kofetz* he is not trying to avoid or skip over something; he is simply trying to reach his journey's end faster. The word *kofetz* is also used idiomatically to refer to any action performed in haste or without proper contemplation. For example, when the Talmud talks about somebody taking an *ad hoc* oath, he is said to have “jumped and sworn”. The miraculous shortening of one's journey is known as *kefitzat ha'derech*, literally, “jumping of the path,” in allusion to the speed with which one reaches his final destination. Rabbi Yaakov Lorberbaum of Lisa writes that *dilug* may actually denote a movement that's faster than *kefitzah*, but the focus of *dilug* is nonetheless that which is skipped, rather than the speed of the act.

*To be continued...*

*Author's note:*

*Le'Zechut Refuah Shleimah for Bracha bat Chaya Rachel*

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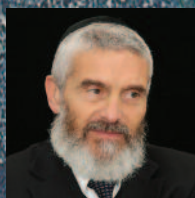
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