



NEFESH SHIMSHON

DIVREI TORAH ON THE WEEKLY PARSHA AND HOLIDAYS FROM
THE TEACHINGS OF **RABBEINU SHIMSHON DOVID PINCUS ZT"l**

THIS PUBLICATION IS DEDICATED TO THE HATZLACHAH AND ZECHUS OF נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה
MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

The Crowned Day

בְּקִרְבֵי אֶקְדָּשׁ. (ויקרא י, ג)

I will be sanctified by those who are close to Me. (*Vayikra* 10:3)

The first of Nisan was a day of great joy for the Jewish people. That day “took ten crowns.”¹ Yet, on this very same day, Nadav and Avihu died.

Chazal say further about this day:

Elisheva, daughter of Aminadav [and wife of Aharon,] saw five crowns on one day. Her husband’s brother [Moshe] was king, her brother [Nachshon] was the leader of his tribe, her husband was *Kohen Gadol*, her two sons were vice-*Kohen Gadol*, Pinchas her grandson was the *kohen* anointed for war. When her sons went in to offer [incense] and were burned up, her joy turned to mourning.²

Elisheva was the happiest of women, and while she was in the midst of her rejoicing, she suddenly found herself mourning over the death of her two sons.

Chazal emphasize here that the death of Nadav and Avihu came specifically at a time of joy and a state of greatness.

This is in fact what the verse itself is saying: “I will be sanctified by those who are close to Me.” The sad event took place in the midst of closeness, which engendered a special *kiddush Hashem*.

What *kiddush Hashem* was produced?

Simply speaking, *Hashem* taught us here that even in a state of closeness we need to have fear as well. We are not *Hashem’s* “friend,” as *Chazal* say.³

But there is a deeper message, too. It says about Nadav and Avihu, “When they brought a strange fire,” and *Chazal* explain that they added love on top of love. In other words, their sin resulted from their exceedingly great love for *Hashem*.

How could sin come out of love for *Hashem*?

Love is a matter of unification. Two people who

¹ See *Rashi*, *Vayikra* 9:1.

² *Vayikra Rabbah* 20:2.

³ *Berachos* 34a.

love each other, unify with each other. They become as one. And the greater the love, the more powerful the unification.

This creates room for a certain error. Sometimes a person loves another so greatly and has such a feeling of oneness with him that he doesn't feel any more that he is dealing with someone else. It seems to him that the both of them are one. And since a person in any case has more feeling for himself, he naturally takes everything for himself and doesn't think of the other's needs and desires. It is because he doesn't feel that there is someone else here at all, since they are as one, so only he is here.

This could explain what Nadav and Avihu did. They loved Hashem so greatly and unified with Him so strongly that they came to offer a "strange fire." They felt so at one with Hashem that they were not careful to do His Will. Their closeness and greatness

caused their downfall. The death of Nadav and Avihu thus serves as a warning to us not to make the same mistake. "I will be sanctified by those who are close to Me."

This idea applies to every *ben Torah*. Sometimes a *ben Torah* might start to feel he is so at one with the Torah that he can allow himself to behave as he wishes. For instance, during *bein hazemanim* he doesn't learn so much. He needs to remember that the Torah has its own demands, and he must behave accordingly.

This idea applies to domestic life as well. Someone who has good, strong *shalom bayis* is more liable to make the above-mentioned mistake. He feels so at one with his spouse that he does everything as he wishes, and forgets that he is dealing with someone else who has their own wishes and desires. He needs to live in unity with the other person but still recognize and respect the will of the other person. ●



Inner Purity

כל מפרסת פרסה ושסעת שסע פרסת מעלת גרה בבהמה אתה תאכלו: (ויקרא יא, ג)

All of the animals that have cloven hooves, and the soles of their feet are split into two, and they chew the cud, you may eat them. (Vayikra 11:3)

As we know, there are two main signs of a kosher animal. It needs to have completely split hooves, and chew the cud. If it has only one of these two signs we may not eat it. It is a non-kosher animal.



The Commentators see in this an allusion to two fundamental aspects of purity, both of which are necessary. One is inner purity, symbolized by chewing the cud, and the second is outer purity, represented by split hooves.

A person might claim that on the inside he is a good and faithful Jew. In his heart he is devoted to Torah and Jewish tradition, and the main thing is what's in the heart. This is like the camel and the rabbit. They, too, have the inner sign of purity. But since their external limbs, the hooves, do not demonstrate purity, they are not kosher.

And so it is the other way around. When a person does every mitzvah there is with his external limbs and organs, but his heart is somewhere else, i.e., inside his heart he seeks honor and physical pleasure, this is similar to a swine. The swine puts out its hooves, as if to say, "Look how kosher I am." But inside it lacks the sign of purity, so it is not kosher.

There is a startling difference between the two types of non-kosher animals.

Why is the swine called חזיר? Because in the future, *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* will "return it" (להחזירו) to us.¹

Rabbeinu Bechayeh explains that this is not to be taken literally. Pork will not become kosher. It means that the swine will return to the realm of *kedushah*.

This signifies the difference between a person similar to a camel, who will never return to *kedushah*, and a person similar to a swine, who will. It teaches us that if someone does not perform external mitzvah acts – he does not keep *Shabbos*, put on *tefillin*, etc – it won't help that he has inner purity and holds Torah and the Jewish way of life in the greatest respect.

The same applies to matters between a person and his fellow. Let's say someone truly feels pain in his heart for a suffering pauper but doesn't bother to do anything to help him. This will not lead to *kedushah*. He will not be rewarded for his pure thoughts and feelings.

It is different with someone who externally performs *mitzvos* with outward excitement so that people will honor him and think he is a real *tzaddik*. Or he does acts of *chesed* and helps everyone so he will be honored and considered a fine person. This is not the right way to behave, but in the future, after he is purified in *Gehenom* from the evil in his heart, he will find that all his *mitzvos* are still there. He will be rewarded for all the good deeds he did, even though they were not done with the right intentions.

Chazal say:

A person should always engage in Torah and *mitzvos*, even with other intentions, because from the other intentions he will eventually come to engage in Torah and *mitzvos* for their own sake.²

This means that the "swine" will not just return to us in the World to Come; even in this world he has a good chance to return and become pure. Even if a person knows he is not on the right *madreigah* and doesn't have the right purity of heart, he should still keep on doing whatever he can in Torah and *mitzvos*. Because *Chazal* promise us that מתוך שלא לשמה בא לשמה – "From the other intentions he will eventually come to engage in Torah and *mitzvos* for their own sake." In the end, his heart and mind will purify, and he will attain proper *sheleimus*.

But we shouldn't forget that someone who serves *Hashem* only externally bears a resemblance to a swine, and that's not a very big compliment.

1 *Chazal*, cited by *Rabbeinu Bachya* on *Vayikra* 11:7.

2 *Sanhedrin* 105b.

וְאֶחֶיכֶם כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכוּ אֶת הַשְּׂרָפָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף ה'. (ויקרא י, ו)

Your brethren, all the House of Yisrael, will cry over the fire that *Hashem* burned.
(*Vayikra* 10:6)

Cry For the Sons of Aharon

When it says, “All the House of Yisrael will cry,” it implies that every Jew in every generation should cry for Nadav and Avihu, as it says in the *Machzor*:

People meticulous about their deeds customarily cry bitterly and shed tears over the demise of *Tzaddikim*.¹

This crying is over the demise of Aharon’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, [as the passage of *Acharei Mos*, “After the death of Aharon’s two sons...” is read from the Torah on Yom Kippur morning].

People usually cry more intensely over someone who passed away young than they do over someone who passed away in his old age. In connection with this, it says about *Sarah Imeinu*:

Avraham came to eulogize Sarah and to cry over her.²

The word לבכותה, “to cry over her,” is written in the *Sefer Torah* with a smaller כ. This signifies that Avraham’s crying over Sarah was “smaller” because she was old and righteous and merited to live out all her days and achieve great things in spirituality.³

When a person dies young, as did Nadav and Avihu, the sons of Aharon, he usually did not actualize his potential and take advantage of the opportunities that lay in front of him. This is a very great tragedy when we take into account all that he could have been and done. He didn’t get the chance to go through life, to build a family, to grow in

Torah learning and raise *talmidim*.

I recently participated in a *hesped* over a young *bachur* whom I was acquainted with a little. I said something that I believe is an important Torah principle and a profound point. We may not be on the level of the idea I am about to present. But from a certain distance, we can think about it, because we have a lot to gain from it, practically speaking.

Learn and Forget

There is a well-known teaching of *Chazal* about what happens while a baby is in his mother’s womb:

He is taught the entire Torah. But when he comes out into the world’s air, an angel comes and slaps him on his mouth, and causes him to forget the entire Torah.⁴

A person is first taught all the Torah, then is caused to forget it, and then needs to toil and learn everything again by himself. This sheds light on the order we follow in our own lives, as well as on the order that the world follows in general. How does a person build himself up, and how is the world built up?

“G-d saw everything that He made, and behold, it was very good.”⁵ R. Abahu said: From here we learn that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* was creating worlds and destroying them, creating worlds and destroying them, until he created these.⁶

That’s the order the world follows. When *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* builds things, He first builds it in all its perfection, and then He takes away this

1 Yom Kippur liturgy, before *Kri’as Hatorah*.

2 *Bereishis* 23:2.

3 See *Baal Haturim ad loc*.

4 *Nidah* 30b.

5 *Bereishis* 1:31.

6 *Bereishis Rabbah* 9:2.

perfection, and gives us the opportunity to rebuild it.

There is a well-known story about the *Netziv*, R. Naftali Yehudah Tzvi Berlin of Volozhin. When he completed *Sefer Ha'amek Sheilah* he held a banquet, and offered a public address, in which he said that this joy and celebration is not just over the publication of the *sefer*, but over what happened to him when he was a child.

He recounted that he was a very rambunctious child, and one night he heard his father say to his mother, "Our Naftali Tzvi is an unruly child, he doesn't want to learn Torah. Nothing is going to become of him. We need to teach him a trade and send him to work."

When the child heard this, it disturbed him very much. He began to learn with tremendous *hasmadah* until he developed into the great *Netziv* of Volozhin.

The *Netziv* then continued, "Now imagine that I would not have heard those words, and my father would have taught me a trade and sent me to work. Assumedly I would have turned out to be a good Jew, supported my family through my hard work, learned a *daf Gemara* in the evening, raised fine children and even donated nice sums to *tzedakah*.

"When my day to die would have arrived, I would have ascended to heaven, and there, in *beis din shel maalah*, they would take out a book, put it down before me, and ask, 'Do you recognize this *sefer*?'"

"I would have looked at the book and said, 'No, I don't know it.' Then they would have said to me, 'This is the *sefer* you should have authored, if you hadn't gone to work instead!' I would have been without a reply.

"This is why," concluded the *Netziv*, "I am holding this celebration. It's because I was fortunate enough to hear those words from my father, and thereby strengthen my Torah learning and devote myself to it more and more, until I came to author and publish *Sefer Ha'amek Sheilah*."

This teaches us an awesome lesson about the concept called *bitul Torah*. If the *Netziv* had not

authored *Sefer Ha'amek Sheilah*, he would not have been held accountable for not putting out a *sefer*. Rather, *Sefer Ha'amek Sheilah* already existed, and he destroyed it, so to speak. It is as if he burnt the *sefer*.

Hashem sees all the way ahead to the last generation. He saw that the *Netziv* is capable of authoring *Sefer Ha'amek Sheilah*. So when the world was created, the *sefer* was already created and came into existence. Then, when the *Netziv* would have passed away, the Heavenly Tribunal would have taken out *Sefer Ha'amek Sheilah*, showed it to him, and asked, "Did you ever see this book?"

"No."

"You know why you didn't see it? Because you destroyed the *sefer*. You burnt it up."

This is what *bitul Torah* means. If a Jew doesn't learn Torah, it's not just that he didn't learn. He nullified the Torah, so to speak. The Torah exists, *Hashem* already taught him all the Torah by means of the angel, and bestowed upon him a tremendous degree of *sheleimus* – each person according to his own portion in Torah – and then removed the Torah and the *sheleimus* from him, so he will rebuild it himself. And if he doesn't rebuild it, he literally nullified and destroyed the Torah.

Hashem Cries Over What Could Have Been

Now we can understand how great a tragedy it is when a person dies young.

Let's say a Jew named Reuven lived seventy years, and during the course of his life he merited authoring a *sefer* called *Divrei Reuven* on *Maseches Yevamos*. He passes away, and is eulogized. What do people cry over at his *hesped*? "Oy, we have lost the *Baal Divrei Reuven!*"

But *Hashem* looks at things differently. He says, so to speak: You are crying over the author of *Divrei Reuven*, but I am actually happy with him. A pure, righteous soul has just arrived here in heaven. What am I crying about? *Sefer Pri Reuven* on *Gittin*. And *Sefer Tiferes Reuven* on *Menachos*. All those books

that this *tzaddik* could have authored, and never will. I am crying over what truly is lost. He wrote a *sefer* on *Yevamos*. Why didn't he write also on *Bava Kama*, *Bava Metzia* and *Bava Basra*?

Hashem says:

My thoughts are not your thoughts.⁷

We don't cry over what *Hashem* cries over, because we don't know what could have been. But *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* knows what *sefarim* this man could have published, and cries over their lack.

We are used to crying over the deceased, saying: We lost such a great man! This is a mistake. The great man exists. What we lost is a lot more than meets the eye.

Hashem taught each one of us the entire Torah, so we knew the entire Torah. This means each one of us is in essence like the *Vilna Ga'on*. This is how *Hashem* created us. But then an angel came and slapped us on the mouth, so our greatness and genius is not visible at the moment, but it exists. *Sefer Ha'amek Sheilah* exists, as does *Sefer Divrei Reuven* on *Masechtos Bava Kama* and *Bava Metzia*. All the wonderful *sefarim* and all the genius and all the depth that each one of us could have achieved. *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created all of it.

The day will come when two *hespedim* will be held. Here in this world, people will say, "Oy, he was such a good Jew, and now he is gone." But *Hashem* will say, "Indeed, he was a good Jew, and I am happy about that, but where are all those things that he could have done, and didn't? That is what I am crying over."

When a seventeen-year-old passes away, who cries over all the potential, all the greatness, all the depth he had the ability to achieve? Maybe he could have become a great *rosh yeshivah*. Maybe he could have raised *talmidim*. Maybe he could have published *sefarim*. Who knows all this? Only *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*. And this crying is forever, for all eternity.

R. Baruch Ber Lebovitch, the *Birkas Shmuel*,

⁷ *Yeshayahu* 55:8.

added that human beings cannot cry over more than they know about. They can cry over *chiddushei Torah* that were said and not written, and then forgotten. Because at least they were said. This is what we can cry over. But *Hashem* cries over *bitul Torah*. Where are all the *chiddushei Torah* that should have been said, but weren't? Over this, *Hashem* cries.

This is a different kind of mourning altogether.

Grab Your Opportunities

We should think about ourselves. How much do we actualize our opportunities and what we have the potential to do? To what extent do we take advantage of what is available to us, what we have, what we possess, what we really are?

It can be frightening to think about.

Each one of us should contemplate on himself. Everyone's life has better times and worse times. Every *yeshivah bachur* has a *zeman* (learning semester), or half a *zeman*, in which he learns with zest and energy, grows in Torah understanding, and becomes a different person.

What would we be like if we would have kept up the same high level of learning for long periods of time? We would have become *gedolei hador*.

The problem is we are okay with the good periods that we have. We feel we have fulfilled our obligation. But if we will take a good, hard look at what we do most of the time, it's not always so impressive.

Let's take the learning *seder* in *yeshivah* as an example. It's four hours long, give or take. How much of it is utilized? If a *yeshivah bachur* counts up the minutes he actually spent learning, without all the small talk, without all the breaks, without all the distractions, he might find that he learned two hours in the morning and two more in the afternoon. And we are talking about a good *bachur*. He feels satisfied with that. It's "okay."

We burn up so many opportunities. We could do so much more with what we have, with the time available to us.

If a *yeshivah bachur* would be a *masmid*, coming

on time to the *seder* and learning with constancy from the beginning of the *seder* to the end, especially if he does so with zest and energy, he would change. He would become a different person.

We rationalize by saying, “It’s not for me. I’m not on that *magreigah*.” Why? “Because I’m not like that.”

This is a mistake. You are like that. That’s how you were created. With wondrous capabilities and opportunities to grow in Torah and *avodas Hashem*. But we destroy it, we degrade our abilities and ruin them. The *Netziv* said that he would have been held to account for not authoring *Sefer Ha’amek Sheilah*.

What questions will we be asked in *beis din shel maalah*?

We need to start learning more seriously. It’s

a serious business. This is our task and role as *bnei Torah*. This is what we were sent here to do. The message applies to ourselves as well as to the Jewish people at large. We are holding in our hands the instrument by which heavens and earth were created: the Torah. This is what *Chazal* said:

Man is beloved, for he was created in the image of G-d. The Jewish people are beloved, for they were given the precious instrument by which the world was created.⁸

We received a wonderful *kli* from *Hashem*. We have *Gemara*. We need to understand our responsibility to build up ourselves and the whole world. ●

8 *Avos* 3:14.

TEFILAH TOPIC

What Do Korbanos Accomplish?

The Outside and the Inside

When it comes to physical objects, the outer form and shape of the object does not necessarily represent its inner nature and content. Let’s take a telephone for example. If someone doesn’t already know what a telephone is, he will not figure it out just by looking at how a phone is shaped. Similarly, if we didn’t already know what a music player is, its shape and form would not tell us its function. Its external style and design does not represent what it does. Nowadays we know what these devices are supposed to do and we also know the functions of their various buttons. But we wouldn’t know what a play button does just based on its shape.

Mitzvos are different. It is written:

תּוֹרַת ה' תְּמִימָה

Hashem’s Torah is complete.¹

This implies that *Hashem’s* Will expresses itself all the way through every *mitzvah*, from the deepest inner point all the way to the external shape and form of the *mitzvah*.

The way we do a *mitzvah* externally thus expresses its deepest inner meaning. Let’s take *shofar* for example. The deep, inner meaning of the *mitzvah* of blowing *shofar* is expressed in the following verse:

מִן הַמִּצָּר קָרָאתִי יְיָהּ עֲנֵנִי בַמְּרֹחַב יְיָהּ

1 *Tehillim* 19:8.

The Nefesh Shimshon Kollel Project



KEEPING HIS FIRE ALIVE



Hagaon Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus, zt"l set a very clear example for his talmidim and children when it came to the paramount nature of Torah learning.

"What I remember most about Abba is that he was never satisfied with his current level. He always wanted more. This was true also regarding fulfillment of mitzvos and avodas Hashem. But most of all, what we imbibed from him was the greatness that a person could achieve specifically through Torah," recalls the Rosh Hakollel, Rav Yosef Dov Pincus shlita.

"Abba would display a child-like enthusiasm from even simplest dvar Torah. And whether it

was for himself or for us, he was always eager for more. 'More' wasn't just about the quantity or even the quality of the limmud, but also how much we were able to internalize it and grow from it.

"Certainly, he valued all Torah study, but he was very explicit that a Torah learner must not remain in one place, but must constantly strive to rise from level to level. We felt that if we were going to commemorate our father through Torah learning, the overall atmosphere must reflect that approach. That's why, when we started the Nefesh Shimshon Kollel, we looked for yungerleit who are self-motivated, who love learning, and who will be personally responsible for coming on time and completing the sedarim."

Coming Soon!

A flash drive with 140 shiurim by Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l, arranged by topic, to be made available to the public in honor of the upcoming yahrtzeit, 12 Nisan.



Harav Shimshon Dovid Pincus, zt"l, at the bar mitzvah of his son the Rosh Kollel, Rav Yosef Dov, shlita.

I called out to *Hashem* from narrowness;
Hashem answered me in the expanses.²

Every place that *shofar* is mentioned speaks of opening up that which is closed. When we blow the *shofar*, *Hashem* opens His treasure houses. This is why the mouth of the *shofar* is narrow, and the other end, where the sound comes out, is wide and open.

On a simple level, the *shofar* is a wake-up call, as the Rambam writes:

Even though blowing the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah is a Biblical decree, it contains an allusion, as if to say, “Awake from your sleep, those who are sleeping, and arouse, those who are slumbering. Examine your deeds and repent, and remember Your Creator!”³

The function of the *shofar* begins by waking up the sleeping person. And it concludes by arousing *Hashem*, so to speak, Who, upon hearing the sound of our *shofar*, moves from the Throne of Judgment to the Throne of Mercy. The tool we use for waking up is the *shofar*. Who do we wake up? First ourselves, and in addition, our wake-up call affects the *Kisei Hakavod*.

[The shape of the *shofar* expresses this because it starts out narrow, and broadens out at its end, just as its wake-up call is at first narrow, addressing ourselves, and then expands to address *Hakadosh Baruch Hu*, so to speak.]

Here’s another example. In order to express joy, in the harvest season we take an *esrog*, which is called *pri etz hadar*. Its form is that of a beautiful fruit that is pleasing to the eye. We take with it a *lulav*, a straight palm frond. This expresses the simplicity of nature. We put all the Four Species together and shake them. This action elicits a feeling of joy, and this joy goes through all the worlds. So to speak, they all are together with *Hashem* in joy.

This is something we can do only with a *lulav*. It won’t work with a *shofar*. Every *mitzvah* object

works in its own way. The *shofar* wakes people up and arouses the Heavenly Throne of Glory. The *lulav* brings people joy and elicits joy Above.

Every *mitzvah* is expressed, or alluded to, by the form of that *mitzvah’s* act. The outer aspect of the *mitzvah* act tells us about its inner content and meaning.

And the same is true of *aveiros*. When a Jew speaks *lashon hara*, his evil speech depicts a voice that resounds from one end of the world to the other, and rises up to the *Kisei Hakavod*. When a Jew speaks *lashon hara* against his fellow Jew, he should think to himself: would I want to go into the *Kodesh Hakodoshim* and speak *lashon hara* in between the two *Keruvim*, and have the *Shechinah* repeat what I said? No!!! And he should remind himself that this is what he just did.

Just as a *mitzvah* connects a person to *Hashem*, so an *aveirah* does the opposite, in a very profound way.

We can thus study every *mitzvah* act and learn about the *mitzvah’s* nature.

What about *Korbanos*, animal offerings?

First we need to think about what an animal is, and why we take it and slaughter it and burn it on the *Mizbeach*. What is this act and what does it represent? This will tell us something about the meaning of *Korbanos*.

The Ramban taught that a *korban* expresses one point: that which is done to the animal is fitting to have been done to the person who brought it. An animal is flesh and blood, and he is flesh and blood. This point is the beginning of understanding *Korbanos*. But there is so much more to them than that.

Bring Down Blessing

Now that we have explained that every act we do in this world, whether *mitzvah* or *aveirah*, has a similar effect in all the worlds, we will add another point: it also stimulates a similar flow to descend from Above. This flow, this *shefa*, resembles the act that was performed.

² Tehillim 118:5.

³ Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah 3:4.

For instance, *Chazal* say:

How do we know that *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* puts on *tefillin*? Because it says *נִשְׁבַּע ה' בְּיָמֵינוּ וּבְזְרוּעַ עֲזוֹ* – “*Hashem* swore by His right hand and by His arm of strength.”⁴

Rav Nachman son of Yitzchak said to Rav Chiya son of Avin: What is written in these *tefillin* of the Master of the World? He answered: “Who is like Your people Yisrael, one nation in the world”^{5,6}

Hashem puts on *tefillin*, but there is a difference between our *mitzvos* and *Hashem's mitzvos*. In our *tefillin* it says “*Shema Yisrael*,” and in *Hashem's tefillin* it says “*Mi k'amcha Yisrael*.” But there is a similarity, too. Both are *tefillin*. [Both express oneness and connection between *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* and the Jewish people. Our *mitzvah* act of *tefillin* draws down from Heaven a similar effect.]

Now to *Korbanos*. Offering a *korban* to *Hashem* is like giving Him a gift. The main value of a gift of this type is what it symbolizes. Let's say a man would give a diamond to his wife as a gift of love. It expresses that she is worth all the money in the world to him.

When one gives a gift of flowers, which is from a growing, blooming plant, it expresses growing, blooming love. When one brings an animal as a *korban* and slaughters it, this expresses love to the degree of total *mesirus nefesh*.

This is why *korbanos* are not offered to human beings. There is no king in the world who asks for a *korban* to be offered to him. *Korbanos* are for G-d alone. When a person offers a *korban* it is as if he poured out his own blood in love of G-d. This is why *Korbanos* are such an important *mitzvah*. Nowhere else in the Torah is there a *mitzvah* that is such a powerful expression of love and devotion to

4 *Yeshaya* 62:8.

5 II *Shmuel* 7:23.

6 *Berachos* 6a.

Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

However, there is a limit to the value of *Korbanos*.

Shmuel said, “Does *Hashem* desire burnt offerings and peace offerings like He desires obeying *Hashem's* voice? Behold, obeying is better than a peace offering; listening is better than the fat of rams.”⁷

Here, *Shmuel Hanavi* expresses *Hashem's* dissatisfaction with *Shaul's* offerings. What was wrong with them? They were not accompanied by proper and total obedience to the word of *Hashem*.

This requires explanation. The Torah doesn't emphasize obeying *Hashem* when it comes to the *mitzvos* of *tzitzis*, *shofar*, *matzah* and even *tefilah*. On the contrary, it is implied that even if a person sinned, the *mitzvah* he did is still effective for him. Whereas when it comes to *Korbanos*, we are told by the *Navi* that they have value only when they are coupled with obedience to *Hashem* and keeping His Torah.

The following allegory elucidates the point. A wife sends her husband to buy something for her, and in addition to the item she requested, he also buys her a bouquet of flowers. The flowers will achieve their purpose, which is to express his love for her. The symbolism of the flowers will do the job. But what if the husband could not be bothered to go and buy what his wife needs, and instead just sends her a flower?

In such a case, not only will the flower not do its job, which is to draw them closer to one another, it will actually accomplish the opposite. She will feel that he doesn't care about her at all, so what does she need his flowers for?! The message of the parable is clear.

This explains what a *korban* is all about. If a person did an *aveirah*, even if it was unintentional, his relationship with *Hashem* was damaged and now his life is worthless. To express this, he takes an animal gift to *Hashem* and pours its blood on

7 I *Shmuel* 15:22.

the altar of love, as if his own self is slaughtered and goes up in smoke. This is an incomparable expression of love. This is the simple meaning of bringing a *korban*. This is what the Ramban was speaking about.

The applies as well to a *korban minchah*, a grain offering. A *minchah* is made of wheat flour, which is the staple of human life. People live on wheat. Just as an animal offering is the richest expression of love for *Hashem*, so a *minchah* offering, which is

bread, expresses life itself. This, too, is an expression of *mesirus nefesh*, because bread is a person's main food, so his very existence depends mainly on wheat. By means of a *korban minchah* he is thus offering his very life to *Hashem*.

Everything in *Korbanos* expresses that our love of *Hashem* is so precious to us that we are willing to pour out our own blood and give everything to *Hashem*, even life itself. ●

STORIES FROM THE LIFE OF RAV SHIMSHON PINCUS ZT"l

Fortress of Prayer

CITING EARLY TORAH SOURCES, Rav Shimshon explained how *tefilah* builds up stage after stage, from *Birchos Hashachar* all the way through to *Ein k'Elokeinu*. Skipping a certain stage damages the whole building.

Using a different metaphor, he stated that "Skipping a part of *davening* so one can recite *Shemoneh Esrei* with the *tzibbur* may be a necessary choice, but it's like cutting off a piece of one's foot in order to fit the shoe." *Birchos Hashachar* and *Pesukei d'Zimrah* build up to the climax of *tefilah* which is *Shemoneh Esrei*, and the sections that follow it are as a tall ladder that allow the *misparallel* to descend from the lofty spiritual plane that he

attained in the course of *Shemoneh Esrei*, allowing him to take along the great *kedushah* he attained up there.

Tefilah was instituted to replace the *avodah* in the *Beis HaMikdash*, which also developed stage after stage. The *Beis HaMikdash* was comprised of four parts: *Har HaBayis*, *Azarah*, *Heichal*, and *Kodesh HaKodoshim*. *Har HaBayis* represents our actions that must all adhere to Torah and *mitzvos*. The *Azarah*, where the majority of the *avodah* took place, symbolizes the recognition that all of life must be devoted to *avodas Hashem*. In the *Heichal*, one attains appreciation that *Hashem* sees us at every given moment, and in the *Kodesh HaKodoshim*, it becomes eminently clear that *ein*

od milvado, there is none other but Him.

Also corresponding to the four parts of the Beis HaMikdash are the four sequential segments of *tefilah*:

Just as the *Kohen Gadol* must pass through the entrance to *Har HaBayis* and then through the *Azarah* and *Heichal* in order to reach the *Kodesh HaKodoshim*, and then exit in the opposite manner, so *tefilah* must commence with *Birchos Hashachar* and *Korbanos* and culminate with *Ein k'Elokeinu* and *Haketores*. The former and the latter represent *Har HaBayis* on the way in and out, respectively. The *Azarah* is represented by *Pesukei d'Zimrah* on the way in and by *Shir shel Yom* on the way out. The *Heichal* is symbolized by *Krias Shema* on the way in and *Ashrei* and *Uva l'Tzion* on the way out.

The order of *tefilah* was developed by *Chazal* in order to foster a stage-by-stage progression that begins on the lowest end and culminates on the highest echelon. Skipping any level can damage one's *tefillah* and its ultimate purpose, which is the recognition of "*Ein od milvado!*"

Davening Doesn't Start with Yishtabach

EXEMPLIFYING THIS POINT, WHEN RAV Shimshon was appointed Rav of Ofakim, he instituted a custom in the *shul* that the *shaliach tzibbur* takes his place at the *amud* before *Pesukei d'Zimrah* as opposed to before *Yishtabach*. On the days that he served as *chazan*, he made a point of starting even earlier, with the *Kaddish* after *Korbanos*.

Preparing for Davening

AT ONE POINT, RAV SHIMSHON delivered a special *vaad* on *Tefilah* to a select group of

bachurim from the Ofakim Yeshivah who pledged to arrive at least five minutes early to *davening* every day. This way, he instilled the significance of advance preparation for *tefilah* in the hearts of his *talmidim* by according special recognition to those who came early for *davening* in the hope that others would follow suit.

He also cited the words of the Arizal who taught, "One who enters a synagogue must linger slightly at the doorway prior to entering, exhibit fear, and tremble as he enters the sanctuary of the King of the world, as this greatly facilitates a person's *sheleimus*."

While the Arizal's description is beyond most people's capacity, Rav Shimshon recommended setting aside several minutes for *hisbonenus*, moments to reflect upon the awesome task ahead. He explained that many people dispense with this *halachah* simply because they come late to davening, and if they would take the extra moment to stop and reflect upon the loftiness of the imminent *tefilah*, they would miss *Borechu*.

The Arizal also states that prior to entering a synagogue, one should stop and recite the verse (*Tehillim* 5:8), '*Va'ani b'rov chasdecha...*' Rav Shimshon expounds that this means pausing a moment from the constant race of life to simply reflect upon the enormity of what one is about to do. These reflections build excitement and appreciation that one is about to commune with the *Ribbono shel Olam*. He compares it, *kivyachol*, to the rush of awe and humility that fills a person's heart as he enters the home of a *gadol b'Yisrael* to ask a *shailah* or request a *berachah*. Without a doubt, the extra moment spent reflecting upon the supreme greatness of this opportunity completely transforms the imminent *tefilah*. ●