



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 רחל נחמה ויעקב בן רחל נחמה
MAY THEY GROW TO BE TALMIDEI CHACHAMIM AND OVDEI HASHEM.

PEARLS OF WISDOM FROM THE PARSHAH

Offer Yourself

וְנִפֶּשׁ כִּי תִקְרִיב קֶרְבָּן מִנְחָה לַה' (ויקרא ב, א)

A soul that brings a grain offering to Hashem. (Vayikra 2:1)

It does not say the word “soul” in reference to any other voluntary offerings; only in reference to the grain offering. Who usually brings grain as his voluntary offering? It’s the poor person. Hakadosh Baruch Hu said: I consider it for him as if he offered his soul. (Rashi)

Let’s say you were standing by the entrance to *Beis Hamikdash* and saw a rich man walk in with a nice, fat bull to offer to Hashem. Then you saw a poor person walk in carrying a bag of wheat flour. His offering wouldn’t look very impressive at all.

But *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* sees it quite differently. The small amount of flour that was brought, despite all the difficulty and self-sacrifice involved, is immensely significant to Him, as if the poor man offered his very life, his “soul.” And in fact, that is what the poor man did. He brought the last pennies he had, to offer them on the altar of *ahavas Hashem*.

Nowadays, we don’t have *korbanos*. We have no altar to atone for us. But we can still express our love

for Hashem in various ways.

And the best of them is learning the *Torah Hakedoshah*. This is more significant in Hashem’s eyes than all the *korbanos*. And here, too, we have the poor man’s *korban* and the rich man’s *korban*.

How so?

Let’s say a man drags himself into *shul* after a hard day’s work, sits down at his regular *Gemara shiur*, and tries with his last ounce of energy to keep his eyes open and concentrate on the *Rav’s* explanation of the *daf*. If you were standing on the side and watching him, it wouldn’t seem very impressive at all. That’s not what *shpitz* learning looks like.

We may not think much of it, but *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* does. To Him, it is significant as if this man offered his very soul. And in fact, it is so. He gave his last ounce of energy for Torah and *ahavas Hashem*.

This applies as well to a *talmid chacham* who learns at night when he is tired and worn out. He

devotedly keeps on learning more and more, despite the pain and strain involved. It is significant to *Hashem* as if he poured out his blood and fat on the *Mizbeach*. From it arises a pleasing fragrance to *Hashem*, opening for him the Heavenly gates of *berachah*, for him and for the whole Jewish people. ●

Accidents

וְהִקְרִיב עַל חַטָּאתוֹ אִשֶּׁר חָטָא פֶּרִי בֶן בִּקָּר תָּמִים לֹהֵ לְחַטָּאת (ויקרא ד, ג)

He shall offer, for the sin he sinned, an unblemished young bull to *Hashem* as a sin offering. (*Vayikra* 4:3)

The *korban chatas*, sin offering, is a tremendous expression of infinite *chesed*, and we merit this only by means of sin. The following allegory illustrates the point.

A child was warned again and again not to ride his bike in the street. It's dangerous. But he didn't listen. He rode his bike in the street, and in fact got hurt by a car. Now he is lying in the hospital.

What did his parents do? They bought him an expensive present that he never would have received otherwise.

This is pretty strange. Because the child rode in the street against repeated warnings, and in the end he even got hurt, therefore he deserves a prize?!

But that's the way things are. There are certain wonderful gifts that are reserved only for times

of tragedy. Only for "naughty children" who get themselves into trouble. This hidden love was created specially for them. The father is willing to spend a real lot of money on this naughty child if he senses that the child is in danger.

How did the Jewish people merit the *Yud Gimel Midos Shel Rachamim*? By getting themselves into a serious "accident." They made the *Eigel Hazahav*. Then *Hashem* showered them with endless love, at the end of which they received the wonderful gift of the Thirteen Traits of Divine Mercy. This is a gift that will always save them from all sorts of tragedies.

You can't bring a *korban chatas* as a voluntary offering. This powerful *chesed* comes only after a sin occurred, and it is expressed in the *korban chatas* that a person brings to atone for sin. ●

לעילוי נשמת

אמינו מרת חיה זיסל עלקא בת ר' שמעון דויטש ע"ה

ומרת אסתר רויזא בת אברהם יחיאל דויטש ע"ה

ומרה"ר משה בן אליעזר ע"ה ומרת חוה בת דוד האמבורגער ע"ה

ומרה"ר ברוך זאב בן נפתלי ע"ה ומרת גיטל צביה בת מרדכי קראוס ע"ה

ומרה"ר שמעון בן צבי דב ע"ה ומרת בלומא בת אפרים מעגלו ע"ה

נרבת משפחת מרדכי דויטש

וַיִּקְרָא אֶל מֹשֶׁה (ויקרא א, א)

Hashem called to Moshe. (Vayikra 1:1)

Said R. Asi: Why do we start teaching children with *Vayikra* and not with *Bereishis*? Because the children are pure and the *korbanos* are pure. Let those who are pure come and engage themselves with that which is pure. (*Vayikra Rabbah* 7:3)

The Creator Knows The Soul

Educational Jump-Start

Let's go ask a question to a straight-thinking educator: Where do you think it's best to start in the *Chumash* when teaching young children?

He might suggest beginning with *Parshas Lech Lecha*, to teach the children about how Avraham obeyed Hashem, and how Sarah *davened* to have a child.

That would make a lot of educational sense.

So why do *Chazal* say we should start by teaching little children about *korbanos*? If we do that, what will the children hear? The *kohanim* slaughter animals and catch the blood in receptacles and throw it on the Altar. This doesn't sound like the most educational topic in the world. It's not what we want our children to be doing.

And the *rebbe* teaching them the subject probably doesn't even understand these matters himself. He doesn't exactly know why *kohanim* are supposed to throw blood on the *Mizbeach* and what all these things are about. He only knows what it says.

Yet, the first rule in teaching children is to open their minds and develop their powers of understanding. But rote learning does exactly the opposite.

And what *parshah* do the children go on to after this? The beginning of *Bereishis*. Another strange choice of subject material. What does a children understand about "emptiness and chaos on the face of the deep, and the spirit of *Elokim* is hovering over the face of the waters"? Do we even understand it? It is pretty puzzling why we choose the subject matter we do.

We could compare this to someone who bought a brand new, shiny car. He elatedly drives it out of the dealer's lot, and after a short time, the car stops. He jogs back to the car dealer and complains, "The car doesn't drive."

The dealer asks him, "Excuse me for asking, but did you put any gas in the tank?"

The customer says, "What's gas?"

The dealer replies, "It doesn't matter right now what it is. Just go to a gas station, any gas station, and fill up the tank. I guarantee you the car will drive after that."

The customer does as told. He gets himself down to a gas station and they fill up a jerry can for him. But then he catches a whiff of this foul, toxic liquid, and says to himself: It's bad enough that the car doesn't drive. Now I am going to put this stinking water in it, and ruin it completely? No way. I'm not going to pour this junk into my new car while there is still hope that it will start driving again.

What do you say to a person like this? You say: You didn't manufacture the car, right? You didn't build the engine. There is someone who engineered this automobile, and he probably knows more about car mechanics than you do.

He understands how a combustion engine works, and he says that only this weird liquid will enable the car to drive, and otherwise, it won't budge an inch. He knows what he is talking about. If you believe him, fine. And if not, good luck.

It's the same with *chinuch*. The best educator with the most wonderful ideas never actually created the soul of a child. He doesn't really know what's "under the

hood.” The only one who really understands the depths of the human soul is the Creator Who made it. *Hashem* created the soul with certain qualities. One of them is purity. “*Neshamah shenasata bi tehorah hi.*” *Hashem* created the *neshamah* and formed the *neshamah* and breathed it into us. And *Chazal* say that breath emanates from a deep place. מאן דנפח מדיליה נפח.

The *neshamah* was created from the inner depths of *kedushah*, and its nature is *kedushah* and *taharah*. And the only thing that will get it to work properly is Torah, and especially those Torah subjects having to do with *taharah*. “Let those who are pure come and engage themselves with that which is pure.” The *neshamah* can't fulfill its purpose otherwise.

Deep Therapy

The Rambam wrote in *Shemoneh Perakim* that we need to learn the healing of the soul from the healing of the body.

If a person has a festering wound on his arm, he is likely to go to a doctor and ask for a cream to put on it. But the doctor might tell him that an external cream won't help. There is an internal infection that is causing this symptom, and the cure is to take antibiotic tablets.

The patient might object that swallowing a pill is an awfully strange way to treat a surface wound on his arm.

But the doctor, who understands how the body works, doesn't think it's strange at all. He explains, “The problem is not with the skin. That's just a symptom of the root problem. The cause of your condition is that your blood has a certain toxin or bacteria that causes a skin outbreak. If you just treat the skin outbreak locally, that spot might get better, but another outbreak will soon appear somewhere else. However, if we treat the problem at its source, if we purify your blood, then your skin will become beautiful and smooth again, and it will stay that way.

It's the same with Torah and *mitzvos*. People are born wild and unruly, and it's a universal problem: how do you educate children to proper behavior?

The answer given by Torah sages is for the child to

learn Torah and do *mitzvos*. This raises the question we asked before. How does learning about the creation of heaven and earth teach a person not to steal or act up? How does learning the story of Yosef who was sold by his brothers educate a child not to have envy? How does *shofar* heal anger, how does *matzah* straighten out the mind?

The rule of thumb is “Let those who are pure come and engage themselves with that which is pure.” The medicine of Torah gets straight into a person's “blood,” i.e., into the depths of the *neshamah*, and performs internal healing.

Let's say a child is fresh and *chutspadik* to his parents and teachers. Some teachers will reprimand him to control his mouth. If he is jumping around, they will reprimand him to stay in his place.

If a child steals, you can tie his hands, but that doesn't solve the problem at all. It might temporarily deter the external results, but the problem is just as strong as before.

In our age, when there is too much theft, the problem is “solved” by increasing police presence. But that causes a new problem: the policemen themselves steal. We don't gain anything by adding more policemen. Because the problem is in the soul.

And what is the soul?

“*Neshamah shenasata bi tehorah hi.*” The soul is pure. And it needs appropriate nourishment – it needs purity.

If Yankelch jumps around, he has a problem in his soul, in his *neshamah*. So what should we do? “Let those who are pure come and engage themselves with that which is pure.” Give him *Chumash Vayikra*, tell him about the creation of the world, tell him about Yosef and his brothers.

It might not make sense, it might not be logical, but *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* created the *neshamah*, and He knows how it works. He tells us, “Let those who are pure come and engage themselves with that which is pure.” ●