



Volume V Issue #23

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Parshas Vayikra, 7 Nissan, 5785

April 5, 2025

– Sponsored by Rabbi Yaakov Mandel, L'ilui Nishmas Esther Bas Menachem Manis –

On The Parsha

"אָדם בִּי יִקְרִיב מִכֶּם קֶרֶבֶן לַה'..." - When a person will bring from you, an offering to Hashem... (Vayikra 1:2)

The customary term that the Torah uses in reference to a Jewish person is the Hebrew word "Ish"—a man. In this instance however, the Torah uses the word "Adam"—a person.

Rashi (based upon an old text of the Midrash Tanchuma Siman 2) explains that the term Adam is specifically employed by the verse to teach us an important lesson. It teaches us that we must be very careful to ensure that what we bring for Hashem is free of any theft.

Adam HaRishon, the first man created by Hashem, owned everything and therefore could not possibly steal, so everything he brought for Hashem was under no possible suspicion of theft. That is why the Torah used the term Adam - we should be like Adam HaRishon, and be careful that what we present to Hashem is under no suspicion of theft.

In Ohr Yahel, the famous Mashgiach, Rav Yehuda Leib Chasman ZT"l, recalls that once the Chafetz Chaim asked why this lesson from Adam HaRishon was necessary. After all, there is a verse that specifically says, "I am Hashem, who hates theft [even] in sacrifices [brought to Me]." (Yishayahu 61:8)

The Chafetz Chaim answered that there are two types of theft:

- The first type is the blatant run-of-the-mill theft that we are all aware of.
- The second type is a form of theft, in which someone receives something because of a misunderstanding. For example, a customer receives a discounted price on a good because the store owner thought the customer was someone he was not (e.g. the owner gave the customer a discount because he mistook him for a relative.)

When the verse tells us specifically that Hashem hates theft, that refers to the first type of theft above - blatant theft. When Hashem tells us that our gifts to Him must be free of any suspicion of theft, to the degree that Adam Harishon's gifts were, that refers to the second type of theft above.

In addition, the Midrash Tanchuma (Vayikra 6) says that when we present ourselves before Hashem with offerings tainted by dishonesty, we are not just bringing an invalid sacrifice—we are actively insulting Hashem.

Of course, the bringing of such an offering does not accomplish its intended purpose, as the Midrash further states: "One who brings a sacrifice from stolen goods is like one who immerses (in a Mikvah) to purify himself while holding a Sheretz (impure creature) in his hand."

Chizuk - Inspiration

This week's issue of the Emes Parsha Sheet is sponsored by Rabbi Yaakov Mandel ("Rabbi Mandel"), L'iluyi Nishmas his sister, Esther Rosenbaum A"H (Esther Bas Menachem Manis). What follows, is an inspirational story regarding Mrs. Rosenbaum's Middas HaEmes (honest character) as told by Rabbi Mandel, in a recent issue of the HaModia newspaper.

"About twenty-two years ago, R"L, I lost a grandson at 14 months old, who passed away suddenly in a crib death. His parents and the entire family were devastated. While I was on my way to Lakewood, Esther hurried to the hospital to be with my daughter and son-in-law. The doctor came out and asked my children, 'Please come inside to identify your deceased child, and to confirm that the name of the deceased is as it appears on the documents that we issued.'

My children looked at each other and were thinking, 'Ribbono shel Olam! In a time of such a Tzarah, on top of that we need to go inside and identify him?' Esther told them, 'I'll go inside and take care of it.' But then she paused and said, 'How can I identify the baby? I don't know what he looks like.' Thinking quickly, she turned to my daughter

and asked, 'Maybe you have a picture of the baby?' My daughter did, and she shared the picture with Esther. Esther looked at the picture and said, 'All right, now I can go inside and identify the baby.'

In such a situation, anyone else would have just done as they were told. Maybe one in a thousand would feel a bit uncomfortable identifying the baby when they did not know what the baby looked like. But it wasn't Emes! How could she say that she recognized the baby to be the name on the document when she didn't know what the baby looked like? Obviously, if my daughter hadn't had a picture, Esther would have identified the baby in any case, because according to Halachah, it would have been permitted. Any delay is not Kavod (dignity) for the Meis (deceased) and would add to the already excruciating pain of the parents. How did the Middas Ha'Emes become so ingrained in her, even in that situation? And how was she able to stop and think at such a time? She had learned from our father (Rav Menachem Manis Mandel, ZT"L)."

Halacha – Jewish Law

Question: When a Kallah (bride-to-be) visits her future in-laws' home for the first time before marriage, it is customary to bring a gift. Common options include fine wine, flowers, or home-baked cookies. Some Kallahs bring a combination of the above and some Kallahs bring all three. Regarding, the home-baked cookies, is the Kallah permitted to bring home-baked cookies that someone else baked, or would this violate the prohibition of Geneivas Da'as (deception)?

Answer: This is a fascinating question that, believe it or not, may depend upon the complexity of the cookie recipe.

The Sefer Titain Emes L'Yaakov (p. 314) cites the Rashbam's commentary on Bava Basra 81b, from which we can infer that it may be permitted under certain circumstances.

The relevant Talmudic discussion involves a case where an owner hired a messenger to take the owner's Bikurim (first fruits) to Jerusalem. The messenger transported the Bikurim part of the way but died before completing the mission, so the owner had to personally complete the journey to Jerusalem himself and offer the Bikurim.

The Gemara explains that in such a case, the owner cannot recite the traditional passage when offering the Bikurim

because the text of the passage implies that the same person must both transport and offer the Bikurim. Rav Ashi clarifies that even though the owner did transport and offer the Bikurim in this case, since the messenger also transported the Bikurim part of the way before dying, reciting the passage by the owner would have "the appearance of falsehood," since it may imply that the owner was the only one who transported the Bikurim.

However, the Rashbam notes that the Gemara implies that there would be no issue of the owner reciting the traditional passage, in a case of where the messenger was charged with transporting and offering the Bikurim and had completed his mission. In such a case, the owner could still recite the passage (which essentially states "Hashem, I have fulfilled my obligation to take the Bikurim to Jerusalem") even though his messenger did the actual transportation. This would appear to be analogous to your question about the Kallah bringing home-baked cookies that she did not personally bake – and following the analogy, just like the owner in the above referenced case is able to make the declaration, so too the Kallah would be permitted to present the cookies that someone else baked.

However, there is an important caveat. The Sefer Titain Emes L'Yaakov states that this is permitted only when ordinary baking skills are involved. If the cookie recipe is complex and requires significant cooking prowess, then the Kallah presenting the cookies as her own would violate the prohibition against deception (Geneivas Daas), as her future in-laws (and husband) might assume that the Kallah possesses baking skills that she does not actually have.

*"May I back out of a school carpool that
I have already committed to?"
"Should I report a co-worker who is acting dishonestly?"*

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