

Echoes of the Ages

ונפש כִּי־תִקְרִיב קֶרֶבן מִנַּחֵה לֶה - ויקרא ב: א
"When a person offers a meal-offering to Hashem" -
Vayikra 2:1

R' Leib of Sassov once travelled down to the marketplace of Yaroslav. Walking among the vendors, he was looking over the hay and straw on sale, searching for the highest quality goods. On his way round the market he met his friend, R' Shimon of Yaroslav.

"Rebbe, what are you doing here?!" R' Shimon asked in surprise.

"Leave out my "Rebbe" and your "Rebbe" and come with me to carry a bale of hay to a poor widow who has no hay or straw upon which to lay her broken body." R' Moshe Leib replied.

And so off the two צדיקים went with the selected bale of hay balanced on their shoulders to where the widow was staying. Astonished bystanders stared in wonder and moved aside to make room for them to pass.

As they went, R' Leib remarked to R' Shimon "Were the בית המקדש standing today, we would be bringing sacrifices and libations. Now we bring straw – and it is as though we have all the כוונות that come with sacrificing a קרבן מנחה."

R' Leib of Sassov's father, R' Yaakov, would take a job grinding down wheat at a mill. Despite being poor himself, this was not for his own sake, but for the sakes of a widow and orphan who lived nearby in his neighbourhood. He put aside learning תורה, which he loved dearly, to perform this great act of חסד.

His son, R' Leib, followed in his father's footsteps. Despite his greatness in תורה, he put all honour aside when it came to performing acts of תד with his own two hands, even if they were beneath him.

**Adapted from "Stories my grandfather told me, Vayikra".
Last week's story and the story featured in Living Torah תרומה
adapted from "Stories my grandfather told me, Shemos"**

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בס"ד

THE LIVING TORAH

FROM HASMONEAN HIGH SCHOOL

לעלוי נשמת ר' אליהו רחמים בן מאיר דוד ע"ה ואחיו ר' עבדאללה פרג בן מאיר דוד ע"ה
מס' רנו פרשת ויקרא תשס"ז No. 256 Parshas Vayikra 5767

Leading a תורה Life

We know that משה רבינו personified humility in the truest sense of the word. Although he was able to speak face to face with Hashem, he would still not enter the קודש הקדשים, unless called to do so. חז"ל learn from such behaviour, that a תלמוד חכם who does not possess דעת (knowledge), manifests a lesser value than an animal carcass. What must be examined is what דעת actually means. Surely it is דרך ארץ משה that should be learnt, rather than his דעת?

Horav Mordechai Gifter answers this question by first defining דעת. The concept of דעת is usually found in conjunction with the terms חכמה and בינה (wisdom and understanding). These three types of knowledge are in ascending order, and דעת is the most eminent. חכמה and בינה are both elements of understanding which are restricted totally to the mind. This means that one could possess both חכמה and בינה, however their life style will be no different to one who does not possess either. דעת has a different connotation. One who achieves דעת possesses a knowledge that governs his every move. It becomes part of

one's psyche, as it transforms his personality. Hence when one comprehends an idea on the level of דעת, he will surely live by it.

We are told that דרך ארץ משה was as a direct result of his דעת. It was not etiquette, but rather the manifestation of a profound level of תורה knowledge that governed every aspect of his life. This is the meaning of the words of חז"ל which emphasise that a תורה scholar must elevate his תורה knowledge to the level of דעת, so that it controls and directs his every action.

This is an expectation only for humans, because they are the only creature capable of attaining such lofty levels. This is our purpose and goal in life. Therefore if he fails, then he is worse off than an animal, which never had the potential to start with. A man who lacks דעת has failed in his primary objective of life. The animal can still achieve it's potential without דעת. This is the lesson that חז"ל teach us, by telling us to elevate our ways to the ways of משה. Throwing away huge potential that has been granted to us by Hashem is worse than an animal.

By Gideon Goldwater

Today קרבנות

It is customary for children to begin learning חומש with ויקרא rather than בראשית.

One reason for this is so is that just as young children are טהור (pure) and חומש ויקרא speaks about קרבנות (sacrifices) which are both pure and restorers of spiritual purity to people, it is fitting that this is what they should begin their learning with, the topic of purity. (ויקרא רבא פ"ז, ג - כלי יקר)

R' Meir Shapiro gives a different reason into why this is.

In the discussion חומש ויקרא is mainly about the various קרבנות that Hashem commanded the Jewish people to bring. Teaching this specific topic imparts a message to both parents and children:

Jewish parents are being instructed that just as we are commanded to bring sacrifices, so too must they make sacrifices so that their children may succeed in תורה study. They should forego lavish lifestyles to live in a way compatible with the teachings of

the תורה that their children are receiving and they should be prepared and willing to give up luxuries in order to pay tuition fees.

Jewish children are being taught a similar lesson. From the beginning they should know that sacrifice and dedication are a prerequisite for success in learning תורה. Effort is necessary for learning and therefore the children should bear in mind what the חכמים have said: "If a person says 'I have tried hard and succeeded,' believe him." - *b. מסכת מגילה* - Only through diligent and assiduous study will one succeed.

Not only this, but the פרס יוסף explains how there is a lesson to be learnt for life from this. As the children grow up, as well as when they are older, they may encounter hardship and even persecution because they are religious Jews. Nevertheless, they must be ready and willing to make sacrifices, like חומש ויקרא in קרבנות, and only then will they realise that their life is meaningful and rewarding.

By Shane Lefkowitz

Riddle of the Week

Which תלמוד is the shortest in דף גמרא?

Last week's riddle: Is it possible for a bechor (first born male) not to receive a double portion of his father's inheritance?

Answer: Yes. If the bechor is an only child; if the bechor dies before his father and the bechor is childless; or if the bechor chooses to not take a double portion.

Sacrificing Oneself

"A person who offers a sacrifice from you" - *Vayikra*

The words "from you" refer to the law that any animal which is brought to the משכן must belong to the owner and may not be stolen property. This law is derived from the first אדם הראשון, אדם. When אדם was created, the entire world belonged to him. When he offered a sacrifice to Hashem it was his own animal; it could not belong to anyone else since there were no other people in his world. So too, when a person brings an animal to Hashem he must bring from his own property. If he has sinned or if he wants to thank Hashem then the offering must come from himself.

The תתם סופר extends this idea. He explains as follows: given that everything belonged to אדם, he was more than just a person. When

אדם was created he was not just his own body, but rather he was the entire world, since he had to use the world to serve Hashem. This meant that whenever he gave anything to Hashem he was actually giving himself to his Creator. We can also emulate אדם when we do מצות. Of course whatever we use in order to do our מצות must be our own, bought from our own money. However, if we want to do a מצוה properly then we must put "our heart and soul" into doing the מצוה, we must really give of ourselves.

By Rabbi D Muster

Quote of the Week

"The hearts (and desires) of the righteous are in their control; the wicked are in the control of their hearts" - בראשית רבא

What Constitutes Stopping?

A ברכה made at the beginning of a meal will cover all of that type of food within the meal. When the meal stops, however, one will have to make a new ברכה before eating more. What does and doesn't count as a stop? Of course saying a ברכה אחרונה counts as a stop. According to most authorities, it is also enough if one prepared to stop (like washing מים אחרונים), or even just announced his intentions to stop. Some opinions even say that if one even thought he would stop eating he should make a new ברכה if he changes his mind. This does not apply if you are a guest in someone else's home, as it is assumed you will only bentch with his permission.

Going to sleep counts as a stop unless you fell asleep at the table. Stopping to talk business at the table with someone, even for quite a while, does not count as a stop, as it is realised you will continue your meal when you are finished.

Summarised from Halachos of Brachos