

**מסכת שבת**

This week we start Perek Gimmel of Messechet Shabbat. This is a very practical Perek as much of it deals with the Melacha of Bishul- cooking.

Mishna Aleph deals with using a 'Kirah' oven on Shabbat.

A 'Kirah' is an oven with a less intensely heated interior or cooking surface. If it was fuelled by straw or stubble, it is allowed to put cooked food on it to keep it warm/hot.

If it was heated by fruit pulp (left over from pressing) or with wood, the heat will be stronger. As a result, it is not allowed to place food on until one has either removed the coals, or covered them in ash. Either one of these will reduce the heat sufficiently.

Once ash has been placed over the coals or they have been removed, there is an argument as to what one may put on the 'Kirah'. Bet Shammai hold that hot water may be kept hot but food may not be put on. Bet Hillel hold that both hot water, and cooked food may be put on it.

The Mishna continues with another argument between Bet Hillel and Bet Shammai. Bet Shammai permit one to remove items from the 'Kirah' on Shabbat but one may not return it. Bet Hillel hold that we may even return the pot to the 'Kirah' on Shabbat.

**Shabbat Shalom**



The Hasmonean High School Weekly



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<b>No.</b>	<b>Parashat</b>	<b>תשי"ע</b>	<b>20th</b>
334	Vayikra	5770	March 2010

**'Parasha Digest – Vayikra**

ראשון: Hashem calls to Moshe and teaches him about the Halachot of the Korban Olah (Burnt offering). The Halachot regarding sheep, goats and cattle are also discussed.

שני: The Halachot of the bird-Olah is discussed. The Torah then describes the 3 types of voluntary meal Korbanot: unbaked flour, baked loaves and the shallow fried meal Korban.

שלישי: The deep fried meal Korban is discussed. Also, the Omer Korban which is brought on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Pesach is discussed. Hashem instructs Bnei Yisrael to add salt to all of their Korbanot. The issur of offering up anything with honey or any leavened products (with 2 exceptions) is related.

רביעי: The Korban Shlamim (Peace offering) is described, this offering can be brought from sheep cattle or goats, some of which was burned on the Mizbeach, while the majority was eaten by the Kohanim and the donors of the Korban. The issur of eating blood is also related.

המישי: The Korban Chatat (The sin offering) is described. Also 3 unique Chatat offerings are described: If the Kohen Gadol does an aveirah, If the king did an aveirah and if the entire nation did an aveirah due to a wrong ruling of the Sanhedrin (High court).

ששי: The Korban Chatat for a normal person is described. Also, the Korban Oleh Veyored (Variable sin offering) is described; the size of the Korban depends on the person's financial means. A rich person would bring a sheep or a goat and a poor person would bring 2 birds and someone in poverty would bring a meal offering.

שביעי: The Korban Asham (Guilt offering) is described, with 3 types of Asham Korbanot described: One for someone who misuses something that was set aside for the Beit Hamikdash/Mishkan e.g. Terumah, another Korban for one who swears falsely in regards to money owed to someone else and finally one brought by a person who isn't sure if he did an aveirah.

**Riddle for the Week**

When do even vegetarians need to eat meat?

(Answer in next week's Living Torah)

Answer To Last Week's Riddle:

**Q:** On what date in the Jewish calendar do we some years say Tachanun, and other years say Hallel?

**A:** The third of Tevet, when it is sometimes Chanukah and sometimes the day after.

(As answered by Rafi Cohen)

**Thought for the Week**

We often don't understand why some things happen, maybe to us, or to someone else. Quite simply, it could be explained that this confusion stems from the fact that our eyes are effectively like sunglasses, allowing us to see, but tinted so that we don't actually acknowledge the real colour of the objects and events around us, just an orange/brown/black version of it. When you consider this and the fact that this tinted vision and understanding was given to us by Hashem, and must consequently be how He wants us to view His world, it becomes apparent therefore, that our job in life is not to understand, but to simply act in the way we know to be correct, whether we understand or not: continuing on in life and doing Mitzvot simply because we are commanded to.

לְמַךָ יָדוּ, עַל־אֵשׁ הַשֵּׁן עֵילֶשׁ חַט אִתּוֹ בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר רִצַּשׁ חַט אֶת־הַעֹלָה לָהּ, לִפְנֵי יְהוָה; חֲטָאתָ, הוּא."

"He shall lean his hands on the goat's head and slaughter it before Hashem, in the place where burnt-offerings are slaughtered. (If it is slaughtered with the intention of being a sin-offering, then) it is a valid sin-offering.

An obvious question on this arises. Why does the חט have to be slaughtered in the same place on it as the עולה? Surely the two have no connection to each other as the חט is brought by someone who sins unintentionally whereas the עולה is a sacrifice brought out of free will.

Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch explains that עולה also has a second meaning - to raise. The Korban raises the owner from their current state to a higher state in order to bring himself closer to Hashem.

The Midrash Vayikra Rabba however, says that the עולה is to atone for sinful thoughts and fantasies that appear in peoples minds or imagination. This happens to everyone. This differs significantly to a בְּשֵׁנָה - where although the sin was unintentional, if he would have been more careful it would not have occurred.

People seeing him bringing a חט may look badly on him because of his actions. Therefore the Torah instructs that the owner places his hands in the same way as the עולה, the voluntary offering to save the feelings of the person offering the sacrifice.

There is a story with Rabbi Yisroel Salanter, the founder of the Musar movement that exemplifies this point. He was once invited out for a Friday night meal. His host noticed when it came to eating that his wife had forgotten to cover the two challos. He flew into a large temper in front of his wife and started shouting at her in front everyone present. "It's a disgrace! How can you have forgotten something like that?" She immediately apologised profusely and rectified it, but was obviously embarrassed. After the meal the great Rav approached the man and asked him "What is the reason we cover the challos?" The husband replied "In order the challos don't feel inferior to the Kiddush wine." Rabbi Yisrael rebuked him in a slight manner "You were concerned with the feelings of an inanimate object, but did not take into consideration the feelings of your wife?"

The Torahs thought for both human feelings are also seen with the Arei Miklot. Many special sign-posts were erected to direct people. This was so that people who had killed unintentionally would not have to be put into the embarrassing situation of having to ask for directions to the Arei Miklot where they will be safe from the family of the murdered person.

With this we can more fully understand the Mishna in Pirkei Avos which teaches that יהי כבוד חברך חביב. יהי כבוד חברך חביב, you should respect other peoples honour as your own.

**By Raphael Waller**

*Shabbat Shalom*

## The Slandered Scholar

In the town of Crimea was a prestigious institute for advanced Talmudic studies for Jewish men. A very affluent individual carried the entire financial burden, and also served as dean. Only the elite, those with extraordinary talent, were fortunate enough to attend this study hall where they delved into esoteric texts for hours on end.

One young man, newly married, felt a strong desire to join this seminary, so that he, too, could fill his soul with the sweetness of Torah, and drink from the fountain of knowledge that reverberated within its hallowed walls. His name was Rabbi Chizkiah Medini.

When word of Rabbi Chizkiah's intent to join reached the ears of the seminary members, they rejected the idea. "He's a good man, but a simple one," they said. "Heaven didn't bless him with any special talents or capabilities. He might not be capable of our rigorous schedule. His questions may hamper our growth."

Undaunted, the young man headed to the home of the dean. As the two quickly became engaged in discussion, the donor was favorably impressed with Rabbi Chizkiah. He immediately went to work persuading the scholars of the seminary that despite Chizkiah's mediocrity, his wonderful personality, coupled with his powerful desire to learn Torah, would be a worthwhile asset to the study hall.

Much to his delight, Rabbi Chizkiah made his way to the study hall where he'd been accepted, albeit grudgingly. Indeed, he imbibed the holy words of the Talmud and his days were filled with joy. Unbeknownst to him, the seeds of envy had been implanted in the heart of one scholar.

Soon after, the donor left town on business for several weeks. The scholar, nursing his envy for some weeks now, jumped at the opportunity. He secretly approached the gentile cleaning lady who worked in the study hall, and bribed her with a sum of money into spreading a libelous story about Chizkiah. And so the woman went around town, telling everyone about the lowly offense the young rabbi committed with her.

The town was in an uproar, the desecration of G-d's name severe. Insult upon insult was heaped on Rabbi Chizkiah, becoming so unendurable that he fled the city. Only one man, the wealthy dean of the seminary, refused to be swayed by the slanderous libel. But, a lone voice in the wilderness, no one seemed to mind him. Saddened by the painful chain of events, he fired the maid and asked her not to return.

Some time passed. The blaze of dispute began to die down, life returned to normal, and the cleaning woman's stash of money ran dry. Unemployed and lacking the means to feed her family, a change of

heart began to niggle at her. What had she done? What had she been thinking when she played her shameful part in broadcasting lies and deceit?

She approached Rabbi Chizkiah, confessed her role in fabricating the terrible story, and begged for forgiveness. She pleaded with him to appeal to the head of the seminary to give her back her job. In return, she promised to announce the truth and publicly admit that she had been bribed.

Though the earth continued to revolve peacefully on its axis, and the little village was going about its everyday existence, to Rabbi Chizkiah, this was an earthshaking moment. He felt at a crossroads. On one side lay the unbelievable opportunity he'd hoped for--a chance to clear his name of the sordid actions attributed to him, to throw off the burden of degradation. Yet if the true story would come to light, exposing the disgraceful behavior a person stooped to – especially a Torah scholar – in promulgating lies, the desecration of G-d's name would be tremendous.

One can only imagine the intensity of the struggle raging within Rabbi Chizkiah. The strength of character and the power of self-control that requires one to overcome the desire to free oneself from the burden of shame is hard to grasp.

Rabbi Chizkiah turned to the maid, expressed his forgiveness and assured her that he would appeal to her boss and ask him to return her previous position. But then he forbade her to disclose the true story of what had prompted her actions and never to discuss the details of the bribery.

"At that moment," Rabbi Chizkiah later recounted, "when I accepted this difficult decision, I felt that a wellspring of knowledge opened up within me and I became a different person. I began to grasp the meaning and depths of Torah on an entirely different level."

Not long afterward, Rabbi Chizkiah Medini authored the brilliant *Sdei Chemed*, a multi-volume text on Jewish law, and achieved renown as an incredible genius, a giant in Torah. Anyone who glimpses the famous *Sdei Chemed* is immediately astounded by the depth and breadth of this encyclopedic masterpiece. Only a finely-honed mind of unusual caliber could turn out a text of this scope. Rabbi Chizkiah Medini said that he wasn't blessed with special talents or capabilities and didn't excel in his youth; only after he withstood a tremendous challenge did he feel unbelievable abilities enter him, as though the gates of knowledge had opened to him.

Instead of the shame he thought would mark him all his life, the legendary name of greatness preceded him wherever he went.

## Humility and Moshe

From a linguistic perspective, the removal of even one letter from a word in Lashon Hakodesh will alter the meaning of that word. The first word of this week's Parasha, which is Vayikra, with an Aleph as the last letter of the word, translates into 'And He called (to Moshe).'

Rashi says that the language of calling precedes every statement, and every saying and every command. He makes a distinction between Vayikar and Vayikra – the emphasis on the inclusion of an Aleph – one is used to connote affection; it is the language of endearment and implies a friendly calling whilst the other (Vayikar) is used when Hashem appeared to Bilaam and implies a chance or forced meeting.

When we read of Hashem communicating with Moshe in the Torah, we see such verbs as Vay'daber (And He spoke), Va'yomer (And He said), Vayatzav (And He commanded). Yet, the language of Vayikra (And He called) precedes them all in prominence.

Whether or not the Aleph is present makes a great difference to the translation of the word, however on closer inspection the letter Aleph of the word Vayikra is written diminutively (Aleph Z'aira). The Baal HaTurim explains that Hashem had ordered Moshe to write Vayikra, but Moshe, the most humble of all men, wanted to use the less complimentary Vayikar. He did not want to accord himself the endearing term of Vayikra. To fulfill Hashem's command, he wrote the Aleph but wrote it smaller than the rest of the word.

*(An interesting side point is that because Moshe wanted to write Vayikar, Hashem lovingly called him close – R'Simcha Bunim offered the following insight into how one might be able to maintain our humility even if we were to reach the heights that Moshe did: "A person standing at the peak of the mountain realizes that he is not really taller than everyone else; it is the mountain that holds him high. We should recognize that our achievements are not of our own doing – Hashem holds us up and grants them to us.)*

The Baal Haturim is in essence saying that a compromise was made metaphorically, between Hashem and Moshe in the writing of the term Vayikra, by allowing Moshe the Aleph Z'aira.

However this explanation of the Baal Haturim leads to a dilemma: the endearing language of Vayikra appears before Sefer Vayikra, without any Aleph Z'aira:

".....And the seventh day He called to Moshe from the midst of the cloud." (Shemos 24:16)

If Moshe was so concerned with his humility, why does he pen the full endearing term Vayikra (including a standard size Aleph) in Sefer Shemos? Why would he

have waited until Sefer Vayikra to show his reluctance to writing Vayikra?

The Chasam Sofer in Torat Moshe addresses the problem in the following manner:

The possession of Ruach Hakodesh is meant to imply that an individual has a higher than basic human comprehension, and a more penetrating visualization of the past, present, and future. He writes that there are three levels of Ruach Hakodesh.

The first level is designated by the term Vayikar (coldly or coincidentally communicated with). This level of Ruach Hakodesh is available even to the Prophets of the other nations, as we see with Bilaam.

The second level of Ruach Hakodesh is hinted to by the term Vay'daber (And He spoke). This attainment of Ruach HaKodesh is only available to Yisrael, and not to the other nations.

And lastly, the third level of Ruach Hakodesh appears in the Torah as Vayikra, that special language of endearment. This level could only have been achieved by Moshe Rabbeinu, and no one else, because Bnei Yisrael sinned with the *Eigel HaZahav* (golden calf). Prior to the terrible sin of the Eigel (prior to Sefer Vayikra), all of Bnei Yisrael were on a higher spiritual plain, and did in fact possess this third and highest level of Ruach HaKodesh designated by the endearing word Vayikra. Hence, prior to the Eigel, Moshe did not wish to pen an Aleph Z'aira onto the word in Shemos (24:16), because the honour of all Bnei Yisrael was also inferred from the word Vayikra. Under no circumstance, would he consider reducing the honour of Bnei Yisrael.

However, in Sefer Vayikra (which takes place after the sin of the Eigel), that highest level of Ruach Hakodesh through the term Vayikra, would apply only to Moshe Rabbeinu and no one else. And, when it came to his own personal honour, Moshe was suddenly unwilling to pen the endearing Vayikra.

There would certainly seem to be a powerful Musar Haskeil (instruction of intellect- see Mishlei 1:3) here, in that the truly honourable are not concerned with their own honour, but rather, with the honour of others. While this highest level of Ruach Hakodesh is attainable no more, let us never forget that the only way to have achieved it was through an immense concern for the dignity of others, not for oneself. Developing a true and sincere awareness of modest humility is the key to personal success in all one's endeavours. The humility of the humble will earn respectful esteem as Shlomo Hamelech writes:

”ושפל רוח יתמך כבוד” (29:23)