



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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News This Week

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Zacky and Esther Blima Graff on the birth of a baby girl
 Mazel Tov to Malcolm and Vivienne Fagleman on the recent Bar Mitzva of their grandson, Dovi Fagleman
 Mazel Tov to the Rov and Rebbetzen on the Bar Mitzva this Shabbos in Gateshead of their grandson, Yossi, son of Meir and Miriam
 Mazel Tov to Aaron Chaim and Chavi David on Chaya Rochel's engagement to Chaim Russell, son of Graham and Sarah Russell, Edgware

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following Davening, sponsored partly by Aron Coleman and partly in honour of the volunteers for the security rota

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit this week:

Mon, 10th Iyyar - Jonny Berkovitz for his father
 Thurs, 13th Iyyar - Rebbetzen Cohen for her mother

Apology

Due to an editorial oversight, the article in last week's newsletter from Laurence Ross did not appear in full. We apologise unreservedly to Mr Ross for this error.

What Might Have Been?

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

Parshas Acharei Mos begins with the pasuk: "Hashem spoke to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons, when they approached before Hashem and they died." (Vayikra 16:1). Parshas Acharei Mos describes the intricate avodah (priestly service) of Yom Kippur in the Beis Hamikdash. In fact, this is the krias Hatorah of Yom Kippur. In many machzorim, there is a comment from the Zohar printed at the beginning of this krias Hatorah, which states that if someone sheds tears when he hears the words "After the death of the two sons of Aharon," he will be saved from losing any of his children during his lifetime. In other words, if a person shows his compassion and empathy for Aharon's loss of Nadav and Avihu, it is a segula that he will be spared from a similar loss.

The Ponevezher Rav (Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman 1886-1969), zt"l, commented: Over the course of Jewish history, there have been many unfortunate incidents in Klal Yisrael where people have died, and yet we find no such similar segula – that crying for those who died in the past will spare us from similar tragedy. What is unique about the death of Nadav and Avihu that should literally move us to tears?

Anyone who knows anything about the life of the Ponevezher Rav will appreciate the answer he gave to his question. The Ponevezher Rav said that we know from the previous parsha (Shemini) that Nadav and Avihu were not just any two people from that generation. They were unique and special to the extent that Chazal say that Moshe Rabbeinu told his brother that he knew that the Mishkan would be sanctified through the death of those "close to Me," but he thought that would be either himself or Aharon (see Rashi on the words "bikrovai akadesh" (Vayikra 10:3)). "But now that I see it was Nadav and Avihu who died during the sanctification of the Mishkan, I realize that they were greater than you and me."

It is hard to imagine, but Moshe Rabbeinu said that Nadav and Avihu were greater in certain respects that even Moshe and Aharon! If that is the case, said the Ponevezher Rav, what type of effect would the leadership of Nadav and Avihu have had on Klal Yisrael, if it would have had a chance to come into effect? Consequently, the death of Nadav and Avihu is not just a singular event that affected Aharon Hakohen. Rather, not having two leaders like Nadav and Avihu had a generational effect. It effected the entire generation that did not benefit from being led by Nadav and Avihu, who were even greater than Moshe and Aharon. The whole nature of Klal Yisrael could have been changed by being led by these two great figures.

Rav Kahaneman explained an incredible insight into the Holocaust based on this explanation. Six million Jews were killed. Among them were many gedolei olam and gedolei Yisrael. Great roshei yeshivos were killed – such as Rav Elchonon Wasserman, Rav Menachem Zamba; and great admori"m with whole courts of chassidic followers were just wiped out. Beyond that, millions of pious individuals, men of action, beautiful Jews, were killed. What would Klal Yisrael have looked like had there not been a Holocaust? It would have changed everything.

Here we are, eighty years post-Holocaust, so we are finally demographically getting back to where we were. Torah has been rebuilt. Chassidus has been rebuilt. But the Holocaust remains a tragedy of untold dimensions. If by Nadav and Avihu, we need to cry because we think 'what could have been?' so too, we must ask ourselves 'What would have been had there not been a Holocaust?' These thoughts are obviously related to the days of the sefiras haomer counting as well. During these days, we mourn the 24,000 talmidim (students) of Rabbi Akiva. These people were all future tanaim, disciples of the great Rabbi Akiva. There would have been 24,000 more tanaim. What effect would they have had on the future of Klal Yisrael? There are certain tragedies that have national ramifications, not only for their generation but for all future generations as well.

That is why we need to mourn the tragedy of Nadav and Avihu, the tragedy of the Holocaust, and the tragedy of the 24,000 talmidim of Rabbi Akiva.

Of Demons and Goats

Rabbi Aron Tendler (Torah.org)

We eat as servants of G-d partaking from His table, not as mere human animals who eat because they need to feed.

The first of this week's two Parshios can be divided into four primary topics: 1. The Yom Kippur service, as performed by the Kohen

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.20pm
Candle Lighting	7.29pm-7.45pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.27am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
Mincha	6.00pm / 8.19pm
Motzei Shabbos	9.24pm
Sun	7.15am / 8.20am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.25pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

Gadol in the Bais Hamikdash. 2. The prohibition against bringing a sacrifice outside of the communal Mizbeach that stood in the Bais Hamikdash. 3. The prohibition against eating or drinking blood. 4. The 15 forbidden sexual relationships. What is the connection between these four topics?

In verse 17:7 the Torah explains that the prohibition against sacrificing on a private Mizbeach was intended to stop the Bnai Yisroel from offering sacrifices to the "Seiyrim." Rashi, Rambam, and many others translate Seiyrim as "demons – shaydim" –the supernatural. Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch translates Seiyrim as "he-goats." Is there a correlation between these two translations?

The prohibition against sacrificing on a "outside Mizbeach"- a personal altar rather than the public communal one that stood in the Temple, needs to be understood. Why should the personal Mizbeach be forbidden? The communal Mizbeach was located in Yerushalayim, in the Bais Hamikdash. If an individual desired to offer a Korban of Thanksgiving on the occasion of having won the lottery, passed the Bar Exam, survived an operation or accident, the birth of a child, or any other event, he would have to travel to the Bais Hamikdash in order to satisfy his intent. For many it would take two weeks, or more, to travel to Yerushalayim, necessitating leaving family and business. Therefore, most would put off bringing their personal sacrifices until the three Yomim Tovim, Pesach, Shevout, and Succoth, when they anyway had to go to Yerushalayim. As you can imagine, it would take an exceptional sense of appreciation and devotion for someone to maintain any degree of enthusiasm for why he was bringing the Korban. The offerings would inevitably alter from a free-willed, enthusiastic outpouring of love and devotion to an imposed obligation of service and commitment. Wouldn't it have been much more intense and intimate for an individual to fulfill his desire to acknowledge G-d at the very moment when G-d's benevolent protection and guidance was revealed? Why limit the recognition of our dependency on G-d in the form of sacrifice to a single location, restricted by time and distance?

In the same vein, why is our prayer which replaces the Korbanos of the past restricted by time and location? Why must I pray with nine other men in a closed room, rather than hiking to the top of a mountain and acknowledging my Creator surrounded by the grandeur and magnificence of His world? Why must I pray three times a day, regardless of my intent and enthusiasm, rather than those times when I truly feel the connection to G-d? The "by rote" problem that plagues the routine of prescribed daily prayer would certainly be alleviated if we prayed when we felt G-d's closeness, rather than when we are obliged to do so, regardless of how we feel.

This week's Parsha follows in the aftermath of the deaths of Aharon's two eldest sons, Nadav and Avihu. They died because they expressed their devotion and love to G-d, in a manner that had not been commanded or prescribed. Regardless of their intentions, they sinned by not taking the time to ascertain G-d's true will. Instead, they attempted to define the parameters of their relationship with G-d on the basis of their personal feelings and thoughts. In so doing, they transgressed the boundaries of that very same relationship in a manner that demanded their deaths.

On Yom Kippur, the first topic of the Parsha, the Kohen Gadol, who functions solely as a servant of the people and not as an individual, must perform the service of effecting forgiveness for his nation. He must enter the inner sanctuary of G-d's home and beseech Him to accept the nation's offerings of repentance, subservience, and dependency. The focal point of that day was the sacrificing of the two identical Seiyrim – he-goats. One he-goat would be consecrated to G-d and be part of the ceremony that effected forgiveness in the inner sanctuary. The other he-goat would be sent out into the wilderness to die.

Rav Hirsch explained that the he-goat symbolized "a sensuous animality which gratifies its instincts in complete unrestraint... typifying the unrestraint of the woods and the wilderness." (17:7)

The message of Yom Kippur is that we have a choice. We can either

frame our lives within the dictates of Jewish law and Torah, thereby consecrating our animalistic selves to the service of G-d, or we can choose to disregard the Mitzvos and live like the he-goat, unfettered and unrestrained, giving license to every desire or perceived need. The difference is that the unrestricted he-goat can only survive in the wilderness, removed from the conventions and norms of a society that desires to live ethically and morally. Whenever we attempt to define ourselves and our relationship with G-d by our "sensuous animality", we become like Nadav and Avihu and are destined to die outside of G-d's sanctuary.

The prohibition of sacrificing outside of the Bais Hamikdash follows the same basic theme. Bringing Korbanos and praying three times a day are structured moments when we are supposed to acknowledge our absolute dependency upon G-d. Doing so is one of the many ways that we remain focused on our responsibilities to be G-d's Chosen People. If we would bring offerings whenever and however we wished, rather than in the manner prescribed by G-d, we would be expressing self-love and self-worship rather than subservience to G-d. If we would pray whenever and wherever we chose, rather than praying in the form and form prescribed by the Rabbis, we would be acting like Nadav and Avihu and would be giving license to a more sophisticated form of our own "sensuous animality."

The concept of sacrificing to "demons" or "he-goats" is identical. In biblical times, humans expressed their animal sensuality by creating gods that served their own personal needs and desires. These "demons" manifested the sensuous animal in each of us and in their service we were able to rationalize the gratification of every urge and instinct. The he-goat is as Rav Hirsch explained the symbolic demon in each of us that we must learn to channel in the service of G-d through a lifetime of Mitzvos. Therefore the Torah prohibited offering sacrifices outside of the Bais Hamikdash. "So that they will no longer slaughter their offerings to the "demons" or "he-goats" after which straying from Me they follow...

The Torah goes so far as to say that if someone should make an offering outside the Bais Hamikdash, it would be considered as having "murdered" the animal. The permission to kill and use animals was granted to us by G-d provided we use them in the manner that He prescribed. If we should do so in the manner that we desire, He removes His permission from us to kill animals, and if we should do so we are murderers.

The integration of G-d into our lives is the theme of Achaarei Mos and Kedoshim. Torah is the manual of instruction that addresses far more than our daily activities and behavior. It attempts to reach our fundamental character and mold us into ethical, moral, and devoted humans. The prohibition against eating blood is such a law. Although G-d granted us permission to use animals, He was concerned for the affect that the taking of life would have on our basic moral character. Therefore, He prohibited the eating of blood that symbolizes our basic respect for life itself – "Because the blood is the life force." Just as the soul suffuses the entire being so too does the blood provide life to the entire body. Although we are permitted to take animal life within the framework of G-d's instructions, we must always acknowledge that doing so is not an act of barbarism but a gift granted to us by the Creator of life Himself. We eat as servants of G-d, partaking from His table, not as mere human animals who eat because they need to feed. Therefore, we are forbidden to eat blood.

The final topic of Acharei Mos, the fifteen prohibited intimate relationships, is the clearest expression of this theme. It frames our most powerful desire and drive in purpose and sanctity. We are humans created in G-d's image, not animals! Our basic instincts are to gratify our sensual needs whenever and however. To rise above our animalistic selves and become G-dly is to express those sensual needs within the framework of G-d's commands. It is not for us to define the parameters of moral behavior, like Nadav and Avihu had done. Rather, it is our obligation to live within the parameters of G-d's moral code. The fifteen prohibited intimate relationships are the foundation of G-d's moral code.