

This week's *Parashah* discusses *Korbanot* / sacrificial offerings. The anonymous sage known only as "a *Levi* from Barcelona" *z"l* (Spain; 13th century) writes: Man's heart is drawn after his deeds. Therefore, when a person sins, he cannot obtain atonement through words alone, saying to himself, "I have sinned and I will not repeat my deed." Rather, he must perform some action to effect complete atonement. Specifically, he must go through the trouble of bringing an animal to the *Bet Hamikdash* and following the procedures associated with whichever *Korban* he is bringing. Only this can impress upon him the evil of what he did, so that he will never repeat it.

The sage from Barcelona continues: To enhance the impression that the *Korban* makes, *Hashem* commands us to bring as offerings those things that a person's heart desires: meat, bread, and wine. In addition, when a person witnesses the *Shechitah* of the animal he brought, it affects him. He thinks: "I and my animal have a great deal in common--all that distinguishes us is a human's intellect, but I cast that aside when I sinned."

The writer continues: This explanation can account for voluntary offerings as well, for they reinforce the supremacy of man's intellect over his physical body. This is a good reminder even for someone who has not sinned. He adds: We must keep in mind, however, that *P'shat* / the "simple" explanation alone will never fully explain a *Mitzvah*. For that, we need the help of Kabbalists. (*Sefer Ha'chinuch* 95)

Shabbat

"Enter in peace, crown of her husband, also with *Simcha* / gladness and good cheer . . ." (From the Friday night hymn, *Lecha Dodi*)

R' Aryeh Finkel *z"l* (1931-2016; *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Mir Yeshiva in Modi'in Ilit, Israel) asks: We are instructed regarding all *Mitzvot* (*Tehilim* 100:2), "Serve *Hashem* with *Simcha*." And, we are warned of punishment that awaits, G-d forbid, "because you did not serve *Hashem*, your *Elokim*, with *Simcha* and goodness of heart . . ." (*Devarim* 28:47)! What, then, is the nature of the added *Simcha* with which we welcome *Shabbat*?

R' Finkel explains: We read (*Tehilim* 92:1), "A psalm, a song for the Sabbath day." The *Gemara* (end of *Masechet Tamid*) comments: "A song for the future, for the day that will be entirely *Shabbat*-like and restful forever," *i.e.*, the World-to-Come. *Shabbat*, writes R' Finkel, connects a person to that eternal world which is filled with *Simcha* and contentment. *Shabbat*, we are told, is a microcosm of the World-to-Come. On *Shabbat*, one can feel, to some degree, the *Simcha* of the World-to-Come.

To be clear, R' Finkel continues, we are not referring to the *Simcha* we will experience when we receive reward for our *Mitzvot* in the World-to-Come. After all, we are taught (*Avot* 1:3), "Do not be like servants who serve *Hashem* in order to receive reward." Rather, the source of our joy is *Hashem's* love for us, because of which He promises us reward and eternal *Simcha*.

One of the foundations of *Emunah* / faith, writes R' Finkel, is the belief that *Hashem*, the G-d of truth, keeps His promises. *Shabbat* is a day for strengthening our *Emunah*, which includes feeling *Simcha* due to the knowledge that *Hashem* loves us and, therefore, has promised us reward in a world that is all good. (Logically, *Hashem* does not owe us anything for serving Him. Therefore, any reward that He gives us is merely an expression of His love for us.) (Yavo *Shiloh* p.83)

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Purim

The *Gemara* (*Megillah* 4a) teaches: “A person is obligated to read the *Megillah* at night, *‘Ve’lishnota’* during the day.” The continuation of the *Gemara* entertains the possibility that “*Ve’lishnota’*” means “to learn its *Mishnah*”—i.e., that one is obligated to read *Megillat Esther* at night and to study the *Mishnayot* of *Masechet Megillah* during the day. Ultimately, however, the *Gemara* determines that “*Ve’lishnota’*” means “and repeat it”—i.e., that one must read the *Megillah* again during the day after having read it at night. [Until here from the *Gemara*]

Though the *Gemara* rejects its initial understanding of “*Ve’lishnota’*,” even the rejected suggestions of the sages of the *Gemara* must have some basis. Why, then, did the *Gemara* think that part of the *Mitzvah* of *Megillah* reading is studying the Oral Law associated with the *Megillah*?

Also, the *Talmud Yerushalmi* teaches that the existence of *Masechet Megillah*, a tractate of the Oral Law, is alluded to by the phrase (*Esther* 9:28), “Nor shall their [i.e., the days of *Purim*’s] *Zecher* / remembrance perish from their descendants.” How so?

R’ David Cohen *shlita* (*Rosh Yeshiva* of the Chevron Yeshiva in Yerushalayim) explains: We read (*Shmot* 3:15), “This is My Name *Le’olam* / forever, and this is *Zichri* / My remembrance from generation to generation.” The *Gemara* (*Pesachim* 50a) explains: In this world, we do not pronounce *Hashem*’s Name beginning “*Yud-Heh*”; it is hidden (“*Ne’elam*”—from the same root as “*Le’olam*”). In its place, we substitute the Name that begins “*Aleph-Dalet*,” which is a *Zecher* / remembrance of His Name.

R’ Cohen continues: Significantly, whenever we see *Hashem*’s hidden Name in writing, we pronounce it exactly the same as the Name that begins “*Aleph-Dalet*,” which the *Gemara* calls a remembrance. This reminds us that, though *Hashem* is hidden, He is nevertheless very present in our world and is pulling the strings at all times. Notably, this is the message of the *Purim* story, which consists of a series of hidden miracles. *Hashem* is alluded to, but never appears openly, in the *Megillah*.

R’ Cohen concludes: This is exactly the relationship of the Written Torah and the Oral Law. R’ Eliyahu *z”l* (1720-1797; the *Vilna Gaon*) is quoted as saying that the Written Torah parallels the hidden Name of *Hashem*, which a scribe writes in the Torah; the letters are visible but unknowable. The Oral Law parallels the Name *Aleph-Dalet*, which is how we pronounce and, to some degree, understand His Name. The Written Torah cannot be understood without the Oral Law, just as we cannot grasp *Hashem*’s true Name—i.e., His Essence—in this world; we need a “remembrance” in its place. In this light, we can understand why the *Gemara* understands the “*Zecher* / remembrance” of *Purim* as alluding to the Oral Law and suggests that we study it.

(*Yemei Ha’Purim* ch.7)

“*Vayikra* / He called to Moshe, and *Hashem* spoke to him from the *Ohel Mo’ed*, *Laimor* / saying.” (1:1)

Rashi z”l writes: “*Vayikra*” expresses affection and is the way angels address each other, as it is written (*Yeshayah* 6:3) “*Ve’kara*” / And one called to another.” To the prophets of the nations of the world, however, G-d reveals himself using an expression that denotes events of a casual character and of uncleanness, as it is written, (*Bemidbar* 23: 4), “*Va’yiker* / And *Elokim* happened to meet Bil’am.” [Until here from *Rashi*]

R’ Yehuda Loewe *z”l* (*Maharal* of Prague; died 1609) elaborates: “*Va’yiker*” is used when *Hashem* speaks to a gentile prophet, in contrast to “*Vayikra*” when He speaks to a prophet of *Bnei Yisrael*, to indicate that the former receive only “half” a prophecy, just as the word “*Va’yiker*” (ויקר) is only part of the word “*Vayikra*” (ויקרא). Why can gentiles not receive a complete prophecy? Because they do not have the Torah to purify their intellects.

Thus, writes *Maharal*, we read (*Esther* 3:14), “The copies of the decree were to be promulgated in every province, and to be published to all peoples, that they should be ready for that day,” i.e., the 13th of *Adar*. Haman was not a prophet, but he was given an inkling of prophecy, a premonition that something momentous would happen in the Persian Empire on the 13th of *Adar*. What did happen, however, was not at all what he expected. He experienced only “half” a prophecy.

(*Ohr Chadash* 3:14; *Tiferet Yisrael* ch.21)

Midrash Tanchuma asks: What is the meaning of “*Laimor*”? The *Midrash* answers: “Saying to *Bnei Yisrael*.”

R’ Avi Ezri Zelig Margalios *z”l* (rabbinical judge and *Darshan* / preacher in several European cities; died 1715 in *Eretz Yisrael*) explains: The *Zohar* interprets “*Ohel Mo’ed*,” usually translated “Tent of Meeting,” as “Tent of Time.” (The holidays are called “*Mo’adim*” because they are “meetings” with G-d that come at fixed times.) When *Hashem* spoke to Moshe from the *Ohel Mo’ed*, He was telling Moshe that this meeting place, the *Mishkan/Mikdash*, would only exist for a time. Eventually, the *Bet Hamikdash* would be destroyed.

However, *Hashem* continued, “*Laimor* / Say this to *Bnei Yisrael*.” The Torah uses two verbs to introduce *Hashem*’s speaking to Moshe: “*Va’yomer*” (from the same root as “*Laimor*”) and “*Vy’da’ber*.” Our Sages explain that the former connotes soft speech, while the latter connotes harsh speech. One would think that a portent of the destruction of the Temple would be introduced by “*Vy’da’ber*.” No! says *Hashem*. “*Laimor*” / Tell it to *Bnei Yisrael* gently, for it is good that I will pour My anger on stick and stones and not on them.

(*Kessef Nivchar*)