

This week's *Parashah* and much of the Book of *Vayikra* deal with *Korbanot* / sacrificial offerings. In the absence of the *Bet Hamikdash*, we do not offer *Korbanot*. And, while we pray multiple times daily for the rebuilding of the *Bet Hamikdash*, where we will "serve You as in the days of old," the truth is that the thought of bringing animal sacrifices makes many uncomfortable.

R' Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook z"l (1865-1935; *Ashkenazic* Chief Rabbi of *Eretz Yisrael*) addressed that discomfort in a *Kislev* 5680 (1919) letter to R' Chaim Hirschensohn z"l (1857-1935; rabbi of Hoboken, New Jersey), writing: Regarding *Korbanot*, it is more correct to believe that they will be reinstated as before, that when the Redemption comes and prophecy and *Ruach Ha'kodesh* / Divine inspiration return to *Yisrael*, we will fulfill everything as it is written. At that time, we will no longer be influenced by ideas drawn from European culture, for hearing the word of *Hashem* will elevate all cultures to a higher level than any human reason can do. For now, we should not think that offering *Korbanot* is a coarse physical service. Rather, *Korbanot* embody a deep spiritual truth that cannot be appreciated in all its beauty until the light of *Hashem* shines upon His nation, until a holy national renaissance comes to *Yisrael*--one that even the nations of the world will recognize. I do agree with your honor that it is impossible to offer *Korbanot* in deed until there is open *Ruach Ha'kodesh* in *Yisrael*. But that does not have to be viewed as something distant. "Suddenly, the Master Whom you seek will come to His Sanctuary" (*Malachi* 3:1), and then the *Bet Hamikdash* will be built speedily in our days. (*Igrot Ha'Rayah* IV #994)

Pesach

"It is a *Mitzvah* for us *L'sapper* / to relate *B'yetzi'at Mitzrayim* (literally, 'in the Exodus from Egypt), and the more one relates *B'yetzi'at Mitzrayim*, the more he is praiseworthy."

(From the *Pesach Haggadah*)

At first glance, the author of the *Haggadah* should have said, "*L'sapper et yetzi'at Mitzrayim*," which would convey that one must relate the story of the Exodus. Why does the *Haggadah* say, "*B'yetzi'at Mitzrayim*"?

R' Yitzchok Lichtenstein *shlita* (*Rosh Ha'yeshiva* of *Yeshiva Torah Vodaath* in Brooklyn, N.Y.) explains in the name of his grandfather R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik z"l (1903-1993; *Rosh Yeshiva* at *Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary/Yeshiva University* in New York):

If the *Haggadah* had said, "*L'sapper et yetzi'at Mitzrayim*," it would have meant only, "Tell the story of the Exodus." In that case, a person would have fulfilled his obligation and been finished once he had told the basic story. In contrast, "*L'sapper b'yetzi'at Mitzrayim*" means to delve ever deeper into the story and to understand it clearly; not merely to tell about a historical event that happened.

In this light, we can better understand the introductory phrase: "Even if we were all men of wisdom, understanding, experience, and knowledge of the Torah, it still would be a *Mitzvah* for us *L'sapper b'yetzi'at Mitzrayim*." Even if we already know the story in depth, we remain obligated to delve deeper and to develop new insights regarding the Exodus.

The *Haggadah* continues: "The more one relates *B'yetzi'at Mitzrayim*, the more he is praiseworthy." Not only is one praiseworthy if he relates more details of the story, one is more praiseworthy if he understands the story on a deeper level [for example, by recognizing the hand of G-d in more parts of the story and learning lessons of *Emunah* / faith].

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“When a man among you brings an offering to Hashem--from animals . . .” (1:2)

“When a Nefesh / soul will sin unintentionally . . .” (4:2)

R' Mordechai Ilan z"l (1915-1981; *Av Bet Din* / Chief Justice of the Tel Aviv Rabbinical Court) writes: One would have expected the Torah to say, “When a man will sin unintentionally,” and, “When a Nefesh among you brings an offering to Hashem,” for seemingly it is physical man who sins and his soul that repents and wants to bring an offering as an atonement. The Torah is teaching us, however, that when a person sins, even unintentionally, he damages his soul. And, when he repents, he must see himself as offering--giving up--the animalistic, human side of himself. (*Mikdash Mordechai*)

“If the anointed Kohen will sin, bringing guilt upon the people (literally, ‘to the guilt of the people’).” (4:3)

Rashi z"l comments: “When the High-Priest sins, it results in the guilt of the people.”

R' Eliyahu Meir Bloch z"l (1894-1955; co-founder and *Rosh Yeshiva* of the Telshe Yeshiva in Cleveland, Ohio) writes: By examining the deeds of the leadership, one can see the spiritual level of the generation. When a generation does not merit, Hashem appoints leaders who lead them further astray. This is one aspect of our bitter exile, he adds. (*Peninei Da'at*)

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In addition, R' Soloveitchik says, the *Mitzvah* of *Sippur Yetzi'at Mitzrayim* includes an obligation to discuss the laws of *Pesach*. This is evident in the *Haggadah's* answer to the Wise Son: “You shall also explain to him the laws of the *Korban Pesach*: that one may not eat dessert after the final taste of the *Pesach* offering.”

R' Soloveitchik elaborates, citing the Torah verses that reflect the Wise Son's question and our answer to him (*Devarim* 6:20-24), “If your child asks you tomorrow, saying, ‘What are the testimonies and the decrees and the ordinances that Hashem, our *Elokim*, commanded you?’ You shall say to your child, ‘We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and Hashem took us out of Egypt with a strong hand. Hashem placed signs and wonders, great and harmful, against Egypt, against Pharaoh and against his entire household, before our eyes. And He took us out of there in order to bring us, to give us the Land that He swore to our forefathers. Hashem commanded us to perform all these decrees, to fear Hashem, our *Elokim*, for our good, all the days, to give us life, as this very day.’” We see that the answer to the Wise Son includes telling him the story of the Exodus and also telling him that Hashem took us out of Egypt in order that we may observe the relevant laws, which are the following . . . (And the we teach him the *Halachot*.)

(*Haggadah Shel Pesach Si'ach Ha'grid* p.29 & 31-32)

“Vayikra / He called to Moshe . . .” (1:1)

Midrash Rabbah teaches: When Hashem appears to gentile prophets, it is only with half a word, as we read (*Bemidbar* 23:4), “*Va'yiker* (ויקר) / *Elokim* happened upon Bil'am . . .” But, when He appears to prophets of *Yisrael*, it is with a whole word, as we read, “*Vayikra* (ויקר) / He called to Moshe . . .” [Until here from the *Midrash*]

R' Chaim Zaichyk z"l (1906-1989; *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Bet Yosef-Novardok in Buchach, Poland; later in Haifa, Israel) writes: For a number of years, I struggled and toiled to understand the meaning of this statement of the *Midrash*--specifically, the meaning of “half a word” and “a whole word.” This year, with Hashem's help, I was enlightened.

R' Zaichyk proceeds to share his insight: A different passage in *Midrash Rabbah* relates that Moshe Rabbeinu asked Hashem to be allowed to live as a regular citizen under the leadership of his successor, Yehoshua bin Nun. Moshe even humbled himself by going to Yehoshua's tent to escort him, and by walking to Yehoshua's left, as befits a disciple. But, when Hashem spoke to Yehoshua, and Moshe asked, “What did Hashem say?”--Yehoshua answered, “Did I ask you what He said when He spoke to you?” At that, Moshe realized that this arrangement was not tenable. [Until here from the *Midrash*]

How are we to understand Yehoshua's response? Moshe had withheld nothing from Yehoshua. When Hashem told Moshe (*Bemidbar* 27:20), “Place some of your majesty upon him” (*i.e.*, Yehoshua), Moshe instead lovingly rested both his hands on Yehoshua's head (*Bemidbar* 27:23)! Why did Yehoshua repay Moshe's kindness so?

R' Zaichyk explains: Prophecy has two components. One component is the message that Hashem commands the prophet to deliver--be it a rebuke, a blessing, a *Halachic* teaching, etc. That the prophet may--indeed, is commanded--to share. The other component of prophecy is a feeling of extreme closeness to Hashem, of visiting “upper realms,” and of basking in the “light” of the *Shechinah*. That experience is different for, and very personal to, each prophet, and there are no words by which a prophet could describe it even if he wanted to.

It was that second component of Yehoshua's prophecy that he refused to share with Moshe--not because he was unwilling to, but because he was unable to, just as Moshe had been unable to share his experiences with Yehoshua. And, with this, we understand the *Midrash*. Prophecy consists of two halves, and a prophet of *Yisrael* can experience both halves--“a whole word.” Not so a gentile prophet; he may be given a message to deliver, as Bil'am was, but he will never have the rich spiritual experience that a prophet of *Yisrael* would have. Rather, he would get only “half a word.”

(*Ohr Chadash*)