

# Lamplighter

2 Nissan  
Vayikrah  
**871**  
27 March  
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## LIVING WITH THE TIMES

With this week's Torah reading, Vayikra, we begin the Book of Leviticus, which contains a detailed account of the various offerings brought to the Sanctuary and the Holy Temples.

Though the physical Holy Temple in Jerusalem was destroyed almost 2,000 years ago, the Torah's teachings are eternal, and apply always.

Furthermore, as we stand now on the threshold of the Messianic Era, the laws of these offerings will be in effect very soon in the Third Holy Temple.

One of the offerings discussed in our Torah portion is the Mincha, or meal-offering, about which the Torah says, "When any soul will bring a meal-offering to the L-rd; his offering shall be of fine flour, and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense upon it."

What are we to learn from the Torah's use of the word "soul", which is not used in connection with any other voluntary offering?

Our answer lies in an examination of the Mincha itself.

Rashi, the great Torah commentator, explains that a meal-offering is usually brought by a poor person, who cannot afford to sacrifice an ox or even a lamb.

G-d's choice of the word "soul", therefore, recognizes the great loss the relatively inexpensive meal-offering represents to the impoverished person. To G-d it is as if he offered up his very soul.

When a wealthy man parts with one of his flock, it makes little difference to his overall financial situation. The poor man, however, gives up a greater percentage of his income to be able to purchase the flour and oil which make up the Mincha. The poor man has many needs; most certainly the money could have been used to ease his plight. His offering, being more of a personal sacrifice, also shows more willingness to come closer to G-d.

Consequently, the meal-offering represents the poor man's triumph against his evil inclination (which no doubt encouraged him to use the money for selfish means), and is therefore especially beloved by G-d.

Even now, during the exile, we can perform this same mitzva (commandment), albeit in the spiritual sense.

We find an allusion to this in the verse, "If any one of you brings an offering". If a Jew truly wants to draw nearer to G-d, it must come "of you" - from deep within. The Jew must sacrifice his "animal soul" - his evil inclination - for the sake of attaining this closeness to G-d.

The Mincha offering therefore provides us with a positive example of how we are to serve G-d during the exile, as the "sacrificing" of our evil inclination serves to negate the reason we were sent into exile in the first place - namely, our sins. Furthermore, this will lead to the building of the Third Holy Temple in the literal sense, speedily in our days.

*(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)*

## Sacrifice

By Yossy Goldman

It's not only animal rights groups who have difficulty with this week's parshah; most people in our modern era have a problem with the concept of animal sacrifice, which is the major theme of the third book of the Torah, Leviticus.

But I have no wish to enter into a rationalization of biblical morality. The second verse in the book lends itself to interesting homiletic interpretation, which makes it quite clear that the Torah's focus on sacrifice is not so much on the animal on the altar as on the person who is offering it:

*"When a man will bring an offering from among you to G-d, from the animals, from the cattle or from the flock shall you bring your offering. (Leviticus 1:2)*

Now, clearly, the language here is rather strained. In fact, most translators have edited the text to read more smoothly - *when a man among you will bring an offering*, clearly an improvement in the flow of the verse.

Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, in his classic *Likutei Torah*, insists, however, that the Torah's syntax is deliberate. *When a man will bring an offering* i.e. he will want to come closer to G-d (the Hebrew word *korbon* has in it the root of *korov* to come close) then he must know that the offering must come *from you*, from the animal within you.

Every one of us possesses animalistic tendencies and these must be consumed on the altar of G-d. We are obliged to slay our inner animal and humanize ourselves by working on developing our character traits until the beast within us has been neutralized - and better yet - sanctified.

What exactly does this mean? The verse continues, *from the cattle or from the flock, shall you bring your offering*. "Cattle" - some individuals may behave like a goring bull, trampling on everyone and everything in its way. He is the proverbial bull in a china closet, stomping, aggressive, bullying, domineering and utterly insensitive to people's feelings.

Others might be like "the flock" - the meek little lamb that timidly follows the crowd. He has no opinion of his own; whatever the last person he spoke to said becomes his opinion for the moment. He has no backbone, no sense of self or self-respect. He stays with the flock at all costs lest he be labelled a 'black sheep.'

Still others might be moody and temperamental, changing colours and character traits from day to day. One minute they might be like the raging bull and the next the docile lamb.

So the Torah teaches us to be "Adam", a human being of human, indeed G-dly, character. Be a man not an ox, a lady not a lamb. Be a *mentsch*, behave like a mature, refined person not like a *vilde chaya* ("wild animal") Examine your own behavioural tendencies; check out your inner feelings and dispositions. Are you satisfied with yourself as a human being? Are those around you happy, or do you intimidate them with your temper tantrums? Are you mature and mild-mannered or do you suffer from road rage?

Searching our souls and our inner psyches for unacceptable behaviours and then doing something about it is what we mean when we say to bring the animal up on the altar of sacrifice. It is the animal within each of us; for the true and ultimate sacrifice is the sacrificing of self.



## HANK AND THE CULT

By Rabbi Shea Hecht

One day I got a call from a shaky-sounding Mr. Stern, telling me that his son Hank had joined a cult and hadn't come home for the last three days. I reassured him that I would investigate and see what the boy was up to. Hank didn't come home the next day or over the weekend.

I decided to enlist the help of a very likable fellow named Avraham David who was often a guest of ours for the Shabbat meals. When Hank had occasionally visited our home in the past, Avraham David had spent many hours in friendly conversation and song with Hank. I felt that his presence would have a positive affect on Hank.

Ten o'clock Monday morning, Avraham David and I were on our way to his high school.

"We would like to speak to one of your students, a boy named Hank Stern. I'm his Rabbi," I said to the secretary.

She went to speak to the vice-principal, and he called Hank out of class. After a few minutes of fruitless discussion, I left, leaving Hank with Avraham David. They were alone for over an hour while I talked with the vice-principal.

When Avraham David and Hank finally emerged from the room, their eyes were red from crying. Hank was too choked with emotion to say much, but he gave me a hug before going back to class.

"What went on?" I asked Avraham David.

He said, "Well, I told him my whole story."

"What whole story?"

"That I'm a convert," he said.

"I never knew that," I said.

"Well, I don't necessarily advertise it. I figured that you were well aware of it anyway."

"I'm amazed. What happened?" I asked him.

"I told him that it took me almost two years of constant struggle to become a Jew. I had to argue with rabbis and convince them of my sincerity. I had to study and wrestle with my own doubts and fears, but I saw this as the greatest blessing on the face of the earth. I was willing to suffer through the pain of circumcision as an adult and give up everything to become a Jew.

"Then I looked at Hank and said, 'and you are willing to walk away from your Jewish heritage without even knowing the first thing about it, tossing it away for a lot of shtick and hocus-pocus.' Rabbi, I really spoke from the guts to this kid, and I think I really got to him."

This was the first real step in Hank's return.

What finally snapped Hank Stern out was an amazing incident. It was on a Shabbat, immediately preceding Purim. In shul before the evening prayers, Hank sat down to learn something about the holiday with several of the congregants. The focus of the lesson was a talk from the Lubavitcher Rebbe, a discourse the Rebbe had delivered a few years back. I kept an eye on Hank during this time and saw that he was especially impressed by it. Afterward, he was full of questions. When had the Rebbe said this, and in what language? I told him it had been about four years ago, in Yiddish. Then he

wanted to know if it had been translated into English. I told him it had.

After we came home from shul for the Shabbat meal, Hank seemed very distracted. He had a far-away look. At least three more times he asked, "Are you sure that the Rebbe said those words four years ago?" I assured him that he had. Finally, after dinner, we went into the living room together and sat down. I could see something was gnawing at him.

"You want to tell me?" I asked.

He buried his face in his hands and sat silently for nearly a minute, then spoke, "Two nights ago the leader of my cult held a prayer meeting, and he talked about the holiday of Purim. He told us that the night before G-d had come to him in a dream and taught him some amazing revelations about Purim. What he taught us was almost exactly word for word the teachings I learned tonight from the Lubavitcher Rebbe." Breathing hard, he got up, walked to the bathroom and threw up his dinner.

Most guys cry when they crack. Hank Stern vomited. That the cult leader stood completely unmasked as a phony was too much for Hank to handle all at once. But now it was over. Hank's heart had opened; now the seeds could fall in and grow.

Like others who find their Jewish souls after having been involved with a cult, Hank went to Israel. He sent me a long letter describing his feelings and experiences.

He wrote that at age eight he had asked his father to buy him a pair of tzitzit. Mr. Stern had told Hank to forget the tzitzit, that he would buy him something much better than tzitzit—a big toy dump truck. Hank went on to write, "If I had cried for that pair of tzitzit like I cried for other things I wanted, I would never have become a member of that cult."

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P.O. Box 67, Balaclava Vic. 3183 AUSTRALIA  
Phone (03) 9525 8190  
Email: lamplighter\_weekly@hotmail.com  
Internet: www.lamplighterweekly.com

Editors: Shneur Wilhelm, Boruch Sholom Ajzenszmid  
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# INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



## Physical Healing thru increase in Torah and Mitzvot

13 Nissan, 5712 (1952)

I received your letter in which you notify me about Mr. ... and his wife. [You write me that] he is suffering from a number of ailments and his wife is also not well. You ask for a blessing on their behalf.

Explain to them that G-d, the King of kings, is the sole Master of the entire universe, and that He is the Essence of goodness, kindness and mercy. We, on our part, have merely to make the proper vessels in order to draw down and receive His blessings from on High. The appropriate vessels for a Jewish man and woman are matters of Torah and mitzvot (commandments).

When someone is physically hungry or thirsty, he stills his hunger with bread and quenches his thirst with water; it does not matter whether or not he understands how the bread and water are able to satisfy his hunger and slake his thirst.

The same is true regarding one's spiritual life. When the soul hungers and thirsts for the bread and water of Torah and mitzvot, the most important thing is the actual deed; that its hunger and thirst be slaked through the practical performance of Torah and mitzvot.

Once the soul becomes healthier and stronger, it will be much simpler - and a lot less time-consuming as well - for it to understand [the significance of] Torah and mitzvot. Moreover, this will [not only be apprehended by his soul, but] even by his [inherently] limited physical intellect.

However, one should not change the order and declare that only after he understands the why's and wherefore's [of the necessity of observing Torah and mitzvot] will he be ready to observe them.

All the above also applies to Mr ... G-d will surely return him to good health. But he on his part should not make conditions that first he must get well and only then will he use his free time to understand the necessity of performing Torah and mitzvot, and only [then] begin increasing his practical performance of Torah and mitzvot.

To act in the above manner is similar to someone who is unwell and yet insists that he will not take any medication until he concludes studying the science of medicine and understands exactly how the medication promotes his healing.

In point of fact, it is quite the contrary: taking medicine will strengthen his intellect, making it much easier for him to understand the science of medicine [and how the medication promotes his healing].

Mr. ... should begin performing mitzvot, particularly wearing tefillin and observing kashrut (the laws of kosher), and his wife should begin conducting a scrupulously kosher home and lighting candles prior to Shabbat and Festivals, and before lighting them she should give to the charity of R. Meir Baal HaNes.

[When they will begin doing so], they will merit to be able in a short amount of time to convey glad tidings about an improvement in their health.

\*\*\*

6 Marcheshvan, 5715 (1954)

I received your letter via Rabbi Gerlitsky in which you ask that I remember you for success in your studies as a Torah and mitzvot observant doctor. At an appropriate time, I will mention you at the resting place of the Rebbe, my revered father-in-law, of blessed memory.

In general every Jew, and especially a Jew who has studied in a Lubavitcher yeshiva, has to always, and wherever he is, consider himself an emissary of G-d, as our Sages have said (end of K'dushin), "I was only created to serve my Master"; and he must influence his Jewish friends that they come to this realization, as well.

... Considering the fact that even secular knowledge now realizes the importance of heredity to a person's life, you should therefore explain to the medical students that the health of a Jew's soul is connected with its inheritance of the Torah received at Mt. Sinai.

A Jew cannot possibly be mentally and spiritually whole if he is, Heaven forbid, sundered from the source to which his parents and grandparents were so closely connected for countless generations....

## A MITZVA A DAY

**Positive Commandment 196:** *Gifts Upon the Release of a Jewish Slave*

When it is time to free a Jewish slave, he must be presented with gifts which will help him begin to live on his own. This is learned out from the words (in the Torah) "You shall give him gifts" (Deuteronomy 15:14).

## A WORD from the Director

*There are two opinions in the Mishna as to when we must begin studying the laws of an upcoming holiday. One opinion is 30 days before the holiday, while the other is two weeks.*

*Although the first opinion is the accepted one, it is appropriate to also reassess and intensify our efforts two weeks before the holiday. Just as we must make an effort to study the Passover laws in advance of the festival, so too we must also make efforts to provide others with their Passover needs through giving money to maot chitim, the special charity associated with Passover.*

*Concerning this the Rebbe said, "Although surely one gave thirty days before Passover, as the Passover holiday grows nearer one must reassess and increase his donations.*

*"Similarly, in regard to the size of one's donations, one must reassess one's earnings and give according to the nature of the blessings G-d has provided. Giving in this manner will not cause a person any losses. On the contrary, as G-d sees the extent of one's generosity, He will provide him with more blessings. A person, who gives without reservations and limitations, will receive Divine blessings that know no bounds.*

*"The above concept is connected with the Prince who brought his offerings on Rosh Chodesh Nisan, Nachshon ben Aminadav. The name Aminadav can refer to generosity, which is the meaning of the word 'nadav'. Nachshon jumped into the Red Sea, in a manner of self-sacrifice, serving G-d without limitations. In this way Nachshon ben Aminadav is a role model to show us how our generosity must be expressed without limitation.*

*"This will transform everything undesirable. Just as Nachshon's jumping into the sea caused the sea to split and led to the completion of the phase of Exodus from Egypt, so too, our unbounded gifts to tzedaka will bring near the redemption and indeed transform all negative influences into good."*

*May the Rebbe's words be actualized immediately so that we can all celebrate together in the Holy Land.*

## MOSHIACH MATTERS

If a soul has been reincarnated in a number of bodies, in which of them will it be clothed at the time of the Resurrection? The AriZal, famed Kabbalist Rabbi Yitzchak Luria, explains that each time a soul descends to this world, one of its components is rectified; through successive descents, the soul as an entirety is rectified. Ultimately, each component of the soul will be resurrected in the body which served as its host.

(From *To Live and Live Again*, by Rabbi Nissan Dovid Dubov)

J.I. Gutnick

# It Happened Once...



Reb Leib Sarah's, one of the greatest of the Baal Shem Tov's disciples, had long desired to live in the Holy Land. After years of struggle, wandering, and perfecting himself to the utmost of his ability, his deepest desire was to settle in the Holy Land. There he would be able to attain spiritual achievements unreachable elsewhere.

Although he was himself a person of renown, he was also a chasid, and so he went to his Rebbe, the Baal Shem Tov, to ask his permission and blessing for the trip. "Rebbe," he asked, "I request your permission to settle in the Holy Land, which is my heart's desire." But to his surprise, the Besht's reply was negative. The next year Leib Sarah's again went to his Rebbe with the same petition. But again the Besht denied his request, without even an explanation. This scenario repeated itself year after year for several years, and Leib Sarah's was deeply disappointed.

One year he decided that he wouldn't go to his Rebbe at all; he just wouldn't ask. The desire to travel and settle in the Holy Land had become so strong within him, that he could no longer deny it. So Leib Sarah's sat down with his wife, and then with his children, and discussed the question of moving to the Holy Land. His wife and children were all agreeable, and so it was decided to go. Wasting no time, he sold all of his worldly goods save the barest necessities, and gathering all of his money, he bought tickets for himself, his wife and children for the long journey to the Land of Israel.

When everything was in order, Reb Leib Sarah's packed up his belongings; and set off with his family through Russia towards Turkey, whence he would travel to Israel. It was a slow and arduous journey overland, with many stops in the small towns and villages through which they had to travel. One day they noticed a lot of excitement in the small town in which they had arrived. When Leib Sarah's inquired of the villagers about this, he was shocked to hear their reply. The people were overwhelmed, for the famous Baal Shem Tov was unexpectedly visiting the town.

Leib Sarah's was now caught in a dilemma. He contemplated not going to greet his Rebbe. This would allow him to avoid being embarrassment because of his disobedience; but how could he not acknowledge the presence of his great Rebbe and teacher? He sat in his wagon deliberating. Suddenly he had no more choices, for the Baal Shem Tov's carriage pulled up next to his own. Reb Leib Sarah's dismounted and approached the Rebbe. The Besht appeared to be surprised and asked, "What are you doing here?"

"Rebbe, please forgive me for not heeding your words, but I am now on my way to settle in the Holy Land."

The Besht replied, "Well, if your wish to go is so strong, then go. But now, where are you going to spend the Shabbat?"

"I am searching for a place, but it's difficult since I spent all of my money on the tickets for the journey," replied Reb Leib Sarah's. The Baal Shem Tov offered to host Reb Leib Sarah's and his family for the whole Shabbat. When they were in their rooms preparing for the arrival of the holy day, the Besht knocked on Reb Leib's door, asking if he had immersed in the mikva yet. "No," he replied, "I have no money remaining, so I will forego the mikva this week." To this, the Baal Shem Tov replied that he would pay the entrance fee for him, and they should go together to the mikva. Reb Leib Sarah's joy was unbounded,

for he understood the profound meaning of the immersion and was relieved not to miss his usual ritual.

Upon arriving at the mikva the Besht said, "Reb Leib, you go first." But he refused, saying, "Please, Rebbe, you go; you are my teacher, after all." The Besht was adamant and Reb Leib immersed first. After the proscribed immersions were completed, he rose from the water, turned to his Rebbe and said, "I have changed my mind. I will not go to the Holy Land. I will return to Medzibozh, to you. Let me tell you what I saw in the mikva during my immersions. As I entered the water I saw a continent. As I looked closely I saw Eretz Israel, and as I looked even more closely I saw Jerusalem. As I narrowed my focus still more, I could see all the parts of the Temple Mount, even the Holy Temple itself. Then I looked inside and saw the Holy of Holies, but though I strained my eyes as hard as I could, I couldn't see the Holy Ark, the Tablets of the Law, or the Divine Presence. In my anguish I cried out, 'Where are the Tablets? Where is the Divine Presence?' A Heavenly Voice answered me, saying, 'They are to be found in Medzibozh.' Therefore I am following you back to Medzibozh to fulfil my Divine Service. I now see that during the exile the Divine Presence dwells with the leader of the generation."

## THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

**If his offering be a burnt-sacrifice ("olah")...of his own voluntary will, before G-d (Lev. 1:3)**

The root of the Hebrew word "olah" means "height" or "elevation," teaching us that if a person truly desires to lift himself up and draw near to G-d, he must sacrifice "his own voluntary will," as our Sages said, "Nullify your will before His." (*The Magid of Mezeritch*)

**He shall kill it on the side of the altar, northward, before G-d (Lev. 1:11)**

The person bringing the offering must be willing to sacrifice his own wants and desires for a higher cause. The offering is only a symbol of our willingness for self-sacrifice. This is alluded to in the Hebrew word for "north," which is related to the word meaning "hidden." Even our hidden thoughts and feelings must be dedicated to G-dliness. (*Chidushei Harim*)

**Every one of your meal-offerings shall you season with salt (Lev. 2:13)**

The world is divided into three parts: one-third desert, one-third inhabited land, and one-third sea. According to the Midrash, the sea rose up in protest. "Master of the Universe!" it cried, "the Torah was given in the desert, and the Holy Temple was built on land. What are You going to give to me?" "Do not worry," G-d replied. "All the sacrifices that will ever be brought by the Jewish people upon the altar will be 'seasoned with salt' [which comes from the sea]." (*Yalkut Reuveini*)

### CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

#### PARSHAS VAYIKRAH 3 NISSAN • 28 MARCH

|                         |                      |          |
|-------------------------|----------------------|----------|
| <b>FRIDAY NIGHT:</b>    | CANDLE LIGHTING:     | 7:03 PM  |
|                         | MINCHA:              | 7:15 PM  |
|                         | KABBOLAS SHABBOS:    | 7:35 PM  |
| <b>SHABBOS MORNING:</b> | SHACHARIS:           | 10:00 AM |
|                         | MINCHA:              | 7:00 PM  |
|                         | SHABBOS ENDS:        | 8:00 PM  |
| <b>WEEKDAYS:</b>        | SHACHARIS SUN – FRI: | 9:15 AM  |
|                         | MINCHA:              | 7:00 PM  |
|                         | MAARIV:              | 7:55 PM  |

### CANDLE LIGHTING: 27 MARCH 2009



| BEGINS |            | ENDS |
|--------|------------|------|
| 7:03   | MELBOURNE  | 8:00 |
| 7:01   | ADELAIDE   | 7:55 |
| 5:35   | BRISBANE   | 6:26 |
| 7:36   | DARWIN     | 8:25 |
| 5:31   | GOLD COAST | 6:27 |
| 7:02   | PERTH      | 7:55 |
| 6:41   | SYDNEY     | 7:34 |
| 6:54   | LAUNCESTON | 7:52 |
| 7:06   | AUCKLAND   | 8:01 |
| 7:05   | WELLINGTON | 8:02 |

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

### The Lubavitcher Rebbe

צוקללה"ה נב"מ ז"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.