



Beha'aloscha 5775

June 5, 2015

A Taste of Torah

Second Offering

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

How much of our life is spent thinking about missed opportunities? The frustration, anger and inability to simply turn back the clock seems to get to everyone at some point. We often tell ourselves, "Don't cry over spilled milk." But, how many of us actually take the challenge to figure out how to be proactive, salvage the moment and grow in the process?

In this week's parsha we read of the Pesach offering on the first anniversary of the Exodus from Egypt. This took place in the Sinai Desert and, as Rashi notes, ended up being the only Pesach sacrifice during the Jews' 40-year sojourn in the Wilderness. The Torah relates that there were individuals who, due to their ritually impure state, were excluded from participation in this event. They complained to Moshe saying (Beha'aloscha 9:7), "*Lama nigara*", why should we be diminished (i.e., left out) from this mitzvah? Their complaint seems puzzling: They were unfit, and they missed their chance; what did they expect Moshe to do? Perhaps even more intriguing is what follows: Moshe asks Hashem what to do and receives the commandment of Pesach Sheni. This unique mitzvah allows individual Jews who were unfit or unable to sacrifice on the fourteenth of Nissan another chance to do so on the fourteenth of the following month, Iyar.

There is an amazing lesson here. Had these individuals gone on, complacent with the fact that they had done what they could have, they would have missed out on the opportunity to bring the Pesach sacrifice. For many of them, this would prove to be the final Pesach offering of their lives. It was due to their concern that they merited this unique opportunity, as well as having the merit of introducing this new mitzvah to us.

One more basic question needs to be asked: Why do we find this unique phenomenon at the Pesach offering alone? No other mitzvah has a make-up date; if one missed making Kiddush

and remembers after Shabbos, he has, unfortunately, missed the opportunity, notwithstanding whatever excuse he may have.

Perhaps we can understand this with something written by Rabbi Yitzchok I. Prag (quoted by Rabbi Moshe Eisenmann in his commentary to Chronicles II, Chapter 30). He explains that the objective of the Pesach offering is different than all other offerings. While other offerings are brought as a means of atonement or to come closer to Hashem, the purpose of the Pesach offering is to remove us from idol worship as much as possible. In Egypt, the Jewish People were commanded to take a sheep, as it was worshipped by the Egyptians. The Jews were told, as part of the process of preparing the sheep, to remove themselves from that idolatry that they had adopted due to Egyptian influence. Among the proofs he brings to this is that the Torah tells us that a convert doesn't bring this offering immediately upon his conversion if it isn't the proper time of Erev Pesach (see Rashi here 9:14 and Shmos 12:48). This indicates that it could have been appropriate for a convert to bring this offering as he leaves idolatry to join the Jewish Nation. This also explains why King Chizkiyahu invested a lot of resources into bringing the Pesach offering immediately after destroying the idol worship of his father, King Achaz (see Chronicles II, ch. 30). Separation from idolatry - be it the type that involves worship of animals or forces of nature, or the type that involves worship of other things, be it food, money or sports heroes - is a prerequisite to connecting to G-d. Thus, these Jews who missed the Pesach offering felt a need to bring the Pesach offering at a different time - and Hashem agreed with their request. May we all merit to separate ourselves from the idolatries that pull us away from Hashem, and to merit bringing the Pesach sacrifice in the rebuilt Temple very soon.

Stories For The Soul

A Different Perspective

The Maggid of Mezeritch (Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch; d. 1772) was once asked by some of his followers, "The Talmud states that one must bless G-d for the bad just as he does for the good. How is it humanly possible for anyone to reach such a level to sincerely do so?" The Maggid told them that his student, Rabbi Zusha of Anipoli (1718-1800), could answer their question.

They went to the Bais Medrash and found Reb Zusha. He was a sickly man, poverty-stricken, with worn clothes and little food to eat. The men asked Reb Zusha their question. Reb Zusha replied, "I really don't know why the Maggid sent you to ask me this question! I haven't had any troubles in my life. On the contrary, Hashem has showered me with goodness and blessings. Go find someone with troubles, and ask him your question!"

The men realized that their question had been answered - it is a matter of perspective. Reb Zusha was thankful for all he had, despite his misfortunes; he thus did not feel he was suffering.

In this week's parsha, the Jewish People complain about the manna that Hashem provided for them. As great as they were, they were taken to task for failing to properly appreciate the great goodness Hashem provided for them.

Kollel Happenings

THE M.B. GLASSMAN FOUNDATION GOLD LUNCH & LEARN PROGRAM

The M.B. Glassman Foundation GOLD Program is a division of the Denver Community Kollel dedicated to bringing Torah study to seniors in the community. Don't miss a great Lunch and Learn class on the weekly parsha at the East Side Kosher Deli, 499 S. Elm St. at 11:30 am. There is no charge for the lunch or the learning! Transportation can be arranged. For more information, contact rmf@denverkollel.org or call 303-820-2855.

A DEEPER LOOK AT THE PARSHA

The weekly parsha is replete with halachic issues. Every week, Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher will choose one topic based on the parsha, and lead an in-depth exploration of the sources and practical halachic conclusions of that issue.

The class takes place Sunday mornings at EDOS, 198 S. Holly St. Shacharis is at 7:30 am, and is followed by breakfast and the class at approximately 8:15 am.

For more info, please contact Rabbi Fleisher rmf@denverkollel.org

THE FAR SIDE OF THE TALMUD

Aggada, the passages of the Talmud that focuses on Jewish thought and outlook, provides keen insights into human nature, and offers advice on how to live our lives, can be difficult to understand, but the knowledge and wisdom hiding beneath the surface is ample reason to make the effort. Be fascinated and inspired as Rabbi Moshe Heyman presents a whole new dimension in Torah learning based on the classic work *Ain Yaakov*. Tuesdays, 1:45-2:45 pm at the Kollel Torah Center, 9550 Belleview Ave.

For more info, contact rmh@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By: Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: When do we repeat an entire chapter of Psalms twice in one set of prayers (including *shacharis-mussaf*)?

A: 1) When Rosh Chodesh occurs on Sunday, the *shir shel yom* (daily Psalm recited at the end of the morning prayers) is Psalm 24, the same one recited when returning the Torah to the Aron (Ark) following the reading of the Torah. 2) On both days of Rosh Hashana, Psalm 150, recited during the *Pesukei D'zimrah*

section of *shacharis*, is recited during the *Shemoneh Esrei* of *mussaf*.

This week's question: When we recite the *tachanun* prayer, we say the words "*va'anachnu lo naidah*", and then we stand up. Why is this done?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org

Ask the Rabbi

Testing G-d

Ben Waldbaum from Washington University,

Dear Rabbi,

I heard someone advise a student at my university that they can say, "I will study five pesukim (Torah verses) this week if You, G-d, give me an "A" on an exam." Is someone allowed to say this? If it is allowed, why is it not considered testing Hashem? Thanks a lot!

Dear Ben Waldbaum,

Did he mean that he will study the Torah verses first, and as a result he expects G-d to reward him with an "A" on the exam? If so, this is considered testing G-d and is forbidden. (One may test G-d only in regard to giving tithes and charity.)

Or did he mean that if he gets an "A" he will then study five Torah verses? If so, this is not testing G-d. Rather, it's like a conditional vow. It's like saying: "If I get an A, then I vow to study five verses. But if not, then not."

In this week's Torah portion, Jacob made a conditional vow: "Jacob took a vow saying: If G-d will be with me... give me bread to eat and clothes to wear, and I return in peace to my father's house... then this stone which I have set up as a pillar shall become a house of G-d..." (Bereishet 28:21-2).

However, a person should not make vows, because the punishment for breaking a vow is very severe. Furthermore, making a vow smacks of arrogance, like saying, "I'm so perfect that, not only do I fulfill 100% of my obligations to G-d, but I'm even taking on extra obligations!"

Source:

-Shulchan Aruch Yoreh De'ah 247:4

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