



DELVING DEEPER

I'm a Soul!

WHEN WE CONSIDER THE DIFFICULTY OF connecting to the next few Torah portions, the task seems daunting and fruitless. How can we understand the idea of offering *korbanos* (sacrifices)? Beyond what's modernly perceived as barbarity, it's something that we don't do now. It seems simply obsolete, irrelevant, and unnecessary.

But can we really dismiss such a massive part of our heritage?

Not a chance. Even today, *korbanos* provide a very real and necessary lesson for us.

...The priest should burn it all on the altar as an *olah* (a burnt sacrifice), an offering by fire—a pleasant aroma for G-d. (1:9)

Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetsky brings a Rambam on this verse, giving important background and relevant context. He explains that since the Jews lived among Egyptians

RABBI ARYEH PRIDONOFF



and Chaldeans, whose chief idol worship was with sheep, cattle, and birds, they needed to demonstrate that these animals were meant for service to Hashem only.

Reb Yaakov also explains, quoting the Rambam, that we must expend our best efforts to understand *korbanos* and any other challenging Torah ideas. Concerning *chukim* (laws which are simply Divine decrees), this is an especially difficult challenge. We must not believe that an idea is less important simply because we don't understand it.

However, in modern times, what are we supposed to do? Should we bring our own sacrifices? Bring back the backyard-barbeque *bamah* (altar)?

Obviously, that is not an option.

The Chofetz Chaim brings a quite practical alternative. He quotes a midrash, which says that even though we don't offer *korbanos*

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THE RABBI WAS ASKED

ADAPTED BY RABBI DOVID TZVI MEISSNER
FROM ME'AH SHE'ARIM
BY RABBI YITZCHOK ZILBERSTEIN

A young bar mitzvah boy bought a roll at a bakery and found a nail inside. He called the bakery, which told him to bring in the roll and show them the nail inside; they would reimburse him. The boy then set the roll aside and subsequently forgot about it. Pesach soon came, and the boy neither sold nor nullified his *chametz* (leaven), for he thought

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A PARASHA Q 4 U

RABBI DOVID SPETNER

Name two non-kosher items that were brought on the mizbei'ach (altar). Identify a third for extra credit!

Bring this question to the Shabbos table and see who knows the answer!

TIDBITS OF CINCINNATI JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

In 5694 (1934), the Board of Trustees of University of Cincinnati ruled that its medical school should make allowances for Sabbath-observant Jewish students. This ruling followed an episode where Rabbi Eliezer Silver's son Nathan and son-in-law Louis Lzenstein, both U.C. medical students, had failed a pathology class after the professor had refused to allow them to make up work or tests that they had missed on Shabbos. The professor allegedly administered tests on Shabbos deliberately. Nathan and Louis had requested permission to make up the class at another university, something which had been allowed previously for other students who had failed courses. This request, as well, had been denied by the professor. Rabbi Silver then got involved, and he appealed to the dean of the medical school. When the appeal did not overturn the professor's decision, Rabbi Silver was not deterred. He proceeded to enlist anyone and everyone he could, apparently writing to every state governor in the U.S., to protest this discrimination against Shabbos observers. The pressure he brought to bear on the school resulted in its board of trustees ruling in favor of the Sabbath observers.



Get into the Pesach spirit!

We invite the entire community to a special learning program and shiur by Rabbi Meir Minster on the topic "**M'lacha on Erev Pesach**" on **Sunday, March 18**, at 9am. The program will be followed by a hot (chametz!) breakfast.

Shacharis 8:15
Seder (chavrusa learning) ... 9:00
Shiur 9:50
followed by breakfast

sponsored by Alter Frydman

as a source of merit for his father, Tuvia Tzvi ben Shmuel David, of blessed memory

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for nineteen years of selfless devotion to building Torah

Cincinnati Torah

is distributed weekly
to local shuls
and the community
e-mail list.



THE RABBI WAS ASKED

CONTINUED

he didn't have any in his possession. After Pesach, the boy remembered about his roll, and he wanted to bring it to the bakery to receive his compensation.

Q May the boy do so, or would that be considered benefitting from *chametz* which was unlawfully owned over the duration of Pesach, which is forbidden?

A First, let us discuss what the law would be in a similar situation: Someone wants to borrow money from a friend before Pesach, and he doesn't have any paper on which to write a *shtar chov* (promissory note); instead, he writes it on a loaf of bread. May he collect his debt after Pesach with this "document?"

It would appear that this would be permissible, because the debt was created by the loan; the note on the loaf is just proof of the loan.

Here, too, the "loan" is the nail, obligating payment, and the roll is just "proof." Accordingly, the roll shouldn't prevent him from receiving compensation for the nail which had nearly choked him.

Furthermore, the boy had no need or desire to own the roll as *chametz* on Pesach—and transgress the prohibition against owning *chametz*—in order to receive compensation; he could have easily sprayed chemicals on the roll, rendering it unfit for dogs. Therefore, we can say that the boy is not considered to have benefitting from *chametz* which was unlawfully owned on Pesach. 🕊

"All hands on deck!"

Sunday morning at the Kollel

GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

RABBI NOACH MUROFF (NOW ASSOCIATE RABBI at Ahavas Torah in Scottsdale, Arizona) at one point lived in New Haven, Connecticut. Needing a desk, he searched Craigslist, the online marketplace. He found a desk he liked, bought it, and brought it home.

I'm a Soul! CONTINUED

any more, we still read about them. We focus on the verses involving them, and we learn the relevant laws.

Even in the times of the *Beis haMikdash* (the Temple), people read those verses and laws. The Chofetz Chaim explains that in those days, *korbanos* obtained atonement for people's iniquities from on High, but only involvement in Torah can fix the spiritual roots of sin. In modern times, he implores us to strengthen ourselves in learning the laws of the *korbanos*, which is considered like offering the sacrifices themselves.

We see this illustrated in a story the Midrash tells: When Haman led Mordechai through the streets of Shushan, Haman passed some rabbis, and he asked them what topic they were learning. They replied, "The laws of *k'mitza* (pinching a small amount of flour off of an offering, to be brought by the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, in order to achieve atonement.)"

On the spot, Haman declared, "Your *k'mitza* speaks louder than my 10,000 bars of silver."

Learning brings about spiritual fixes to the world we keep messing up.

Rabbi Noach Weinberg, *zt"l*, explains things a bit more personally: We need *korbanos* because we need blood. When a person sees blood, it affects him.

When does a person need to see blood?

Let's consider two major categories of *korbanos*:



When he tried to fit it through the door of his office, he found it was a tad too big. He would have to dismantle it. While taking it apart, he found a bag full of \$100 bills! Rabbi Muroff counted out the bills, which totaled \$98,000.

Instead of pocketing the possible windfall, he picked up the phone and called the seller.

A *chatas* (sin offering) is brought when someone does a sin by mistake—he wasn't paying attention, or he didn't realize something was forbidden. He lacked awareness.

Blood, even if it's just from a paper cut, brings reality into sharp focus. It's bad for Jews to stray from Hashem, and *korbanos* reveal the severity of tuning out.

Similarly, we can examine *sh'lamim* ("peace offerings"). These are brought out of joy—at the start of a Festival, or as a *Korban Todah*, the real Thanksgiving. We are supposed to be happy at the start of a festival; what if we're not?

The blood of the *sh'lamim* reminds us that such indifference comes from our physical body, which is dull and uninterested in anything that doesn't satisfy some impulse.

(Rav Noach was big into getting the body out of the way, and focusing on the fact that we all have souls!)

The world is filled with distractions and many reasons not to learn Torah. When we choose to identify with our souls, and learn Hashem's Torah, we remember who we really are. That is the only option left to us, since we no longer bring *korbanos*. When we get into our learning with excitement and mindfulness, we are fixing root issues. We combat listlessness and monotony, with the *real* elixir of life. 🕊



"Oh my gosh, because I... Oh, my G-d!" was the response.

The money was an inheritance that had been hidden in the desk, and its owner had forgotten where it had been placed.

Rabbi Muroff returned the money, an act which then caused an international sensation. 🕊